

htspecial
YOUTH SURVEY 2014



AN EXCLUSIVE HT-MARS POLL



Broad-minded or bored?

YOUTH AND RELATIONSHIPS India's young pay a heavy price for straddling both tradition and modernity. Deep-rooted habits stop them from practising what they preach

45%

of respondents in Chandigarh said they've cheated on their partner in the past year. Only 21% of Kolkatans said they've strayed from their committed relationship

46%

The percentage of participants who said they are comfortable with live-in relationships. In 2013, 44% of the respondents said they are fine with such an arrangement

87%

Percentage of men who said the wife shouldn't be allowed the freedom for flings even if the husband strays. Surprisingly, women, too, don't think any differently. Only 36% women said the wife should be given this freedom



ILLUSTRATION: MALAY KARMAKAR / RAJ K RAJ / SOUMYA KHANDELWAL

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At 24, Indore's Amit Trivedi hasn't really taken too many decisions on his own ever. He decided to get a degree in MBA because that's what all his seniors in school did. Once he completed it, again, it didn't take him much time to decide: he relocated to Delhi and has been working with a "multinational" for a year now. But for this, not much has changed in Amit's life. Back home, his parents are looking for a perfect match for him. As for him, Amit's clear about what he wants: a well-educated, "presentable" girl from a good family. He also has one unspoken prerequisite — the girl must be a virgin. It is immaterial that Amit is not one himself.

Call it double standards, the cost of straddling a la-la land between tradition or modernity or just plain old hypocrisy, the fact is that the youth of urban India hardly practise what they preach. According to the HT-MARS Youth Survey, an unprecedented 61% believe that pre-marital sex is no longer a taboo. Only, when it comes to marriage, 63% want their partners to be virgins.

Delhi-based psychiatrist Dr Sanjay Chugh explains, "While women are far more empowered today and ready to embrace their sexuality, the male mindset has hardly changed. The trope of the virginal bride still holds. Pre-marital sex and casual relationships have been de-stigmatised in the youths' minds but they are afraid of being found out. The guilt is not about the act itself, but the fear of being discovered."

The number of youngsters who accept that they are in relationship also varies with the affluence of the city they come from. While their numbers are higher in cosmopolitan Delhi (67%), Mumbai (63%), Kolkata (67%) or Chandigarh (67%), a traditional Jaipur (28%), Indore (32%) and Chennai (35%) seems to have a stymieing effect. The national average is 49%.

And these are not they-lived-happily-ever-after relationships either. Only 24% of these 49% accept that they are "very much" in love with their boyfriend/girlfriend. While Chandigarh youth top the chart when it comes

to cheating (45%), Delhi is not far behind at 41%. Pune, where only 44% respondents accepted they were in a relationship, is at the bottom of the pile in terms of cheating on their significant other (25%).

Says Mumbai-based sexologist Deepak Jumani, "Earlier, marriage was about finding the best mate in terms of financial security and social strata. Those rules are not applicable any more. Both men and women want to experiment and find compatibility in every sense — emotional, physical and sexual. Embarking on a relationship does not mean youngsters have marriage on their mind. Whether it is a one-night stand, a casual relationship or a live-in, commitment does not have to be on the agenda."

However, the dos and don'ts are far more hard-bound when it comes to the institution of marriage. Divorce is still not an option for 53% of youngsters and neither is casual sex while married. Only 11% feel it can be forgiven and 25% believe if a man strays, he should let his wife do that too. Out of this figure, 13% are male and 36% women.

Delhi-based fine arts student Avneesh Murgai says, "Every relationship is different and you cannot say why people make the choices they make in a relationship. Having said that, marriage is commitment and the alpha male mindset where you can get away with anything is just not acceptable. We are westernised enough to indulge in a casual sexual encounter but still caught in the patriarchal time warp where we cannot entertain the idea of our wife/girlfriend ever being touched by another man."

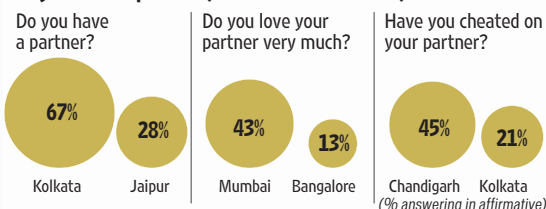
There were some positive takeaways from the survey too. The number of youngsters who believe homosexuality is an acceptable sexual preference stands at 43%, up from 37% last year.

"Your sexuality is your personal choice. Nobody should be allowed to dictate whom you should love and why. Law and society needs to be changed to accommodate a very large percentage of people who are forced to live in the closet," says Yukti Arora, an 18-year-old Delhi University student.

LIVE THE GOOD LIFE, MINUS THE RULES

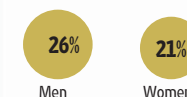
DRIVEN BY HORMONES

City-wise comparison (maximum & minimum)

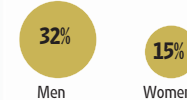


SEX AND THE COUNTRY: SLEEPLESS IN INDIA

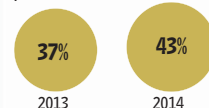
Sex toys be made available in India



Watching pornography isn't a big taboo any more. C'mon, we are in 2014!

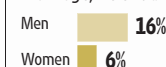


Homosexuality is an acceptable sexual preference now

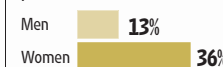


MARRIAGE: STILL TIED IN KNOTS!

If a man has casual sex outside marriage, he should be forgiven



If a man strays, he should let his partner too to do the same



Even if the marriage is not working out, divorce is still not an option



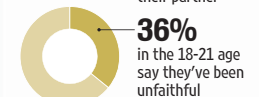
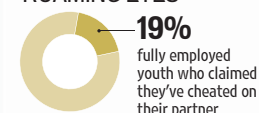
Pre-marital sex is no longer a big issue in India



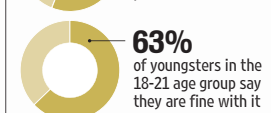
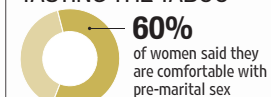
Expect partner to be a virgin



ROAMING EYES



TASTING THE TABOO



METHODOLOGY: The survey was carried out among 5,214 urban youth in the 18-25 age group in 15 cities across India — Delhi, Lucknow, Jaipur, and Chandigarh in the north, Kolkata, Patna, Ranchi in the East, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune and Indore in the West, and Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi in the South



DIVORCE IS NOT AN OPTION EVEN IF YOUR MARRIAGE IS NOT WORKING. THERE ARE PROBLEMS IN EVERY RELATIONSHIP. YOU CANNOT SIMPLY RUN AWAY FROM THEM ALL. JUST MAKE IT WORK

AARUSHI DHUNNA, 21, student



INDIA'S MIDDLE CLASS IS VERY PROUD OF ITS MORAL VALUES. YOU MAY SEE A KAREENA KAPOOR MARRYING AN ALREADY-MARRIED SAIF. SUCH THINGS ARE VERY RARE IN AN OTHERWISE NORMAL WORLD

VIDHI ARORA, 21, student

'Living-in, but don't want parents to know about it'

We would like to believe India is changing. Live-in relationships have become passe and even courts have passed some progressive judgments on the issue. And homosexuality is slowly but steadily also finding acceptance. Look at the numbers — while only 37% thought it was an acceptable sexual preference last year, the number stands at 43% this year. The change, however, is obvious only in a small-but-growing demographic of youngsters, and mostly

43%
HOMOSEXUALITY IS AN ACCEPTABLE SEXUAL PREFERENCE

in the cities. "I know that after some initial misgivings, most in my peer group will eventually accept my sexuality. It stops there, however. I just don't have the guts to go home and tell my family. I have relatives who happily poke fun at gays. You think they will accept me?" asks Syed Z, 21. It's the same for live-ins too. "I live with my girlfriend in Delhi. We intend to marry without letting our parents know that we ever lived together," says Kaushal T, 24.

moreonweb

For full data, blogs, voices, video features, last year's results and to take our opinion poll, log on to: www.hindustantimes.com/youthsurvey2014

TOMORROW YOUTH AND CONSUMERISM

Consumption is no more a simple act of purchase, it's a big identity marker

Rooted to traditions, casual sex remains a no-no

They may have been brought up on a diet of Americanisms, but scratch the surface and you'll realise that India's youth still hangs on to the traditional values hard-wired in their DNA. The biggest of them all: expecting your partner to be a virgin at the time of marriage. The young may be comfortable with a fling or two before they tie the knot, but marriage is still a sacred institution. "Relationships are transitional. There is no social sanction

63%
WANT TO GET MARRIED ONLY TO VIRGINS

needed to get into one or leave it," says 23-year-old Pramod Rane from Mumbai. Agrees Delhi's Zeeshan Siddiqui, 25: "Our marriages will always be between two families. I have also had relationships, but once I get married, it will be for keeps." That, perhaps, explains why casual sex outside marriage is still a taboo. About 89% believe men who stray should not be forgiven. Only 36% women feel cheating should be reciprocated with cheating.

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YOUTH SURVEY 2014



YOUTH & CONSUMERISM



The young materialists

AN EXCLUSIVE HT-MaRS POLL Generation Next succumbs to and denies brand obsession in the same breath. But what everyone loves is a 'good deal'

2,624

Average total monthly pocket expenses of youth in Ahmedabad. A youngster in Delhi, in comparison, spent ₹2,277, while one in Kolkata spent only ₹1,439

32%

Women said they are always on the lookout for bargains while making their shopping decisions. Men, too, aren't too far behind on this. 30% of them said they're always looking for a cheap deal

61%

Women beat men respondents on this one too, but only marginally. While 61% of them said they'd want to be rich enough to buy anything they want, 57% of men said they wish they had enough money to indulge themselves



ILLUSTRATION: MALAY KARMAKAR / RAJ K RAJ / SOUMYA KHANDELWAL

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Young Indians want it all but they are unsure how much is too much. Fifty-nine percent of India's youth would like to be "rich enough" but accept that they (31%) need to be on the lookout for bargains. Among full-time students, 47% like high-fashion brands, three percent more than last year, but "dressing well"—48% in 2014 as compared to 51% in 2013—seems less a priority. The HT-MaRS Youth Survey, in its fourth year, has thrown up dichotomies and pulls that India's youth experience whenever they turn consumer and in which consumption seems to have emerged as a big marker of identity rather than a simple act of purchase.

Chetan Talwar, a 20-year-old college-goer from Delhi, for example, describes himself as a "Puma person". He calls attention to his sensible choices as a shopper. Because he has a Puma shoe, and they are "cheap and durable", he has a wallet and bag from Puma as well. He denies brand obsession but makes a point about the nature of his spending habits: "For a good bargain, I'm willing to turn consumerist. In my book, that's not being consumerist, it's about being practical."

In other words—he may need one shirt but he might buy three if it's a good deal. According to a KPMG survey, on what drives first-time consumers' purchasing decisions, India's youth has been characterised as "highly experimental", especially with regard to food, media and personal care. Its youth psychography reveals a high percentage of impulse purchase "reflective of high pent-up of demand and aspirations" combined with the practicality of relying on word-of-mouth publicity.

Santosh Desai, CEO and MD, Futurebrands India, says India's youth has started to see the self as an asset making the move from a collective past into a personal present. "It's no more about being from a good family, it's now about who I am. You are more likely to say I am an IT student or I am a student of animation, than say I come from a family of doctors' or I belong to a family of

IAS officers.' And the instrumental part of that identity is the body or activities around it. And the body is malleable, it can be given shape to, it's about controlling your destiny, putting your best foot forward," he says. And for that the youth are willing to pay the price. Mumbai's youth (70%) admits to making unaffordable purchases, followed by Chandigarh (64.9%).

Ruchi Pandey, 20, a Chandigarh student, says her luxuries—₹10,000-shoes, ₹17,000 gym membership—come partly from her earnings as an event manager on a freelance basis, and partly from her parents.

"If I say I've earned ₹7,000, now give me ₹3,000 for the shoe, that goes down better with my parents," she says. "I've to look good, I have to give something. Nothing comes for free."

In 2014, out of a total monthly spend of ₹2,014, on an average, India's youth spend ₹385 on personal grooming, up by nearly 39% from last year. This category tops other expenses such as going to coffee shops (₹258 on an average) and to the movies (₹355 on an average) and on other personal expenses (₹631).

Mobile expenses, however, remain high and seem to be rising with each passing year—₹318 (approx) in 2012, ₹348 (approx) in 2013 and ₹435 (approx) in 2014. What is interesting, though, is that there has been a dip in the percentage of India's youth that thinks it is important to own the latest gadgets. The survey says it's approximately 40% as compared to 42% for both genders in 2013.

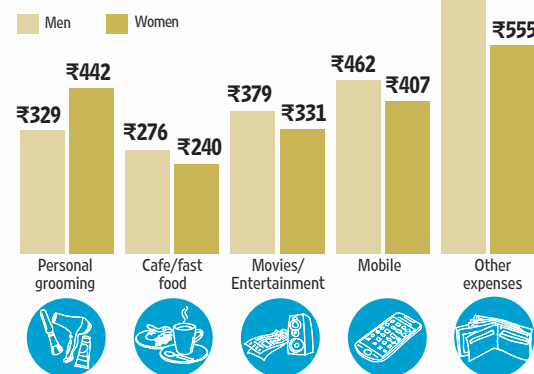
Malls and coffee shops also grab a large part of the monthly spend with 46% of Ranchi's youth (the highest among the cities surveyed) willing to visit a coffee outlet even without company.

At 51%, Delhi tops the survey among youngsters who visit coffee places with friends of the opposite sex. Desai says this has more to do with the lack of public spaces for young people and less to do with coffee. "In India, where spaces are coded, if you're seen in a coffee shop, it's not the end of the world," says Desai. "You get intimacy, but distance. A coffee shop is private and public." And all these meanings are understood by India's cautious young consumers for what they are.

RUPEE SAVED IS RUPEE WELL-EARNED

GROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

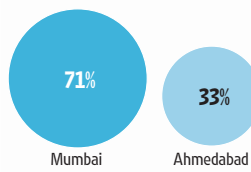
Indian youth spends most on personal grooming and mobiles



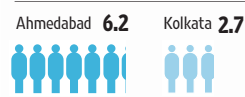
(Figures represent average monthly spend)

FROM THE AISLES

City-wise break-up (Maximum/minimum)



Made an unaffordable purchase in the last one year



Number of denim trousers they have currently (men respondents only, average figures)



Number of denims purchased this year



Number of cosmetic brands used (women respondents only, average figures)



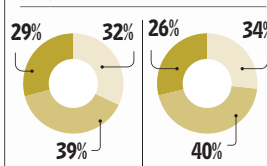
Number of cosmetic brands purchased this year

CHAT, COFFEE AND COMPANY

Pune/Bangalore 4.1 Ranchi/Patna 1.8



Average number of café visits in a month



When company matters in café

A BRANDED GENERATION

Men 57% Women 61%

Want to be rich enough to buy any brand they want

Men 42% Women 46%

Love high fashion brands

Students 44% Part-time students 31% Employed 34%

Agree it is important to flaunt latest gadget to be cool

METHODOLOGY: The survey was carried out among 5,214 urban youth in the 18-25 age group in 15 cities across India—Delhi, Lucknow, Jaipur, and Chandigarh in the north, Kolkata, Patna, Ranchi in the East, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune and Indore in the West, and Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi in the South.



I LIKE GOING TO MALLS, SITTING AT FOOD COURTS, AND LOOKING AROUND FOR STUFF. IF I LIKE SOMETHING, AND THEY DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TO BE EXPENSIVE BUYS, I JUST HAVE TO GET IT. I CAN BE QUITE RESOURCEFUL

ISHA BAND, 22, post-graduate student



MY MONTHLY EXPENSES ARE WITHIN ₹4,000. FOR A STUDENT, RECESSION MEANS NOTHING. I DO OFTEN GO TO A COFFEE SHOP, SOMETIMES EVERY ALTERNATE DAY. I'M NOT THAT MUCH INTO GADGETS

CHETAN TALWAR, 20, student

In the cities, coffee scores for all reasons

India's youth loves coffee and likes spending time in coffee shops for varied reasons. "Cute boys go to coffee shops, and perhaps they come to coffee shops for the same reason," says Ishita, a student from Mumbai. The average amount spent on coffee and fast food has increased from ₹208 per month in 2013 to ₹258 in 2014. A 2011 report by the New Delhi-based research and consultancy firm Technopak Advisors revealed that there are more than 1,500

36%
VISITED A COFFEE SHOP WITH A FRIEND OF OPPOSITE SEX

cafés in India. Young people in most Indian cities are coffee drinkers. On average, young people in Bangalore and Pune visited coffee shops 4.1 times in the past month. They are followed by Cochin (3.4) and Mumbai (2.8). Delhi's youth have visited a cafe with a friend of opposite sex the most. For girls, a coffee shop is where they catch up with their female friends (30% as compared to 26% for males) and with the opposite sex (42% as compared to 36%) of their time.



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TOMORROW YOUTH AND SOCIAL MEDIA
India's young isn't ready for in-person interactions in the real world

Living it up in style in India's small towns

Small doesn't mean dull. Life's looking up in cities that are not traditionally considered metropolises and its inhabitants have the money to afford a socially active lifestyle. Ahmedabad's youth have the highest (₹2,624) monthly spend followed by Chandigarh (₹2,499); Pune's youth spends more (₹2,301) than Chennai's (₹2,075). Lucknow's (₹1,933) young generation spend more than their counterparts in big-city Bangalore (₹1,616) and Kolkata (₹1,439).

48%
SAY IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP UP WITH LATEST TRENDS

Mumbai's youth scores, the highest (70.6%) in making unaffordable purchases and the lowest is in Ahmedabad (33.1%). In comparison, last year, Delhi's youth scored 66% in this category, and this year, the percentage is down to 56.3%. Says Santosh Desai, "They have a certain sense of freedom and enough economic activity to generate a sense of surplus. Easy navigability plus growth in the entertainment and hospitality segments make them boom towns."

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YOUTH SURVEY 2014



YOUTH AND
SOCIAL MEDIA



Addicted to virtual likes

AN EXCLUSIVE HT-MaRS POLL In-person interactions are passé, and the young are just an imaginary version of who they are. But nobody's ready yet to unplug to connect

88%

In Jaipur said social media has had no impact on their love life. Compare this to Chandigarh's youngsters: 57% here said networking has helped their relationships. Only 4% in the city said it has hurt them

4.2

The average number of days fully-employed youngsters spend without accessing any network. Ranchi's youth score the most on this count: they said they can stay without virtual connection for an average of 3.8 days

91%

Youngsters in part-time jobs who said Whatsapp was their most-preferred application to keep in touch with friends. In comparison, only 77% of women use it to keep in touch with their friends



ILLUSTRATION: MALAY KARMAKAR / RAJ K RAJ / SOUMYA KHANDELWAL

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If you thought the digital divide between India's big cities and tier-II towns is increasing, think again. Figures of the fourth edition of the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2014 suggests it couldn't have been any narrower: six out of 10 youngsters in the 14 cities the poll was conducted said they are either very active, or have a profile, on one or more social networking site. Fifty-seven percent of the more than 5,000 respondents said they access at least one networking site every day, and look for anything from friendship and love to news and jobs. Last year, this figure stood at just 46%.

There's more. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram, figures suggest, are the most popular with youngsters in India, where a mobile telephony boom has helped register an impressive rise in Internet penetration. Given that by 2016, India will have at least 350 million Internet users, and about 75% of them will go online using mobile devices, the figures are only a reiteration of the shape of things to come.

But then, this is where conventional wisdom goes wrong. For all those of you who thought India's young access these sites only to stay connected with friends, and girlfriends, here's some food for thought: 42% of the respondents in the 22-25 age group claimed politics was their most tweeted topic, followed by sports, current affairs, friends and movies.

For most, it's not just a medium that helps them stay connected but also one that offers a platform for free exchange of ideas and thoughts, and even a private space away from the prying eyes of parents and relatives. "More and more, people like consuming content the way they do on their Facebook newsfeeds or Twitter timelines," says BuzzFeed India editor Rega Jha.

In terms of the most number of users, however, the survey didn't throw any surprising insights: technology hub Bangalore, as expected, topped the list, with Pune coming a close second.

Politics apart, there is no denying the fact that this is

also the age of drunken status updates, unwanted photo-tags and check-ins of the most mundane kind, and the young is milking the possibilities to their advantage. Surprisingly, only 30% said social media helped their love life. But there are exceptions. "I know a lot of people who've found their partners through twitter. It's no big deal today. You interact, you meet. You meet often. You click. You fall. And boom!" says Pankaj Sinha an engineer with close to 16,000 followers to his Twitter handle @AskThePankazzz.

But, for the Indian youth, networking isn't all about play and no work. The survey revealed that an increasing number of them are using it for professional networking and to find jobs. Says popular stand-up comedian Sahil Shah, referring to Twitter where his funny tweets draw newer audiences, "As a comedian, I can say it has (proved to be a boon) because it's the best way to reach newer people and convince them to come for my shows."

Not everyone, though, is enamoured with the medium's so-called infinite reach. Rocky Singh, anchor of popular TV series Highway on My Plate (HOMP), says social media did not have any significant impact on the TV series, although it did help them connect with food lovers.

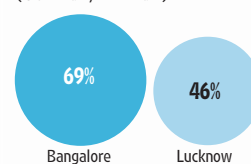
So what is driving this tool in India? With some 900 million cellphone connections, India is the second-largest mobile market in the world after China. And for millions of Indians, cheap smartphones are becoming their first Internet-connected device, offering the convenience and affordability required to stay connected. Close to 60% users who participated in the survey say they access social media through the mobiles.

When it comes to the choice between WhatsApp, Instagram and Snap Chat, WhatsApp emerges the clear winner with 82% responders using the application on their mobiles. The survey further revealed that men were more active on mobile phones than women, in contrast to worldwide trends. "In India there is a sad state of affairs when it comes to (empowerment) of women," says Sapra. "Besides, we are a scared country when it comes to women."

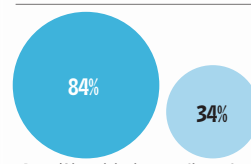
NO MORE THAN JUST THOUGHT BUBBLES

THE LINKED-IN GENERATION

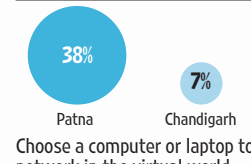
City-wise break-up (Maximum/minimum)



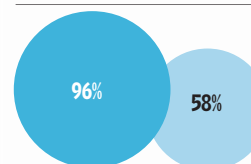
Access social media network every day



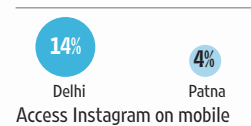
Prefer mobiles to log on to networking sites



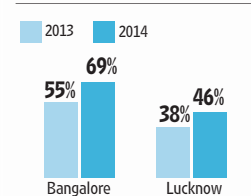
Choose a computer or laptop to network in the virtual world



Say Whatsapp's the best to keep in touch with friends



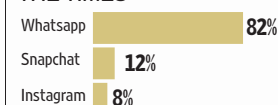
Access Instagram on mobile



Virtual reality: How networking habits have changed since 2013

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IN TOUCH WITH THE TIMES



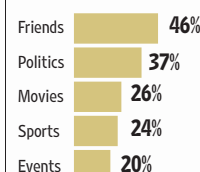
The apps most employed youngsters use on mobile

CATCHING UP WITH 'CLOUD' FRIENDSHIPS

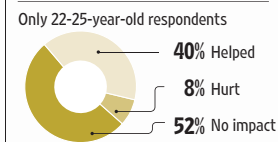
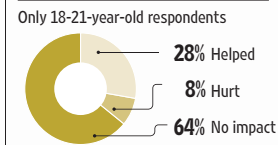
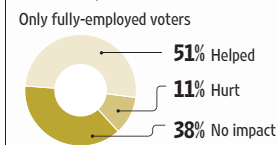
- 33** Average number of new 'connections' men made since last year
- 14** The number personally met or spoken over the phone
- 10** Who can be called 'friends' from those met personally
- 26** The average number of connections young women made since 2013
- 10** The number personally met or spoken over the phone
- 5** Who can be called 'friends' from among those met personally

HAIL THE ARM-CHAIR COMMENTATOR

Most tweeted topics



VIRTUAL LOVE: NEITHER BOOST, NOR BANE



High PC sales, low time on social media down South

Call it the great divide between the south and the rest of the country. The survey suggests that use of mobiles and the time spent on social media remains markedly low.

"It's probably because they don't substitute social media with daily routines," says Amaresh Namburi, 28, an engineer residing in Bangalore. The three Southern Indian towns that were part of the survey — Bangalore, Chennai and Cochin — figured in the bottom five in terms of the use of

34%
FROM CHENNAI WHO ACCESS SOCIAL MEDIA ON A MOBILE PHONE

WhatsApp, the most popular message application according to the survey.

Interestingly, personal computer sales are the maximum in South India.

Moreover, youngsters there may access social media every day, may not even be able to stay away from it for too many days, but they don't spend a lot of time on it.

"They value their real friends more than the virtual ones," says Namburi.



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TOMORROW YOUTH AND TRADITION

India's young is reinterpreting traditional truths. But at what cost?

The bait: Getting hooked to the viral phenomenon

What happens when youth become hyper-social? #AddictionMax. The survey suggests most youngsters will get restless within three days of not being able to access social media. So, what is it that's keeping the youngsters hooked these days? Take a look at the three things viral right now:

37%
SAY THEY TWEET ON POLITICS. ELSE IT'S ALL ABOUT FRIENDS

Pretentious Movie Reviews: Ever watched an Indian movie and thought "what the hell?". Yep, these guys do. Watch Kanan Gill and Kalyan Rath as they review movies that shouldn't have been made.

Buzzfeed: From How Things Happen #AccordingToIndians to Domino's Banana Pizza, you can spend the whole day on Buzzfeed and never get bored.

'Movie ruiner' Imaan Sheikh: Cult classics like Hum Saath Saath Hain and Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge reviewed with hilarious GIFs and witty write-ups that would never forget. Need we say more?



I JOINED TWITTER BECAUSE SOMEONE ACTUALLY FORCED ME TO AS I'M SUPPOSEDLY WITTY. I AM GLAD I DID. IT INTRODUCED THE INTERNET TO ME IN A WAY I COULDN'T HAVE IMAGINED. I AM TOTALLY HOOKED TO IT NOW

PATHIKRIT SANJAL, 23,
Client servicing executive



SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BECOME A FORM OF GAINING ACCEPTANCE FROM THE MASSES WHO ARE COMPLETELY RUTHLESS IN THEIR PROSECUTION WITHOUT ANY CREDIBILITY

SHASHAN ANGIRA, 23, Student

htspecial
YOUTH SURVEY 2014



YOUTH AND TRADITION



New figures of speech

AN EXCLUSIVE HT-MaRS POLL Questioning stereotypes comes easy to the young. They're even reinterpreting God in a whole new way

90%

in the 18-21 age group said they want to get married in a traditional way, complete with all the rituals and ceremonies, rather than go to a court to formalise it. The numbers are almost similar among men and women, 85% and 92% respectively

38%

said they would call off a marriage if dowry is involved. Chennai's respondents scored the most on this count: 71% in the city said they won't go ahead with it. Indore (22%), Chandigarh (25%) and Patna (28%) populate the bottom half on this

70%

of the total respondents said one should never smoke in front of elders. The need to maintain strong family bonds (79%) and always listening to elders (68%) too got a thumbs up from India's youngsters



ILLUSTRATION: MALAY KARMAKAR / RAJ K RAJ / SAUMYA KHANDELWAL

Poulomi Banerjee

poulomi.banerjee@hindustantimes.com

There's something about traditions that makes it as disturbing as compelling. The more obscure its origin, the more does the society cling to it. Some fade out with the passage of time, to be replaced by fresh ones, and some (often the ones that should have died an early death... the dowry system, for example), need long years of protest, social awakening and legislation to put them to rest.

"I think the most important Indian tradition, one that finds mention even in our scriptures, but forgotten for many years, is that of questioning and rebellion. Our scriptures encourage us to question everything, even God. In the last few years the youth have been trying to revive this tradition. For example, it is a good tradition to respect our elders. But if you find elders disrespecting women, it is important to question and stop them," explains Amish Tripathi, writer of the best-selling Shiva trilogy.

The tradition of rebellion wasn't part of the list of traditions the youth (those in the age group of 18 to 25 years) were quizzed about in the fourth edition of the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2014, conducted across 15 states. But relationships, family values, spirituality and relevance of a few old Indian traditions were. Their relationship with God continued to be important to India's young, with 56% of the respondents claiming they pray regularly. The percentage was higher among the female respondents, with 60% of them saying they believe in the power of prayer: "I believe in a higher power, but don't feel the need to give in to elaborate rituals. I think many youngsters today are interpreting God in their way," says young writer, Durjoy Datta.

For many, spiritual well-being is balanced with the faith in traditional methods of ensuring physical well-being, with 47% of them saying they do power yoga to keep fit.

However, the faith in God doesn't extend to a dependency on astrological intervention to help fulfil one's aspirations, with only 35% admitting to believing in it strongly. The reason might also be a lack of faith on the astrologer than on the system itself. "Everybody knows there is a science

there, but they also know that it is difficult to find a good astrologer these days," agrees Amish.

India is known for traditions such as treating guests as gods, the joint family system, listening to elders and not smoking in front of them. Datta feels, however, that these have to do more with the kind of person you are than being symbolic of any one culture. "Traditions such as respecting your elders have to do more with being a nice person. No culture in the world would tell you to not respect them," he points out.

And while Yash Raj and Karan Johar romcoms continue to pull crowds to the theatres, when it comes to taking the plunge in real life, traditions continue to win over romance. Forty per cent of the respondents said they would marry the person chosen by their parents, without any questions, while only 4% said they would marry a person they have chosen themselves, even if their parents objected to him/her.

What's shocking is that only 38% of respondents (37% male and 39% female), said they would break the marriage if dowry was involved. Sixty-one per cent of female respondents believed working men and women should divide the housework, as compared to 35% male respondents. "Many of my readers are from among the youth and I find that there is not much of a difference in attitude between men and women. However, girls have moved a lot further in their emancipation journey and many Indian men have not been able to keep pace," says Amish. In some areas, however, such as a woman's responsibility in keeping the relationship working, women need to give themselves an easier time. Seventy-nine per cent of female respondents said women should try to save the marriage before divorce.

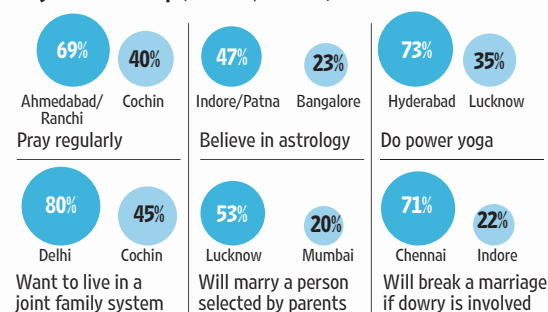
Sixty-two per cent believed many Indian traditions need to be preserved. "One Indian tradition that had been lost during the British and post-British era is that of studying our ancient past. We must study our Vedic heritage. It will be good for youngsters to do that today," says Amish.

At a time when the distance between regions and cultures are shrinking, thanks to the world wide web, it is important to keep one's identity, without closing oneself to what is good in others.

LOOKING AT THE OLD, WITH A NEW TWIST

IT'S COOL TO BE TRADITIONAL

City-wise break-up (maximum/minimum)



A KNOTTY AFFAIR

Will marry a person

Selected by parents
without question



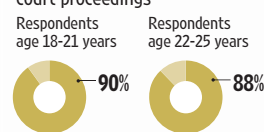
Selected by self, with no
objection from your parents



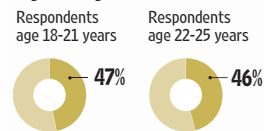
Selected by self, even if
parents object



Prefer religious rituals over
court proceedings



Want several ceremonies dur-
ing marriage celebrations



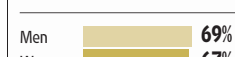
Will walk out of a marriage if
dowry is involved



ROOTED TO TRADITION

Men 77%
Women 83%

Build strong family bonds



Always listen to elders



Never smoke in front of elders

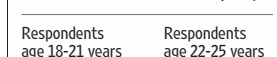
THE MAN-WOMAN DIVIDE

Men 56%
Women 79%

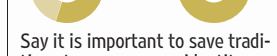
Say women should save marriage
even if divorce is the only option



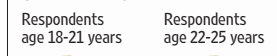
Agree that a married couple must
divide household chores equally



Say it is important to save tradi-
tions to preserve our identity



ON A WING AND A PRAYER



Pray regularly

METHODOLOGY: The survey was carried out among 5,214 urban youth in the 18-25 age group in 15 cities across India — Delhi, Lucknow, Jaipur, and Chandigarh in the north, Kolkata, Patna, Ranchi in the East, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune and Indore in the West, and Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi in the South.



WE NEED TO DO AWAY WITH REGRESSIVE TRADITIONS LIKE DOWRY SYSTEM. OUR NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS REMARRIAGE FOR THE OLDER PEOPLE TOO MUST CHANGE. MEN AND WOMEN SHOULD HAVE EQUAL FREEDOM TO FIND THEIR OWN PARTNERS

MUDIT SOOD, 22, law student



I COME FROM A LIBERAL FAMILY. HOWEVER, CERTAIN THINGS SUCH AS BEING CLOSE TO THE FAMILY ARE INGRAINED IN ME. ALSO, I PREFER SOME TRADITIONS SUCH AS THE INDIAN NAMASTE TO A HANDSHAKE.

MADHURIMA CHAUDHURI, 21 student

Meet Gen Y: Family-oriented, obedient and god-fearing

Some traditions catch up with age, and others lose relevance with the passage of time. In the total sample group of 18-25 years, there is a marked difference in the responses of those in the age group of 18 to 21 years, when compared to the beliefs of those in the 22 to 25-year-old category.

While only 28% of those in the age group of 18 to 21 years professed a strong belief in astrology, the percentage in the 22 to 25 years category was as high as

41%. Similarly, while 56% of those in the 18 to 21 age group believe that many Indian traditions need to be preserved, 70% of respondents in the 22 to 25 age group replied in the affirmative to the same question. However, the dependence on families and giving in to elders was visible more in the younger lot. "This could be because attitudes change faster today and a generation gap is visible within three to five years," feels writer Amish Tripathi.

63%

MEN AGREE IT'S BAD MANNERS TO SMOKE IN FRONT OF ELDERS



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TOMORROW YOUTH AND POLITICS

For India's young, content matters more than age or background

Being traditional no longer a small town prerogative

Are the youth in small towns more traditional in their thinking? Not really. While Ranchi and Ahmedabad had the most number of respondents who say they pray regularly (69%), Delhi comes a close second with 67%. The capital also had the highest number of respondents who preferred a joint family set up — 80.3% — and the second highest number of those who said they would marry a person selected by their parents without any questions (52%). Ninety-four

94%

PREFER RELIGIOUS RITUALS OVER COURT MARRIAGE IN DELHI

per cent of respondents in Delhi (the third highest) and 98% in Kolkata (the second highest) said they would prefer religious rituals over a court marriage. Hyderabad was at the top here with 99%. "The difference in attitudes is not so much between metros and small towns now, as between the anglicized-elite section of the big cities and all the others. Those outside that anglicized-elite circle in cities have the same values as those in small towns," says Tripathi.

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YOUTH SURVEY 2014



YOUTH AND POLITICS



The age of game changers

AN EXCLUSIVE HT-MaRS POLL An increasingly engaged young is leading the call for change in India. Content, not surprisingly, matters more to them than age or lineage

83%

voted for BJP in the elections earlier this year primarily because of Narendra Modi. Sixty-six percent of the sample size chose the party, compared to the 16% who reposed their faith in the Congress. Of those who voted for Congress, only 36% said they were influenced by Rahul Gandhi, and another 44% said they voted for the party

71%

respondents from Hyderabad said they didn't vote because they 'didn't feel like, or felt lazy'. With 56%, Kolkata's youngsters, too, weren't too far behind. In Chennai, 27% said they didn't exercise their franchise because no candidate was 'worth voting for'

25%

of those who voted for BJP said they sided with the party because they were attracted by Gujarat's development model. Another 28% said they were influenced by the promise of good governance



ILLUSTRATION: MALAY KARMAKAR / RAJ K RAJ / SOUMYA KHANDELWAL

Danish Raza
danish.raza@hindustantimes.com

In the end, the groundswell of anger was too evident and pronounced to be missed. The general elections earlier this year marked another moment in India's history: a rare awakening among the young to stop despairing at the way their country is being run, and lead the change. Disenchanted, but no less engaged, India's young ensured their presence was noticed, and their voice heard.

No wonder then that Prime Minister Narendra Modi struck a chord with India's young, dwarfing Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi, in the popularity sweepstakes of the fourth HT-MaRS Youth Survey, conducted over 15 cities among more than 5,000 respondents in the 18-25-year age group. The 63-year-old PM was voted the most inspirational political figure by 65% of the respondents. In contrast, only 22% found the 44-year-old Gandhi inspiring. Gujarat's largest city Ahmedabad (96%), Pune (90%) and Chandigarh (88%) turned impressive figures for the PM.

Says political analyst Jai Mrug, "It marks the dawn of a mature democracy in India where content matters more than age and background. It is difficult for someone to get elected in India just because the person belongs to a particular political party."

Sanjay Kumar, director of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, says Gandhi's is a case of right person in the wrong party. "He is young and has new ideas. But whatever advantage he had was overshadowed by the party's performance," he said.

"A young political leader like him may be an attraction for the youth, but that's not the sole deciding factor when it comes to voting. Factors such as party, issues, castes, too, play a crucial role," he added.

That India's young took an active part in this year's elections is clear from the numbers of those who voted: 70% of the total sample size confirmed they exercised their franchise, with both men (68%) and women (71%) returning very impressive figures. The numbers from individual cities were unusually high: Jaipur recorded a

high 86%, while Kolkata and Patna recorded 83%. There was, however, a marginal dip in the 18-21 age group in which only 59% said they exercised their franchise in these elections.

First timers in the sample size, however, didn't make a big majority: only 57% said they took part in the exercise for the first time this year. The cities, however, turned more promising numbers: Bangalore (76%) and Ranchi (74%) were among the top cities.

The anti-corruption demonstrations of 2011 and the street protests of 2013 demanding strict laws to curb violence against women are prime examples of how this class, once considered disinterested and ignorant, is becoming an active participant in issues of national interest and politics.

The survey reveals that youngsters who voted the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to power were attracted more by Modi than his party. Among those who voted for the BJP and the saffron party's allies, 83% said they did so primarily for Modi. Only a small percentage of 8% said they voted primarily for the party.

The scenario reverses in the case of the Congress. Among those who voted for the Congress and its allies, 44% said they did so primarily for the party and 36% primarily for Gandhi.

Modi's march to the top post came despite rumbles within the BJP following his anointment as the party's prime ministerial candidate in September last year and sections of civil society opposing the move over the 2002 post-Godhra riots in his home state Gujarat.

"The BJP's victory was powered by Modi. He was the prime catalyst. It defies the theory that the party's image or organisational capacity matter in its victory," says Mrug.

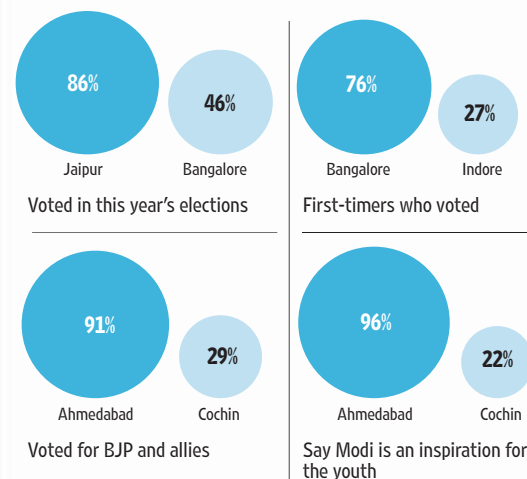
All through his election campaign, Modi used various platforms including social media to publicise the Gujarat model of development coupled with the promise of good governance.

The two points made a significant contribution to the BJP's victory, as 47% of respondents said they got attracted by the combination.

SETTING THE AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

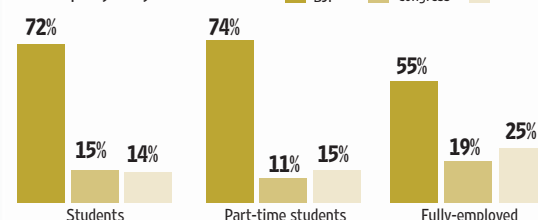
NUMBERS TELL THE TALE

City-wise break-up (maximum/minimum)

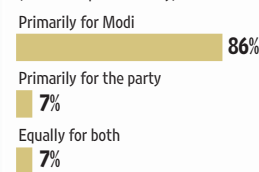


FREEDOM OF THE FRANCHISE

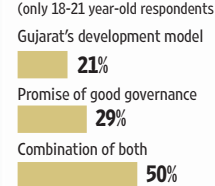
Which party did you vote for?



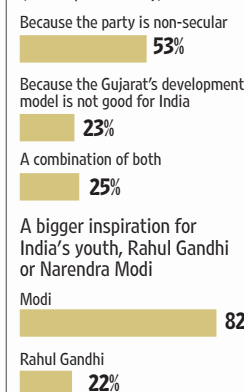
Voted for the BJP (women respondents only)



Attracted to the party because of (only 18-21 year-old respondents)



Didn't vote for BJP (men respondents only)



METHODOLOGY: The survey was carried out among 5,214 urban youth in the 18-25 age group in 15 cities across India — Delhi, Lucknow, Jaipur, and Chandigarh in the north, Kolkata, Patna, Ranchi in the East, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune and Indore in the West, and Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi in the South.



RATHER THAN BLAMING POLITICAL PARTIES OR GOVERNMENTS FOR OUR PROBLEMS, THE YOUTH NEEDS TO INTROSPECT ON HOW THEY CAN BRING ABOUT CHANGE IN THE COUNTRY. WE CANNOT STAY INSULATED FROM EVERYTHING ANY LONGER

PRIYANKA VAID, 24, civil services aspirant



ONE SHOULDN'T BE RIGID WHEN IT COMES TO BACKING A POLITICAL PARTY. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS NOT TO BE SWAYED BY THEIR IDEOLOGIES. INSTEAD, APPRECIATE GOOD PRACTICES IN VARIOUS PARTIES

VINAY SHASHIDHAR, 25, researcher



On a high, with support from the young brigade

The Bharatiya Janta Party's march to power at the Centre was aided, in large measure, by the fact that it managed to strike a chord with India's young electorate. Sixty-six percent of

the sample size voted for the party and its allies, while only 16% opted for the Congress. Ahmedabad, not surprisingly, turned the biggest score for the party with 91% youngsters say it was their party of choice. Chandigarh (84%), Jaipur and Lucknow (both 82%), Ranchi

66%

NARENDRA MODI IS AN INSPIRATION FOR THE YOUNG

(81%) too turned big numbers.

The Congress, in comparison, fared pretty badly in these cities. Only 7% voted for them in Ahmedabad, and Chandigarh, Jaipur, Lucknow and Ranchi returned equally dismal figures for the party with 4%, 13%, 6% and 6% respectively.

Forty-six per cent of those who did not vote for the party said they didn't find BJP secular and another 26% thought the Gujarat model wasn't good for India.



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TOMORROW YOUTH AND ASPIRATION

India's young believes that money can buy them happiness. That's why most start early

Modi a vote puller, Cong bigger draw than Rahul

Despite all the flak he has drawn over his image of a reluctant politician and having failed to turn around the fortune of the Congress, party vice-president Rahul Gandhi remains a favourite among India's young women voters.

Of the 36% who voted primarily for him, 64% were women. The party was also the primary reason for the 44% who voted for the Congress and its allies. However, 63% said the party encouraged corruption and 56% said the UPA

52%

PROGRAMMES SUCH AS MGNREGA SHOULD CONTINUE

those who chose Rahul Gandhi (22%). Says Sanjay Kumar, "Such support base is on expected lines. If we consider the vote base of both the parties among the youth, we find that the Congress gets slightly more votes among young women and the BJP gets votes of young men."

government wasn't efficient.

This is in stark contrast to Modi's pull among voters. Sixty-six percent said he was an inspiration for youth, compared to

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YOUTH SURVEY 2014



YOUTH AND
ASPIRATIONS



Generation dreamweavers

AN EXCLUSIVE HT-MaRS POLL Global or local, for India's young, dreams mean hard work, and an early start is already a step ahead in the game

77%

said they are very happy with their life. In 2012, when we asked the same question, the count stood at 61.5%. The figure is lower, 68%, among fully-employed youngsters in the 18-25 age group

46%

said they are anxious about their future. More than half of the respondents (51%) who are studying and working said they have no idea how their future will shape up. Among fully-employed respondents, only 35% said they are tense about their uncertain future

63%

of fully-employed youngsters feel the country must take steps to ensure their needs, and aspirations, are catered to.

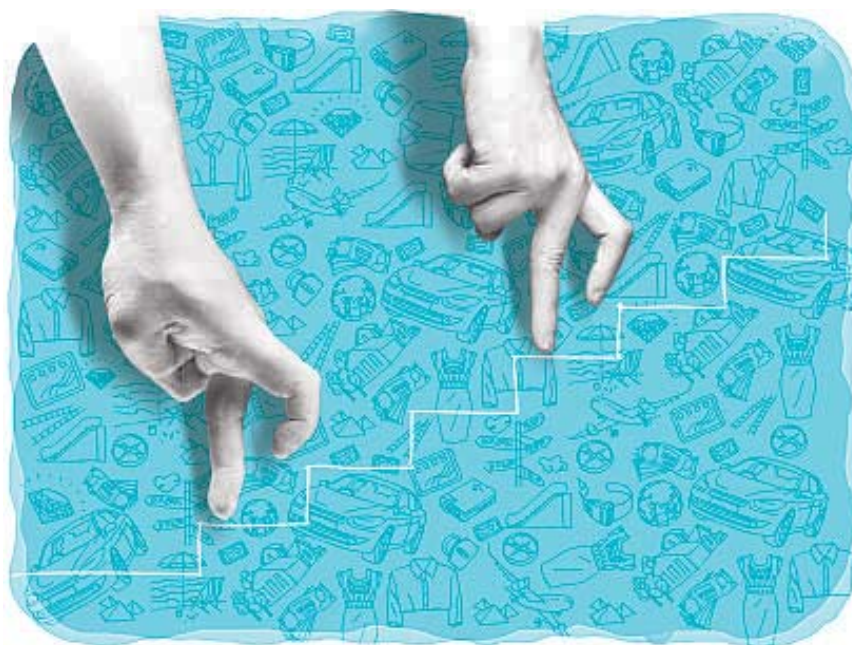


ILLUSTRATION: MALAY KARMAKAR / RAJ K RAJ / SOUMYA KHANDELWAL

Namita Kohli
letters@hindustantimes.com

For today's youth, the burden of aspirations means starting early. Take the case of Navmeeta Roy, all of 21, she is keen to be "financially independent", and a "successful" professional. Roy, who works as a paid intern for a public relations firm, says it's important for her to work hard to achieve her dreams — her own house, a car, and the power to support her family. "I have learnt that money can give you happiness, and I am working towards it. I am enjoying this work; meeting new people, and learning new things," says the Fine Arts graduate.

In an era of rising material and professional expectations, youngsters like Roy feel it's important to focus on building a career, a path that they believe will lead to the realisation of their aspirations — both material and otherwise. Roy, who switched from making a career in fine arts to public relations because "you need to make money too", says she has always been a "focused" individual, unlike some of her friends who are laid-back about their careers.

In general, the youth are a happy bunch, or so the numbers indicate. Seventy-seven percent respondents of the fourth edition of the HT-MaRS Youth Survey, conducted across 15 states with a sample size of over 5,000 youngsters in the 18-25 year age group, said they were happy. But juxtapose this "level of happiness" with what they think their future would be, and 46% confess to being anxious, up from the 2012 figure of 40%. However, a little over 62% said they have high expectations from life. Interestingly, the survey results show that a higher number of women — 49% — are worried about what turn their life will take, and a significantly higher number (69.1%) say they expect a lot from their future as compared to men (55.4%).

This "worry" and expectations from the future then translates into being serious about what professions

they choose — 52.6% agree that they like to plan strategically about their life and career.

Delhi-based sociologist T K Oomen says that while the aspirations always existed in the young, the structure of those aspirations has now changed dramatically. "With the shift in employment options from the government, or the army or even becoming a doctor, to that involving working with multinational corporations, the aspirations of the youth have also shifted. Today, the question is not about being in a good job, but how much more can one get?" he says.

According to Oomen, a shift towards rising — predominantly material — aspirations can be accounted for by the change in material conditions of the youth: bank loans are easily available to buy consumer durables, and high salaries paid by big companies make it possible to afford those loans in the first place.

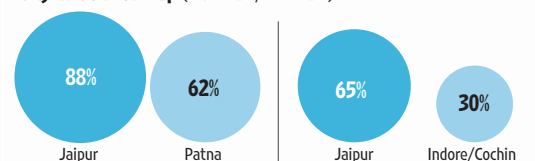
For a media professional like Shivani Bhattacharya, 22, the aspirations may not be predominantly material — at least not at this stage, as she clarifies — but she is still serious about thinking through her options: "At this stage, I am working towards building my career as a writer on development issues. Today, I am working for a media house, but I might consider going for further studies, and explore a career in academics as well."

Pawas Aakrsh, also a Fine Arts graduate currently doing freelance projects, says that he is looking for a job that will fetch him a "good salary" and an opportunity for "creative satisfaction" as well. But Aakrsh, 24, is not limiting himself to a job in India. As an animation and special effects designer, he is considering applying to studios abroad as well. "There are many reputed studios offering this kind of work abroad and I am considering them as well," he says, giving credence to the survey figure of 57.9% of youth who consider themselves "global citizens". Global or local, for the youth, dreams mean hard work, and an early start is already a step ahead in the game.

CHECKING IN TODAY TO CHECK OUT TOMORROW

THEIR CHANGING ASPIRATIONS

City-wise break-up (maximum/minimum)



Say they are very happy with life at the moment

But are worried about their future

PEACE OF MIND



Say 'work hard, party hard' is their life's philosophy



Have very high expectations from their future



Want to get rich very quickly



Say they spend extra time just so that they are stylish

EQUAL STAKEHOLDERS



Feel that if they don't do well, India too would fare badly



Say the country should take care of its youth

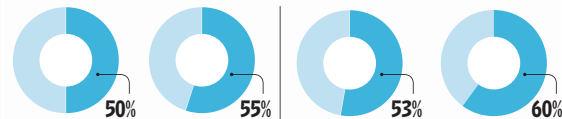


Say they're global citizens



Say they always find a way to achieve what they want in life

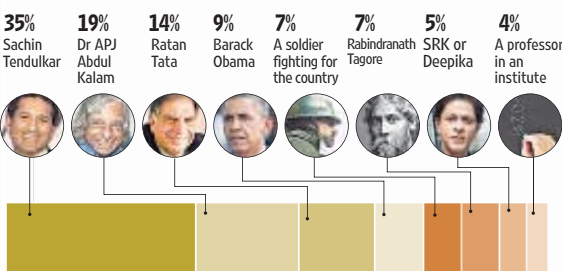
THE FUTURE IS NOW



Say they've strategically planned for life, career and other things

Have integrated all aspects of life: work, family, leisure

WHO INSPIRES YOU THE MOST



METHODOLOGY: The survey was carried out among 5,214 urban youth in the 18-25 age group in 15 cities across India — Delhi, Lucknow, Jaipur, and Chandigarh in the North, Kolkata, Patna, Ranchi in the East, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune and Indore in the West, and Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi in the South.



A STABLE FUTURE, WHERE I HAVE ENOUGH TO ENJOY THE BEST OF LIFE, IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR ME. I KNOW IT'S A TOUGH TASK, BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE IF I PLAY IT SMART. I AM WORKING ON MY TOMORROW, TODAY

KRISHNA SINGH, 21, student



I DON'T REALLY BOTHER ABOUT MONEY. A CAREER IN MEDICINE WILL BE MORE REWARDING FOR ME BECAUSE IT WILL GIVE ME A CHANCE TO HELP THE PEOPLE AROUND ME

ANINDYA SINGH, 23, doctor

Working hard and letting their hair down too...

Chasing their dreams might mean hard work, but it's not an all-work-and-no-play situation for the youth. According to the survey, an overwhelming number of young people — 75.5% — agreed to the work hard, party harder mantra. At least 56.5% agreed that all aspects of life — work, family and leisure — must be integrated. Young people such as Navmeeta Roy and Shivani Bhattacharya feel that while it's important to work hard when they can, taking time out for themselves is also a part of their

56.5%

AGREE THAT WORK, FAMILY AND LEISURE MUST BE BALANCED

lifestyles. "There's a difference between being a workaholic and being passionate about your work. It's important to maintain that work-life balance. I like to spend quality time with my family," says Bhattacharya. Roy says that while her job is interesting, she makes sure there's always time for her true passion — painting. "I am an artist too, and giving time to my passion helps me unwind and keep up with the multitudes of things that I am capable of doing," she says.



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TOMORROW YOUTH AND ICONS

For inspiration, India's young always turns to self-made, middle class icons with a bit of grey in their hair

Women want more, they also worry more!

One interesting gender dynamic revealed in the survey is that more young women are worried about their future than their male counterparts — 49% women as opposed to 44%. The "worry" is also reflected in the higher figure of expectations from the future: 69%, as against 55.4% men have high expectations from life. With higher numbers of young women entering the workforce and aspiring to empower themselves financially, as well as become successful professionals, tra-

49%

GIRLS WORRY ABOUT THEIR FUTURE AS AGAINST 44% BOYS

ditional stereotypes of women are no longer the norm. Today, the likes of Roy, who says she was inspired by her older sister, a journalist, and Bhattacharya, think of themselves as "ambitious" and aspire for professional success, before they can think of marriage and "settling down". "I am not like my friends for many whom marriage is the only future they can imagine. I would rather travel, see the world, and make some money for myself," she says.

htspecial

YOUTH SURVEY 2014



YOUTH AND ICONS



The extraordinary league

AN EXCLUSIVE HT-MaRS POLL The young need not relate only to the young. They turn to self-made icons known for their achievements, maturity and consistency

65%

women voted for Narendra Modi as the biggest icon in Indian politics. Arvind Kejriwal (13%), Sonia Gandhi (10%) and Rahul Gandhi (8%) figured way below in the popularity sweepstakes among women. Jayalalithaa, Mamta Banerjee and Sushma Swaraj got even more dismal numbers

22%

women thought their safety is the biggest issue facing India. Not too many men thought it is a critical issue: only 13% ranked it above corruption and unemployment. Most respondents, across gender, said corruption is the biggest menace India needs to fight

0.9%

men who say Maria Sharapova is the world's biggest sporting icon. Saina Nehwal fared slightly better, with 2.4% men respondents ranking her on top



ILLUSTRATION: MALAY KARMAKAR / RAJ K RAJ / SOUMYA KHANDLWAL

Sanya Panwar

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The young may often scorn and wonder at the old, but when it comes to finding inspiration in life, the youth in India turns to self-made, middle class icons with quite a bit of grey in their hair. Be it politics, sports or cinema — achievement, maturity and consistency are qualities as valued as any in a youth role model, belying the notion that young relate only to young, reveals the fourth edition of the HT-MaRS Youth Survey, conducted among over 5,000 respondents in 15 Indian cities. Little wonder then that Narendra Modi, Amitabh Bachchan and Sachin Tendulkar are the top icons for India's young, even though the average age of this eclectic group is a little over 58 years.

The competition was much, much younger — from Rahul Gandhi, who is relatively youthful among India's grandfatherly politicians, to a lively and fresh Virat Kohli — but perhaps they will have to wait a few more years for their turn at inspiring the Indian youth.

On the popularity stakes where politicians are routinely outclassed by sportspeople and cinema stars, Prime Minister Modi is a pleasant exception. His legions of followers on social sites, his natty sense of fashion and an inventive air of hope around him make Modi a youth icon in a country where more than 65% of the population is under the age of 35.

The third most popular world leader on Twitter after US President Barack Obama and the Pope with 5.5 million followers and almost 20 million 'likes' on Facebook, Modi bagged 57% vote as the biggest icon in Indian politics, a first time entry on the list. Arvind Kejriwal came a distant second with 13%, followed by Congress president Sonia Gandhi (11%) and her son, Rahul, with just 8% of the votes. Former PM Manmohan Singh bagged a dismal 0.3% of the votes. Regional biggies Nitish Kumar, Jayalalithaa, Mamata Banerjee and current foreign minister Sushma Swaraj — all got between 1-2%.

"The euphoria post his win and the images on maga-

zine covers are a symbol that Modi is more than just the new PM. He's also cool," says Bangalore-based social worker Tinto Thomas, 25.

It's difficult to pinpoint what lends to Modi's coolness that makes the 63-year-old man tick with the youth. For one, his multifaceted personality helps. Says Zaid Al Baset, assistant professor of sociology at St Xavier's College, Kolkata: "There are three key components to Modi's cool: He's technology cool, he's economy cool and he's culture cool." Modi, he says, has ideas the youth likes. But if he's not careful, this could be temporary. "The youth has a hard time finding high levels of intelligence as being cool if they're not also conveyed with a sense of likability. While Kejriwal seemed intelligent and Rahul likeable, Modi, so far, has been able to capture both reputations," he says.

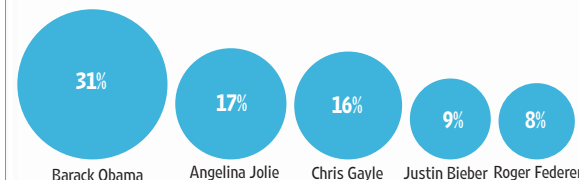
And when the talk is about reputation, Tendulkar's is the stuff legends are made of, a shining example of a middle-class dream achieved with sheer hard work. He got 53% of all votes as the world's biggest sports icon for 2014, reprising last year's performance, followed by M S Dhoni (14.1%) and Virat Kohli (9.2%). Cricketers dominated the list, but he likes of Roger Federer (5.6%), Lionel Messi (4.3%) and Saina Nehwal (3.5%) too made the cut.

In cinema, the years may have taken the angst out of Bollywood's angry-young-man, Amitabh Bachchan, but still the youth aspire to the 71-year-old actor's exacting standards of excellence. "Big B shows no signs of slowing down," says stand-up comic and actor Vir Das. "He's always up to something exciting," he adds.

Bollywood's three Khans — Shah Rukh (19%), Salman (10%) and Aamir (9%) — follow Bachchan, but matinee diva Priyanka Chopra is also a popular choice with 13% votes. "This isn't to denigrate other mega-stars, but to recognise that Priyanka exists in a somewhat different category than her closest female contemporaries. She does things her way, she takes risks," says actor Gul Panag. Interestingly, Vidya Balan (7%) and Preity Zinta (3%) are the only other B-town female actors to make the list.

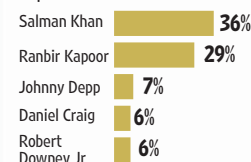
ROLL CALL: GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

TOP 5 ROLE MODELS FOR INDIA'S YOUNG

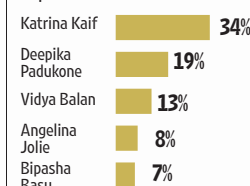


OUR BIGGEST HEARTTHROBS

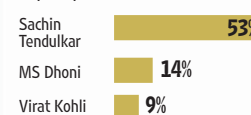
Top 5 sexiest men



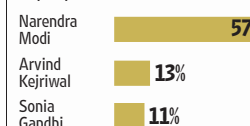
Top 5 sexiest women



Top 3 sports icons

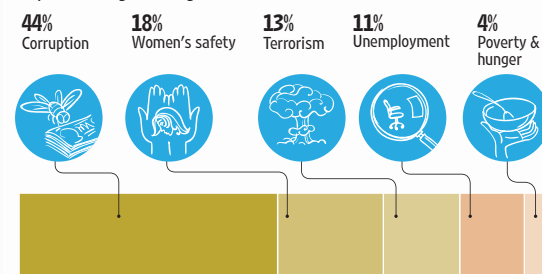


Top 3 political icons

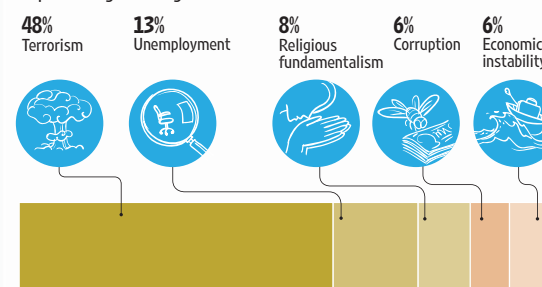


WE SHALL OVERCOME!

Top 5 challenges facing India



Top challenges facing the world



METHODOLOGY: The survey was carried out among 5,214 urban youth in the 18-25 age group in 15 cities across India — Delhi, Lucknow, Jaipur, and Chandigarh in the north, Kolkata, Patna, Ranchi in the East, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune and Indore in the West, and Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi in the South.



THE JOURNEY FOR MODI, FROM CANDIDATE MODI TO PM MODI, IS ALMOST LIKE WHAT WE SAW WITH CHE GUEVARA OR BARACK OBAMA. OUR PM REPRESENTS OPTIMISM AND CHANGE. HE HAS LOTS TO DELIVER THOUGH

SUPREET DHINDSA, 22, hospitality professional



PRIYANKA CHOPRA BUCKS TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES BY OPERATING AS A BONA FIDE MULTIFACETED MOVIE STAR, WHO REFUSES TO BE PIGEONHOLED INTO NICHES

SOHAM BANERJEE, 18, student

Mirror, mirror... who's the sexiest of them all?

Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif have a new title, again. The former 'lovebirds' pretty much sum up what the youth's looking for in terms of beauty and sex appeal. The two are our sexiest man alive and sexiest woman alive, with 36% and 34% votes, respectively.

Coming in at a close second is current heartthrob Ranbir Kapoor (29%) and rounding up the top five sexiest men are Johnny Depp (7%), and Robert Downey Jr and Daniel Craig (6% each).

36%

SAY SALMAN KHAN IS THE SEXIEST MAN ALIVE

Not only is she beautiful and incredibly sexy (appealing to both men and women), Deepika Padukone also makes it to our list of sexiest women on spot number two with 19% votes. Further down the list is Vidya Balan on number three (13%), Angelina Jolie (8%) and Beyonce (3%). Also, have you heard of Alia Bhatt? You should Google her. With three back-to-back super hits, 2014 is her year and she's on the list too with 6% votes.



With this we conclude our seven-part series on the youth survey. Share your feedback with us.

Tweet us @httweets with #HTyouth

For complete data of the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2014, blogs, expert interviews and video features, log on to:

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Corruption, the biggest challenge facing India

The young have given their verdict: Corruption is the biggest problem facing the country, while terrorism is an issue that's a problem for everyone throughout the world, and not just in India. When asked what is the most critical problem facing India, almost half of the respondents put corruption (44%) way above terrorism (13%), unemployment (11%), poverty and hunger (4%) and even women's safety (18%).

"Corruption is the root cause for all our problems. We're not happy putting up with

44%

SAY CORRUPTION IS THE MOST CRITICAL ISSUE IN INDIA

unemployment, but corruption is an issue is something we've come to detest. It's something that's eroding the very essence of our country and we cannot put up with it," says Delhi-based lawyer Insha Mir, 26. While the long shadow of corruption hangs over as India's biggest problem, the most pressing global issue for Indian youth is not corruption (6%), unemployment (13%), religious fundamentalism (8%), pollution (6%) or HIV/AIDS (1%), but terrorism (48%).