

# Managing Generational Differences: A Case Study of NTPC Limited



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*It's a digital world surrounded by Search Engines, Laptops, Smartphones, Wi-Fi, iPods, Social Networks, WhatsUp, Video Conferences and emails. Majority of digital populace is Generation Y employees born between 1980s and 1990s. Generation Y nearly comprises 40 to 60 percent of the workforce in most of the industries now-a-days. The employees from this generation are technology savvy, courageous, determined, self-motivated, and tough. They are career oriented and look for challenging and satisfying career or chase their passion. They join the industries with their own values, outlook and confidence compared with employees of other generations. Still Government and Public Sector Industries continue to make use of systems designed years before. Leaders in Government and Public Sector Industries have to bring changes in their leadership style, work culture and systems to make it fit and satisfying place for Generation Y. Government Industries require these talented people to survive in this competitive world as these employees are very innovative, accept challenges and take risks. In this paper, an attempt has been made to find out the various ways of retaining and motivating Generation Y employees in Government and Public Sector Industries by creating an enabling culture through discouraging old traditional methods, allowing them to implement their ideas, empowering them and delegating power to them.*

**Keywords:** Generation, Technology, Challenging, Opportunities, Career

## 1. Introduction

Generation Y is more concerned than their earlier generations to work-life balance and modern gender roles: stay-at-home-fathers, flexible work schedules, and virtual offices. Generally private sector industries in India continue to understand the expectations of Generation Y and then keep them in mind while assigning any work to them. They also have to depart from traditional practices and cater to new requirements like open, casual and cooperative work environment, challenging work, faster career progression opportunities, flexible working hours and even volunteering opportunities. This paradigm shift sees Generation Y employees not leaving the job and also makes industries the 'employer of choice.' Generation Y value a job with ample number of holidays, gets a chance to make friends and expect that people respect their position in the industry.

Due to the different upbringing and environment around Generation Y, they have different work ethics, values, attitude and expectations so managing them become difficult for the industry. Previous generation worked hard sacrificing family time and health for work. However, Generation Y wants to live life now and not after they retire. They value free time, health and fulfilling personal expectations and ambitions. Every generation is unique and influences the next generation and at the same time complain about the inadequacies of the other generations. Therefore, it becomes important to address these issues. They also need to be tackled psychologically as they show the behaviors of – not accepting constructive criticism, not tolerating mistakes, not understanding limitations, not taking ownership for decisions etc.

As per the 2012 study of UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School:

- Generation Y prefers quick recognition and not traditional performance reviews. 80% of them they would prefer to receive the feedback just after the activity performed rather than wait for the year end or completion of all interlinked activities.
- For motivating Generation Y, structured assignments and frequent feedback should be clubbed with opportunities to learn, grow and contribute in meaningful ways. They want a work environment that is comfortable and inspires them to contribute without criticism.
- Once group's purpose and goals are understood, Generation Y easily collaborates.

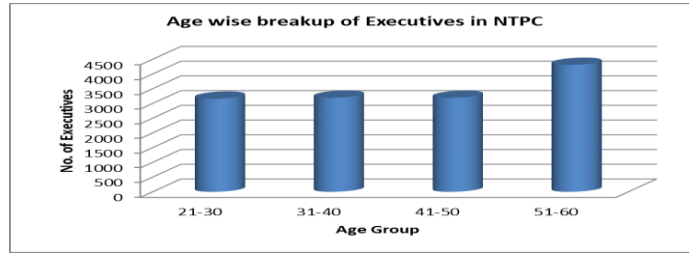
In view of this changing scenario in the business world, an effort has been made in this paper to study the characteristics and expectations of Generation Y through published secondary data as well as primary data based on individual interview and group discussions. The end objective has been to give an insight into how to create an enabling work culture by building right kind of HR Strategies and Processes which will enable industries to unleash the potential and talent of Generation Y and also create a win-win work environment.

## 2. Research Undertaken

A primary research was conducted through circulation of questionnaire and conduct of interviews amongst Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) and Generation Y (born between 1981 and 2000) executives of NTPC Ltd., a public sector industry. NTPC Ltd is India's largest power sector established in 1975 and acquired the Maharatna status in the year 2010.

Out of total 13859 executives at NTPC Ltd, 22.82% are in the age group of 21-30 years, 23.04% are in the age group of 31-40, 23.02% are in the age group of 41-50 and 31.10% are in the age group of 51-60 years. Though the average age of

executives in NTPC is 46 years and attrition rate is also very less i.e. 1.14% but every year NTPC is recruiting nearly 800-1000 executives and is in a continuous process of providing them with developmental opportunities and an employee friendly work culture.



Graph 1

### 3. Analysis of the Questionnaire Circulated Amongst Generation Y Executives

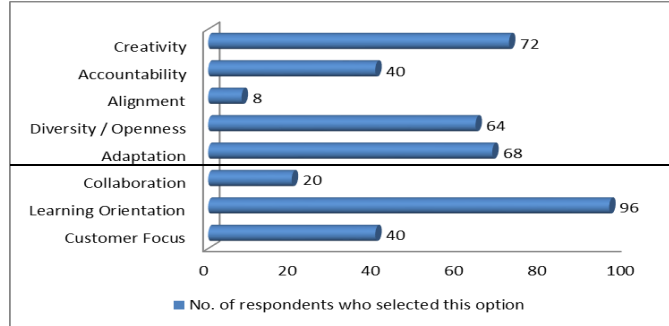
The questionnaire was circulated amongst 152 executives. Their responses on questions are given below.

- Gen Y executives were asked to rank the work related parameters in the order of importance in their work life. As per the table given below, career advancement is the most important parameter for executives followed by high salary, whereas, job security is of least importance.

Table 1 Importance of Work Related Parameters

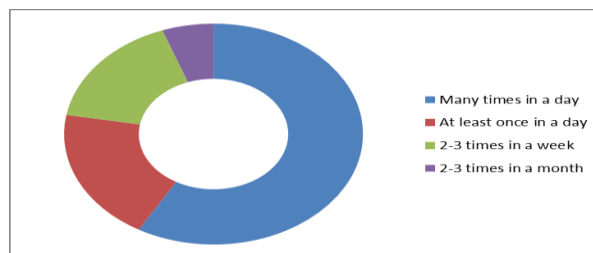
1	Career advancement	6	Teamwork
2	High salary	7	Good seniors
3	Treated with respect and valued	8	Challenging / interesting work
4	Good work life balance	9	Values
5	Decision making	10	Job security

- When executives were asked about what they look for in the industry’s culture, majority of them selected – learning orientation and creativity which clearly shows their enthusiasm towards using their ideas and an inquisitive need for learning new things.



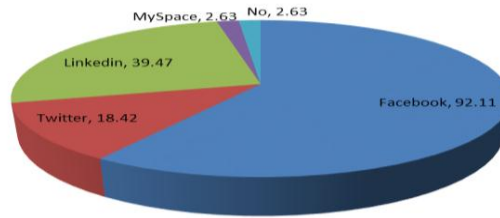
Graph 2

- Though Generation Y are techno savvy people, but when asked how often they communicate face to face, without the use of technology such as SMS, chat, calls or email, majority of them answered – many times a day. These people remain in constant touch with their peers and relatives through mobile or internet but communicating face to face with friends or colleagues for official work, leisure or networking is still important for them.



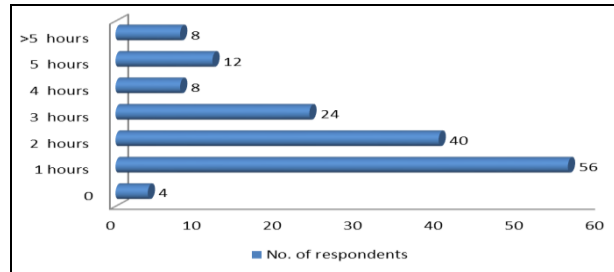
Graph 3

4. Out of 152 respondents, only 1 does not use any social media (like Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and LinkedIn) on a regular basis. All others are using this form of communication frequently.



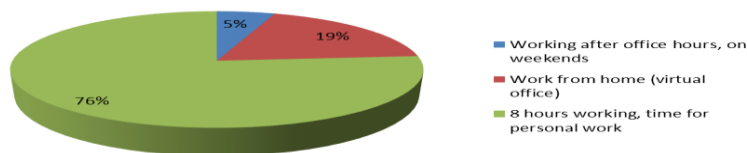
Graph 4

5. Out of the total respondents, majority of them spend one to two hours daily on social networking sites.



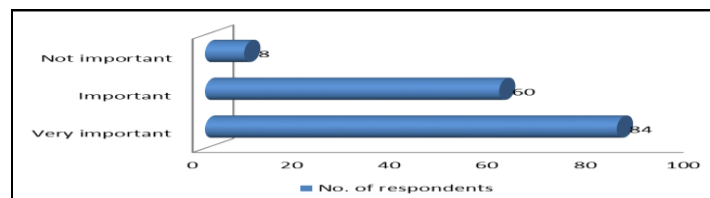
Graph-5

6. All the respondents agreed that they can do multi-tasking while using a range of technologies.  
 7. When asked for preference between job security and career growth, 136 people preferred career growth.  
 8. Generation Y also preferred rapid change and development in career (136 nos.) as compared to stability in job and time bound growth.  
 9. For majority of people (148 nos.), physical work environment like office space, ambience, facilities, resources etc. is important.  
 10. Majority of respondents preferred 8 hours working so that they have time for personal work and leisure activities.



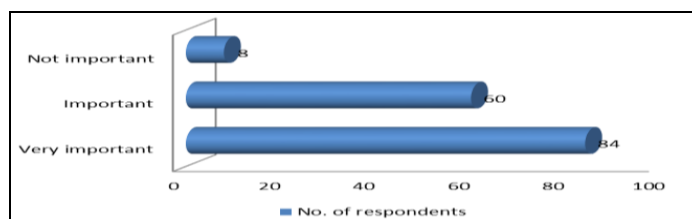
Graph 6

11. For all the members of Generation Y, freedom and autonomy for doing a work is important.  
 12. For majority of young executives, reward and recognition is important.



Graph 7

13. For Generation Y, both monetary and non-monetary rewards motivate them at work place.



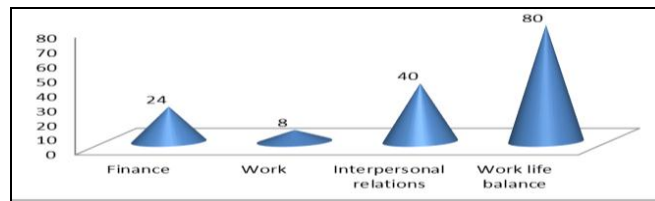
Graph 8

14. Generation Y were asked to rank the factors they consider important for their generation in order to continue in the industry, we obtained following ranks:

**Table 2** Factors Important for Continuing in an Industry

1	Opportunities for career growth & job enrichment
2	Choice location
3	Merit based compensation
4	Paying for further education
5	Work environment
6	Training & learning
7	Opportunities for travel
8	Rotation between departments
9	Flexible hours
10	Challenging job
11	Mentoring program

15. The most stress causing factor for Generation Y is work life balance



Graph 9

16. When asked from youngsters about their expectations from seniors, their priority was that they:

**Table 3** Expectations from Seniors

1	Respect and value you
2	Communicate well with you
3	Support you in career growth
4	Trust you for the assigned work

17. 148 people were of the view that role of a boss should be of a coach, mentor and friend rather than someone who directs and allocates work.

18. Generation Y women’s view on work

**Table 4** Gen Y Women’s Views

Items	No. of responses
Work can be enjoyable & meaningful	2
Work is about making a difference	2
Work is an integral part of life	4
Work is only one aspect of life	0
Work affects all other areas of life	0
Work is about picking up a paycheck	0
Work is a necessary evil	0

(As per the study by Kara Nichols Barrett, Research Consultant, October 2011, 5 most important work values for Generation Y career women are - achievement, co-workers, creativity, income and independence. The expectations are nearly same for both men and women in Generation Y as compared to earlier generations)

19. Idea of Fun at Work for Generation Y: Motivational seminars, outbound training, recreation center, informal get together at workplace.

20. The most critical thing that will make Generation Y stick in the industry is: Support from seniors, recognition, medical facilities, learning opportunities – higher education, training, study leave.

## 5. Comparison of Thoughts of Generation Y and Generation X

Based on the interviews of senior level executives of NTPC like Directors and Executive Directors, we have come to the following comparative table of Gen Y vs. Gen X

**Table 5**

	<b>Gen Y</b>	<b>Gen X</b>
Leadership Style	Want creativity and speed in work, power for decisions, networking with maximum people, want recognition	System and performance oriented, autocratic but with time they have started following participative style
Role models	Caring attitude, coach, mentor	Performance oriented, problem solvers, delegates, guide
Success	Fast career growth, facilities and amenities, rewards	As a young person – career growth is linked to success but as one matures, success constitutes of a combination of career, family, finance, emotional satisfaction etc.
Motivation & Values	Career advancement, high salary, social networking	Learnings and changes, implementation of ideas, selfless work for others
Handling Crisis	Want power for decision making	Take responsibility, empower others
Difference between Gen X & Y	Gen X – slow, follow old traditions, resistance to change Gen Y – fast, innovative, need freedom, high aspirations	Gen X – patience, respectful, value resources Gen Y – impatient, no value for money & resources, restless, self-centered, self-empowered, arrogant, tech-savvy, high expectations
Leave behind legacy	Innovations, prominent amongst maximum people	Inspire people to face challenges, team worker, share learnings
For self-growth	Autonomy, latest technology gadgets, friends, metro life	Be close to nature, reading, being with learned people
Work Life Balance	Want balance between work and life but find it difficult to do so	Have Work Life Balance, give importance to both personal and professional life

## 6. Based on the Survey Analysis, following Inferences can be Drawn for Generation Y

1. Generation Y is always in search of opportunities for career advancement and they switch between jobs for fast growth. They prefer to work in urban areas and like the fast lifestyle of cities.
2. Providing them with challenging and interesting jobs, good amenities, time for personal needs, learning opportunities, sponsoring for higher education can make them stick to the industry.
3. Being rewarded and recognized for any good work done is very important for Generation Y. They need continuous motivation for so that their need for recognition is satisfied.
4. Generation Y wants to take their own decisions based on their knowledge about the latest environment, concepts, technologies etc. they need to be empowered to take their own decisions.
5. In order to avoid blame game between Generation Y and Generation X, an orientation program may be conducted for both to make them understand each other's expectations, values, motivators and characteristics.
6. The strengths of Generation Y can be properly utilized. As Generation Y are tech savvy, they are fond of using latest software and social networking sites, this strength can be well utilized at work place too for official work and e-learning.
7. An industry comprises of both Generation X and Generation Y employees and in order to provide them with job satisfaction and cohesive work environment, employee friendly policies and systems are required to be in place.
8. The concept of 'Fun at Work' which has gained momentum in last few years is becoming important day by day in industries as Generation Y is joining workplace. They love interacting with people. Arranging for sports, movies, get-togethers, excursions, picnics, revealing extra talent etc. create interest and engagement.
9. A supportive boss who values and respects his young subordinate, mentors him, provides encouragement and recognition is liked by all.

Generation X will soon retire and Generation Y will take over in every industrial setup. It is the right time to capture the knowledge and experiences of Generation X so that Generation Y is benefitted by it. Generation Y is transformational, techno-savvy, likes challenges and agility. In India, Generation Y is considered entrepreneurial, ambitious and technologically capable. Generation Y in India is the world's largest and their strengths can be used for country's growth.

Industries must consider the impact of systems, relationships, job assigned and technology to attract and retain talent as there is a strong link between them and the way people prefer to live, innovative and productive work. Emotional engagement is another area which needs to be studied in industries. It is an outcome of the feelings towards work, learning opportunities, physical surroundings and colleagues.

## 7. Conclusion

Generation Y is the talent that business desires to set up competitive advantage in the market. For many employers, it becomes difficult to attract, manage and retain them as their requirements, mindset, satisfaction levels are not understood by the industry. Generation Y wants the workplace to be fun, relaxed, and non-traditional with more empowerment and idea implementation. Attracting and retaining Generation Y is an issue of concern for HR Managers today. If industries want to

retain these young talented Generation Ys, they need to display trust in Generation Y and allow them to work entrepreneurially within the industry by giving them power to take decisions and work according to their convenience.

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