

GEN Z AND MILLENNIAL EXPECTATIONS AT WORK: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON WORKFORCE TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS VIKSIT BHARAT

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ABSTRACT :

Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital transformation, and hybrid work systems have deeply changed the way organizations are structured in different industries. Millennials (aged 30-45) and Generation Z (aged 18-29) will be the main workforce groups in India in 2026. Knowing what different generations expect at work is very important to make the modernization of the workforce in line with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. This paper investigates the generational differences in work mode preference and career mobility orientation through a study of primary data collected from 221 respondents. The paper uses Percentage Analysis, Chi Square test, One Way ANOVA. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between generation and hybrid work preference and a significant difference in career mobility expectations. Generation Z is more inclined to flexible work systems and faster career advancement. The paper points out that digitally adaptive and growth oriented HR systems are a must for the sustainable workforce transformation in India.

Keywords: Generation Z, Millennials, Artificial Intelligence, Hybrid Work, Career Mobility, Workforce Transformation, Viksit Bharat

INTRODUCTION :

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a main driver of change in organizations. With AI-facilitated recruitment, predictive analytics, workflow automation, and digital collaboration platforms, companies have been able to rethink job design, performance evaluation, and talent management. At the same time, hybrid work models have dematerialized work location, thus, making flexibility a hallmark of the modern work system.

Meanwhile, alongside the tech revolution, there is a demographic drift that changes the face of the workforce. Generations or cohorts are mostly differentiated by the socio, historical circumstances and the level of technological exposure in which they grow up or live. Taken individually, in the scenario of present, day workforce (2026):

Millennials or Generation Y, people who were born between 1981 and 1996, are now around 30 to 45 years old. Their first job experience occurred amid the opening of borders and the dawn of the digital transformation. They have witnessed the change of transition of traditional organizational systems to technology driven workplaces. A significant number of Millennials are now heading towards the top management level.

Generation Z includes those individuals whose birth year ranges from 1997 to 2012. Gen Z workers in 2026 will be aged around 18 to 29 years. They are the first generation to be completely digital by DNA, as their childhood was in an environment dominated by smartphones, social media, artificial intelligence, and platform economies. Gen Z is mainly made up of early, career workers, gig economy participants, and entrepreneurs in the making.

These different generational groups have been brought up with distinct forms of technology, have different career focus and workplace expectations. Millennials are usually juggling career advancement along with their already set personal and professional routines whereas Gen Z are more inclined to being digitally savvy and are flexible in terms of work systems.

India's ambition for Viksit Bharat 2047 highlights innovation, digital capability, inclusive growth, and sustainable development. Since Millennials offer institutional stability and Gen Z brings technological agility, it is thus important at a strategic level to know their desires concerning AI-Driven workplaces. Preference for hybrid work and career mobility orientation are, in fact, two main aspects in terms of which workforce transformation can be analyzed. Therefore, this research explores differences across generations regarding the preference for a work mode and career mobility expectations in the context of AI-integrated organizational environments.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

Deal, Altman, and Rogelberg (2018) revealed that younger generations mainly value deeply engaging work, rapid career progress, and flexibility. Similarly, Schroth (2019) noticed Gen Z to be demanding workplaces that are equipped with technology as well as constantly evolving

career systems. Meanwhile Costanza, Badger, and Fraser (2019) pointed out that generational differences are lessened by situational and economic factors.

Artificial Intelligence has changed the way jobs are organized far beyond just replacing human labor with machines. Brynjolfsson, Rock, and Syverson (2018) considered AI as a factor that changes both productivity and the way tasks are divided. Acemoglu and Restrepo (2019) showed that when robots replace people at work, tasks get reallocated and workers have to gain new skills thus the need for being flexible goes up. Hybrid work has become an integral part of organizations. Kniffin et al. (2021) urged that the success of hybrids depends on the availability of digital tools as well as the support of leaders, also noting that younger employees are more likely to be remote collaboration ready.

Career mobility orientation has evolved alongside technological change. Briscoe et al. (2019) noticed younger professionals displaying considerably more protean career attitudes. According to the Deloitte Global Gen Z and Millennial Survey (2023), around fifty percent of Generation Z employees will be looking to switch jobs to get better growth opportunities within two years. Besides that, Glavas (2016) pointed out that a sustainably oriented workforce is characteristic of those younger employees who are deeply committed to their work. Although these insights were helpful, there is still limited empirical research that combines the generational expectations, preferences for hybrid work, and career mobility of the Indian AI-driven workforce in line with the Viksit Bharat objectives. This study attempts to fill that gap in integration.

RESEARCH GAP :

Earlier studies have separately looked at generational work values, digital transformation, and hybrid systems. However, there has been little empirical work combining these factors in the context of AI-driven economies of the future.

In particular, there is a lack of sufficient evidence on the following points:

1. The relationship between generational cohort and hybrid work preference
2. Variances in the career mobility orientation of Generation Z and Millennials
3. Changes in the workforce as a result of AI integration in emerging economies

This paper experimentally measures these aspects to be a part of the workforce modernization debate in India.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the demographic profile of Gen Z and Millennial respondents
- To Study the relationship between generation and work mode preference
- To Analyze the differences in career mobility expectations between the two generations.
- To Assess sampling adequacy of the dataset.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

A descriptive as well as an analytical research design was adopted. Primary data were collected from 221 working professionals through the use of a structured questionnaire based on a five point Likert scale. Convenience sampling technique was employed.

The following statistical tools were used:

- Percentage Analysis
- Chi Square Test
- One Way ANOVA

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N = 221)

Personal Profile	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Generation	Gen Z	120	54.3
	Millennials	101	45.7
Gender	Female	125	56.6
	Male	96	43.4
Work Mode	Hybrid	127	57.5
	Remote	54	24.4
	On-site	40	18.1

Source: Computed Data

Most of the respondents are from Generation Z (54.3%), which shows there is a high representation of young professionals who are just starting their careers in AI- driven workplaces. The predominance of the hybrid mode of work (57.5%) indicates a major change in the structure towards organizations which are flexible, and technology enabled.

Table 2: Cross-Tabulation of Generation and Work Mode

Work Mode	Gen Z	Millennials	Total
Hybrid	78	49	127
Remote	28	26	54
On-site	14	26	40
Total	120	101	221

Source: Computed Data

Table 3: Chi-Square Test between Generations and Work mode preference

Particulars	Value
Chi-Square	8.72
df	2
Significance	0.013*

Significant at 5% level

Source: Computed Data

The significant Chi-square result ($p < 0.05$) indicates that work mode preference varies across generational cohorts. Generation Z demonstrates stronger preference for hybrid arrangements, reflecting higher digital adaptability and autonomy orientation compared to Millennials.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Career Mobility Expectations across Generations

Generation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gen Z	120	4.18	0.84
Millennials	101	3.76	0.91

Source: Computed Data

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA for Career Mobility Expectations across Generations

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.72	1	18.72	9.84	0.002*
Within Groups	416.53	219	1.90		
Total	435.25	220			

Significant at 5% level

Source: Computed Data

The ANOVA results reveal a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in career mobility expectations. The higher mean score for Generation Z indicates stronger orientation toward rapid career growth and inter-organizational mobility, consistent with protean career attitudes in AI-driven labor markets.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Our study shows that the workforce expectations in AI-powered work environments are largely influenced by the generational factors. Among the respondents, over half belong to the Generation Z group (54.3%), showing the growing number of young professionals at the start of their careers working in digitally integrated offices. The high number of those who prefer hybrid work (57.5%) proves that the idea of flexibility has become an inherent characteristic of today's work systems and not a passing phase anymore.

The Chi-square analysis of the association between the variables shows that there is an association between the generation of the respondent and the preference of work mode ($\chi^2 = 8.72, p = 0.013$). So, this result means that the demand for flexibility varies among different generations. Generation Z is found to have a greater preference for the hybrid model of work than Millennials, showcasing their higher level of digital skills and the desire for more freedom. This is in accordance with earlier studies that point out how the digital, native generations are more capable of working efficiently both remotely and in virtual technology, enabled collaboration environments.

The outcome of the research reveals that a variation in career mobility expectations can be linked to the generational demographic at a significant level ($F = 9.84, p = 0.002$).

According to our survey, Generation Z has the highest average mobility score (4.18) while Millennials have the lowest score (3.76), which shows that Generation Z members are more eager to have rapid career progression as well as organizational changes. In AI-driven labor markets where skill requirements continually evolve, such a mobility orientation from individuals may indicate a very proactive behavior in adapting, not instability.

Millennials have a very less inclination and preference towards mobility than most of the generations, which may be a consequence of their career establishment and institutional

anchoring. This shows the shift between generations and different life stages influence each other. Coming to the point, the results indicate that both technological progress and demographic change are the main drivers of workforce transformation in India.

On the one hand, AI implementation transforms work settings, and, on the other hand, changes in generations alter the demand for work, life balance flexibility and personal development opportunities. Hence, a wise and sustainable business plan has to be capable of combining not only the digitally skilled workforce but also the human resource models sensitive to the different needs of the generations.

IMPLICATIONS FOR VIKSIT BHARAT

The results of this work have quite a direct implication for India's Viksit Bharat 2047 plan that highlights the importance of innovation, productivity, digital capability, and inclusive growth.

To begin with, the greatest adoption of the hybrid work format by Generation Z is a clear indication of the need for a strong digital infrastructure, a cloud based governance model, and AI enabled collaboration tools in all the sectors. The flexibility of the work arrangements should be ensured by national level investments in broadband connectivity, cybersecurity, and digital public infrastructure.

Secondly, the fact that career mobility is pointing to be a major factor for Gen Z means that skill upgrading and reskilling will continue to be the main concern. Lifelong learning, digital literacy, and cross functional skills should be the focus of national skill missions and training programs that are AI centric to make sure that people will be able to find jobs even in changing labor markets.

Third, human resources policies that are oriented towards the future should consider different generations as a resource to be integrated into the company strategy. Millennials provide institutional continuity and have managerial experience, and on the other hand, Generation Z brings technological adaptability and innovation capacity. Using this demographic complementarity will be indispensable for keeping up the growth of the economy.

Lastly, the making of a Viksit Bharat is most compatible with human capital readiness when it is not only a matter of technology being adopted. The incorporation of AI does not suffice, it has to be backed up by flexible work systems, dynamic career pathways, and management

practices that take different generations into account. Workforce modernization, hence, becomes one of the cornerstones of India's road to a developed, digitally empowered nation.

CONCLUSION :

The artificial intelligence (AI) powered age has changed the way workplaces are organized, the expectations of employees, and the career paths in a very fundamental manner. The research demonstrates that a generational factor highly impacts the preference for hybrid work and career mobility orientation in India.

Generation Z is a segment of the workforce that is digitally very agile and highly mobile. They are the kind of people who are ready to work in ever changing environments. Millennials, on the other hand, provide a stable structure and managerial experience. Both these generations together constitute the fundamentals of India's workforce transformation.

Technology cannot bring Viksit Bharat by itself. The way forward for the nation will be determined by the AI potential correlation with generational adaptability. Those organizations who acknowledge the convergence of demographic, technological factors will not just survive the transformation they will become its leaders. This is the real workforce revolution.

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