

Review Article

Do millennials have less sex compared to gen X ?

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Abstract

Significant patterns and traits mark the generations. These traits and practices are consistent over time. When there is a change, we call them the change-in-generations. These generations are different in their sexuality patterns as well. Through time, it has been observed that the previous generations have been having more sex than the millennials. An in-depth study categorically represents multiple possible reasons for it. It can be theorized that the primary reasons pertaining to such changes are highlighted in the article. They are as follows - but are not limited to the following reasons - age of marriage/ dating, entertainment opportunities, materialism and life philosophies, access to pornography, and partnered sexual activity. Therefore, further research is needed to understand the reasons and effects of such change in the sexuality pattern and understand how it may affect human evolution.

Introduction

Sexuality is an integral part of human life that colors various aspects of one's personality. Human sexuality plays a significant role in everyone's life, whether young or old, whether a man or woman. Sexuality is an integral part of being human (Kar et al.,

2015). Love, affection, and sexual intimacy contribute to healthy relationships and an individual's well-being. Sexuality is how we experience and express ourselves as sexual beings (Roy and Rai, 2020; Twenge et al., 2017). Being aware of one's sexuality is essential as it helps people know who they are. Illnesses, mixed emotions, and unintended consequences can affect our sexual health when addressing sexuality (Douglas and Fenton, 2013). An open discussion of sexual issues is essential, bringing awareness regarding themselves and helping in self-discovery. There has been a clear trend of distinction among the patterns of lives of various generations. Moreover, there has been an observable difference in the sexuality pattern. We aim in this article to

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understand the generational differences and reasons why in-person sex has reduced in Gen-Y compared to their Gen X counterparts.

People from current generations feel more relaxed than their parents, especially regarding sexuality. However, they might only be half right (Twenge et al., 2017). It can be said that Millennials are less involved in in-person sexual activities compared to gen X. Gen Y has options like dating online, which only focuses on their appearances, and it can be a likely factor in their dropping rates of sexual activity (Twenge et al., 2017). Average appearance, marriage, and stable relationships were where they were having sex and perhaps dating apps, leaving some people with fewer choices. They might be more reluctant to search for partners (Roy and Rai, 2020). It can also be for personal safety. There tends to be a lot of fear and anxiety related to protection and STIs, as this generation is more about security than having sex (Julian, 2018). Fewer millennials having sex could include the widespread availability of Pornography. This generation, where many young adults continue to live with their parents, makes it difficult to find a suitable place for sexual activity (Beainger et al., 2007; Julian, 2018; Roy, 2019). The later age at first marriage and increased access to instant entertainment online are possible reasons for reducing sexual activity.

Statistical reference

Most of the baby boomers were born after World War II (1946-1967), and their life issues have shaped a particular pattern that led to their characteristics. This was a time of instability worldwide, and there was a worldwide recession, and systematic trade was not in place. Therefore, in this time, magazines, newspapers, and radio communication used to be the most

common methods of entertainment (Julian, 2018; Roy, 2019; Twenge et al., 2017). Here we observe that the age of marriage was relatively young, and in countries like India average age for marriage among girls was in the teens and slightly above that for the fair gender. Therefore, the initiation of conjugal marital relationships was much younger in them and also was socially acceptable. There was not much expectation in terms of economic independence. Agriculture supported jobs and small businesses. Therefore, there was much time to relax and enjoy life. People during that time, due to developing railways and relatively scarce use of Air travel, also limited traveling options and therefore may be possible reasons to enjoy sexual relationships (Stephan, 2017).

In the next generation, there was a change in terms of increased usage of digital media, and TV had become common place for all of them; therefore, Gen X also uses a lot of smartphones and social media, reportedly around 7 hours per day (Twenge et al., 2017). This generation started using pornographies and video CDs, and VCRs to record and digitize sexual experiences. There was not much policing and surveillance on sharing and exchanging sexually explicit materials on printed and CDs (Stephan, 2017; Twenge et al., 2017). The significant demographic differences observed are increased age of marriage acceptance of western liberal value systems, therefore, engaging in premarital relationships and love marriages. This was also the central theme of movies during that time. Thus, the average age of sexual intercourse increases slightly in standard deviation in this period. In addition, there was increased stress to find jobs and better pay. As a result of these, both men and women focused on their careers more than starting a family, leading to a decrease in sexual relationships that may be substituted by masturbation and other media and

methods to satisfy the sexual needs (Twenge et al., 2017).

Generations explained

The generations are arbitrarily divided into a few cohorts mainly grouped by their birth years and the challenges that they face in their lives and major issues in their lifetimes and events, namely the World War, post-World War, Cold War, Recession. It has been observed that they follow a particular pattern of financial, social and political habits,

therefore mark a generation. The generations can be divided arbitrarily into Baby Boomer (1946-1954), Boomer II (1954-1964), Gen X (1965-1980), Gen Y (1981-1996), Gen Z (1997-2012) [Fig-1]. If we investigate the patterns of sexuality, there are distinct changes in various aspects of their sexual lives, belief systems, and ways of expression. Therefore according to a few surveys and reports, it is said that millennials have much less sex compared to their generation X counterparts (Stephan, 2017) [Fig-2].

Figure 1: Generation curve timeline

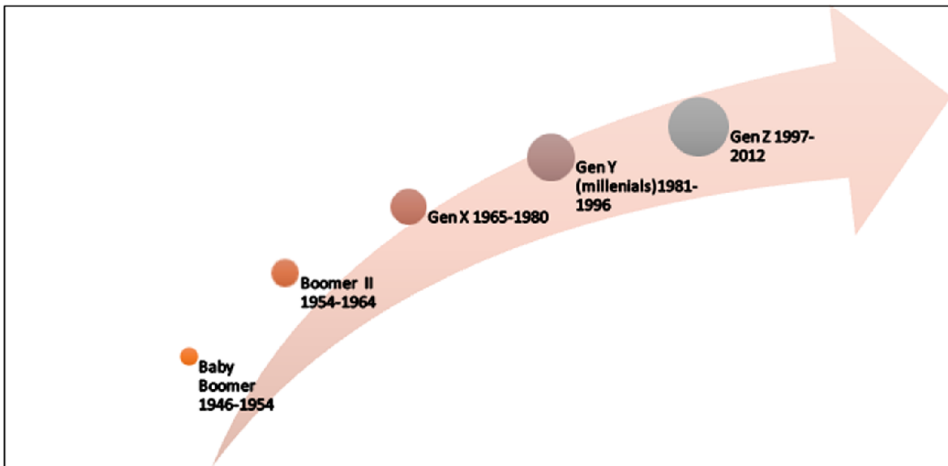
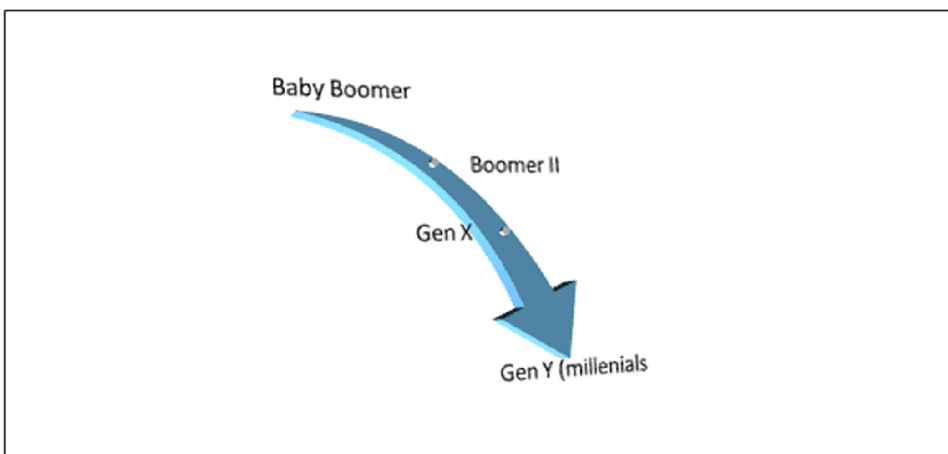


Figure 2: Decreasing in-person sexual intimacy across the generations



Sexuality is a significant part of a person's life and impacts their belief system formation; therefore, it is necessary to understand the underlying reasons for such a generational change and decline into in-person Sexual relationships. In retrospect, while we look into the lives of the people of Generation X, the following contrasting patterns can be observed.

Age of marriage : The legal age of marriage has been responsible for most people engaging in in-person sexual relationships. For Generation X, the average age of marriage was in their early 20s; therefore, by default, the initiation of sexual relationships was earlier than that of Gen Y. It was even socially acceptable for girls of 16 to get married and start their reproductive lives (Bersamin et al., 2014; Julian, 2018; Stephan, 2017; Twenge et al., 2017). In addition, the expectation of the average household for income and expenditure was also divided steeply across the socio economic classes and average reproductive index. This led to higher socially fair chances for engaging in sexual relationships.

Entertainment opportunities: If we observe closely, we can see that during Gen X, entertainment opportunities were diversifying, and new methods were coming in, like the first Nintendo and the early generation of Video games, VCRs, etc. However, the access to these was extremely limited in the Indian scenario as well as the poor power back up and supply led to their limited usage, so there was more consumption from the Romantic novels and classic writings (Basu and Mahintamani, 2021; Roy and Rai, 2020; Twenge et al., 2017). This even influenced them further to find a partner and start a relationship. This was when movies began glorifying love, and the end of that always led to marriage and socially acceptable procreative activities.

Whereas in the current scenario for Gen Y, where people are willing to take a stand and feministic movies portray women and men both unwilling to compromise for their needs, therefore against the typical belief systems of Gen X.

Materialistic needs and life philosophies:

When We look into the socioeconomic scenario of Gen X, there is a vast difference in their choice of priority and sustenance, but the millennials (Gen Y) have very different needs and preferences when it comes to materialistic needs and stability (Basu and Mahintamani, 2021; Stephan, 2017). There is far more mobility in the millennials. Their choice of jobs and nature of their work-life, leading to frequent job changes and frequent movements and short term stays, affect their selection of partners, delay in their commitments, and change increased stress and anxiety. It further leads to serial monogamy and breakups and, even in committed relationships, a lack of access to sexual intimacy due to long-distance relationships. Therefore, it can be contended that the Millennials engage more often in sexual play with gadgets and indulge in Pornography compared to in-person partnered sexual activity (Chawla and Kar, 2021).

Difficulty in maintaining relationships: maintaining relationships has always been hard for the Millennials or the previous generations. As the gender roles are getting less and less strict, the millennials are getting the shorter end of the stick. Both genders have increasing expectations regarding sharing chores and bringing bread to the table. With similar earning capacity, the men and the women of the latest times feel tremendous difficulty in compromise. Therefore, people being stuck in relationships that are not fulfilling is becoming less common. Therefore, it leads to more break-

ups which means decreased opportunities for sexual intimacy for both genders (Stephan, 2017; Ueda et al., 2020). In the previous generations, strict gender roles and social security were not feasible for the couple to break up and still have social inclusion.

Access to pornography and non-partnered sexual experiences: The previous generations had more access to partnered sexual activities due to their earlier age of marriage and social acceptability, more time to spend with the partners, and less mobility and slow-paced life. Whereas for the millennials, it has been an increasingly faster life with an increasingly changing environment (social, financial, educational, etc.), putting them in a state of confusion and anxiety much more than the previous generations and changing nature of jobs, and increasing competition in every aspect of life. This led to the development of the high-tech pornography industry, accessible to the youth at their fingertips. Along with this, the sex toy market has commoditized the whole sexual experience. Along with them, the increased fear of sexually communicable diseases (HIV and other Venereal diseases) have boosted the preference for non-partnered sexual experiences, and therefore, in-person sex with its inherent difficulties have made Gen Y hold the short end of the stick (Chawla and Kar, 2021; Twenge et al., 2017; Ueda et al., 2020).

Conclusion

Sexual intimacy is a biological need and manifests itself in all aspects of life. The changing patterns of sexuality show not only the difference of generation but also the capacity of human beings to be adaptable to the changing world and its needs. Therefore, through this article, we tried to find out the possible changes in the sexual lives of the

recent generations and their circumstances. In retrospect, it will hopefully be an adaptation to the world, leading to the ultimate survival of the species.

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