



Session	Bridging the Generation Gap in India
Speakers	Jaya Virwani, Pankaj Rai, Sreela Dasgupta, Megha Jose

<p>Jaya</p>	<p>Hello, good afternoon everyone my name is Jaya Virwani and I head the diversity and inclusiveness strategy at EY’s global delivery services. Welcome to the session this afternoon on bridging the generation gap in India I think that today it’s a very interesting discussion moving a little away from the Gen-Y hot topic of conversation and we can’t forget the fact that the Indian work place is made up of a multi-generational workforce and each of these generations is shaped by very different influences each of these influences impact working styles impact communication preferences and also have the potential for generational differences. In today’s session, we’ve invited three corporate representatives from different generations in India to share how companies can bridge the generation gap. We’re also going to highlight why the discussion why learning perspectives of multiple generations can really lead to deeper insights and a greater diversity of thought.</p> <p>I’m going to invite our very first speaker and participant Pankaj Rai and I’m going to introduce Pankaj, really quickly though it’s a really long very robust bio that I have with me. Welcome to the session, Pankaj Rai is the head of strategic planning at Wells Fargo G.I.C. where he is responsible for creating a culture of 3 E’s- effectiveness efficiency and experience. Pankaj has worked at Dell leading a shared services global analytics team that consisted of over four hundred members in Bangalore supporting all segments of DELL. In his professional career spanning over twenty-five years, Pankaj has worked as a management consultant at feedback ventures moved into financial services industries where he’s worked at ICICI and GE capital. Pankaj has studied law. Pankaj has done his Electrical engineering at IIT Delhi and completed his M.B.A. from the Indian Institute of Management Ahmadabad. Pankaj is among the twelve bankers selected by the British Council fellowship for young banker’s programme administrated at the London School of Economics in 1999. Wow Fabulous Pankaj and welcome to the session Pankaj.</p>
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Pankaj	Thank you, Jaya.
Jaya	<p>My second speaker participant is Sreela Dasgupta, Associate Vice President and Head of diversity inclusion at Tata Consultancy Services. Sreela Dasgupta is Associate Vice President and Head of diversity and inclusion at Tata Consultancy Services. With an M Phil in population studies from the Jawahar Lal Nehru University.</p> <p>Sreela has worked for over two decades in the developmental sector focusing on human rights issues related to gender, social inclusion and public health. She has worked both with group or communities as well as with international agencies including CARE and the UN agencies amongst others. In her role Sreela focuses on issues related primarily to gender diversity, disability inclusion, cultural cohesion and L.G.B.T rights at the workplace. The geography she engages with, include a wide range from China to the Philippines to Saudi Arabia and the USA. Sreela has also had prior engagements with Nigeria Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. She is also strategically engaged with the United Nations, ILO, CII, NASSCOM and of course the Tata group's HR and Diversity issues at both global and national level, welcome again Sreela.</p>
Sreela	Hi Jaya. Thank you so much.
Jaya	<p>My next speaker panelist is Megha Jose, IT engineer at Cisco. She is an I.T. engineer at the Cisco Systems India private limited and has completed a Computer Science and Engineering Degree from P.S.J. College of Technology graduated last year. Megha now works as part of the networking team in Cisco's IT infrastructure organisation, she also leads the early career network in Cisco India which is an organisation that comprises of all early career employees with up to five years of work experience.</p> <p>Megha feels that her involvement with the E.C.N. has helped her develop and grow as an individual in the corporate world. Megha's vision as lead of the E C N is to groom the next generation of the company to become successful leaders in the future. Welcome Megha.</p>



Jaya	I'm going to dive into you know the session and talk a little bit about each of the generations that you represent and if you could share with us and anyone can you know go take a first go at it but if you could share with us the three very clear characteristics or defining bits of your generation and how that has shaped the workforce today or how that has contributed to how you, you know shape the Indian work force.
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Pankaj	<p>So Jaya if I can go first on this one Pankaj here, you know one of the things I was reflecting when you were talking about this topic again which came to my mind on you know what really defines a generation and you know usually we tend to use age or the year and so on and so forth to typically define the generation but I think you know if you peel the onion and I think what clearly defines a generation is the significant events that happened in that period which really shaped that generation and you know if you look at the various periods in history there are certain events which are you know far more you know. transformational than other periods. I somehow think that you know those events let's take world war or the partition for India or some of these events they really impact you know everyone very deeply and I think those generations tend to get defined in a more you know sort of uniform or homogenous fashion because everyone is impacted and everyone sort of the reacts in a certain way and forms a certain opinion but if some of those events were not so transformational then I think that generation is not necessarily going to be so homogenous because they will see changes from different lenses and different geographies and different places and so on so I did think that you know that that is one realisation at least I have in my mind that certain generations are probably more homogeneous driven by the significant events that happened versus others or there were different events happening in different locations and therefore those folks got shaped slightly differently and therefore putting them in the same canvas may or may not be doing justice to that generations , so that was just sort of a prelude to what I am going to say about my generation and you know and the reason I say that is because I do think that my generation did have a bunch of things that were quite significant and therefore there were quite a few commonalities which defined our generation in a certain way like when I see now and I'm sure Megha and some others will probably going to contradict me or come up with their own opinion that may have you know many different things happening in different parts of the world and therefore may not have so many commonalities might have a lot of divergence and so on so having said that I think you know I was born on the day when Neil Armstrong stepped on the moon and so that was the year of sixty nine , summer of sixty nine so to say and</p>
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so my generation saw a lot of interesting events so it was the banks got nationalised the multinationals got thrown out of India . India was liberalised you know Manmohan Singh and Narshima Rao Regime. I think that the main thing or significant thing that happened was that ,we kind of became a more capitalistic more private sector oriented economy versus a bit of a socialistic country that we used to be prior to that So while you know the know the previous generations took pride in working for the governments sort of having a stable job for life I think my generation started to see a bit of the change where you know the salaries shot up the loyalty to the company started going down a bit , people started moving around working in the private sector ,going abroad and working some of those things started to show up which were not available to the other generations so I think this globalisation I would say was one phenomena , which kind of made our generation think of the world in a slightly different fashion and was able to also contrast that with the previous one where some of these forces have not happened and it was obviously a tension when I remember when I graduated from IIT, my father and grandfather said that if you are so smart you should do IAS versus go work in the private sector because in their mind you know that was the epitome of a great career that you know you work for the government and IAS was supposedly the best place you could be if you're working for the government and obviously they could not comprehend why anyone would do a M.B.A. and work for a accompany that they had actually not initially heard of and an industry that they fully did not comprehend which was consulting.

So, I would like to kind of pause here and leave with a few remarks that the most transformational event I think in our generations was this whole globalisation, globalisation which made my generation quite different from past and created certain amounts of tension of how we viewed the world and versus how they viewed the world.



<p>Jaya</p>	<p>Jaya Virwani- Absolutely great points from you Pankaj and I think I'm going to come back to you on you know how that shaped your approach to work I'm going to quickly ask Sreela to share her views and then Megha and then come back to you and just shaping the approach on work. Sreela.</p>
<p>Sreela</p>	<p>Hi ya, thank you so much and that was a very interesting start to having a baby boomer discussion, I always feel that, maybe every generations feels that their generations is a sandwich generation but Gen X is usually considered to be, I was born in 1966 so I'm and kind of borderline baby boomer and Gen X it is considered to be bit of a sandwich generation between a Gen X and Gen Y, where I really see very distinct things really stand out for me. A) Our generation had very two distinct sides to it, 1)the non-conformist activists NGO sector blooming so you had sort of a feminist movement in the seventies, you had the various environmental movements starting, you had various human rights movements in fact Gen X were the one who really articulated the LGBT rights so that's a huge stream , so I worked for 20 years in and as an activist in the NGO sector and then there is the other conformist stream that I find let's explore the , like Pankaj said let's explore the corporate world let ditch the government stability and let's move into more technology so that was two different streams of the same generation and so with different life experiences and now having spent about 6 years in the corporate sector I find a very interesting, wouldn't say schizophrenic but yes but two sides of the same coin. The second point that I really see is that I think Gen X brought in a discourse of work life balance, because Baby boomers were completely work is worship baby boomers were complete workaholics and also in approaching technology helps free up time for work life balance and families and the third thing I would say is that women started coming into more into non-teaching roles, so its slightly non-traditional role, so it was pushing the envelope and breaking barriers, so I really see these three as my generation and my life experiences and I hope I answered your question.</p>



Jaya	<p>Thanks, Sreela- I am a Gen Xer like you and I know like Pankaj shared the very baby boomer perspective and you know everything that you said just resonates with me and you know and the life experiences that I've had during the time that I was born I'm goanna just quickly move onto Megha and move the whole conversation around Gen-Y. Megha its hot everyone is talking about it, all the diversity practioners and organisations are working on how do we ensure to keep Gen Y happy.</p>
Megha Jose	<p>Yeah I think they're like you said I think Millennials are probably the most studied and talked about generation right now I think that's because we are the first generation in history that you know grown up totally immersed in the world of digital media and that has completely shaped our identities and you know has created a lasting impression in our minds, both in a political , social and cultural perspective so our biggest strength over here is definitely our comfort with social media and digital media and I think when you talk about millennials , the most talked about thing form Baby Boomers and Gen Xers will be like we are very impatient with established processes is that we are very impatient you know and the first thing that comes to any baby boomer is when they hear the word millennials is that oh yeah they get very bored easily, their attention span is very short. But I think me as a millennial is that we are a wrongly perceived notion, we as millennials do have a comparatively shorter attention span when compared to Gen Xers and the Baby boomers, we are highly collaborative in nature and we have a tendency to do extensive research before we make a decision, which is really important right now and with the expanse of the internet and all the resources we have available to us and with all that in play we are the ones who know to use them best and come out with the best results. So, Millennials I think are the most important generation right now I can say is, as in the next 20years we will probably take over 70% of the workforce. So that's why satisfying us is the biggest agenda for everybody else right now.</p>



Jaya	Thank you for Sharing with us- Yes being digital native has its advantages, especially when it comes to referral points you know about Gen Xer and Baby boomer. Just to sort of talk a little bit about the percentages of different generations or different generation of Cohorts within your organisations. I know at EY Global Delivery Services, we're 90% millennials, 90% gen Y, So Pankaj, what are your numbers looking like or how are your cohorts looking like. Pankaj, I think you are on Mute.
Pankaj	Ya, so exactly the same percentage. Yeah in fact I also checked before this meeting to make sure what our number is, so we are exactly are at ninety percent and I think in my age group is like less that 1 percent. So, I do think that the larger IT Industry might have sort of similar percentages across company because I was talking to a few other people in other companies and they sort of returned with a similar number so I felt it looks like an industry phenomenon to me at least.
Jaya	Yeah you know with what are some of the issues or challenges you observing you know working with Multi generations what is it that you are seeing?



Pankaj	<p>Yeah so you know I think you know it is, at least appears to me that the role of a job in our life, what does it really mean? You know in these different generations I think you know for me or for my generation you know job it is an important part of your life your identity you know you know it's very difficult for people to imagine that you know you're out of a job you know not being in a job is some kind of identity crisis it's almost very personal that you know there must be something wrong in you , if you don't have a job or if you're not working so it was really a you know a very critical elements of your life I think what I see happening you know later on nowadays is one thing the economy just as I said like previous era was government led jobs my generation was private sector led jobs I think in this economy that sort of Megha and others represent , really the start-ups and the smaller companies are showing up, are you know creating many more jobs and many more opportunities so to some extent when we talk about the new Generations they do seem to have more opportunities of a different type, where you can actually choose to have shorter you know attention spans because I do think that this whole talk about attention span I actually correlate it to the you know to the investment horizons you know, at the end of the day we are all part of a capitalist system and the capitalist system is you know determined by the investors who invest in these public companies and what kind of investment horizons they have, and you know having been in banking you know I can tell you that even the pension funds were supposed to be really long term investors who are managing your retirement money and supposed to be thinking 30 years . You know their investment span and has gone down to you know less than a year now. They used to invest in a company and hold on for 10 years, 15 years 20 years, so that has come down you know that has led to you know activism and the C.E.O. span shortening. CEO's used to be jobs for 10-15years and the average is now come down to 3 years. And so in general what I'm trying to argue is that the attention span of investors of CEO's on boards and everyone has shrunk and if that has shrunk and if the millennials have also shrunk in that in the same line then why are we complaining because that is part of the same macro trend really, they are really part of the same thing , that food chain ,so to my mind they actually represent the right set of</p>
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ideas, because in the larger world is also going in that direction that maybe you know that's what they are really doing. So, the average set of start-up don't last for so many years do, so you can't have 10 year careers will not last for so many years and so on and so forth so I do think that this trend in my mind, these you know are expendable the type of investment sense and I think when we talk about large companies like ours and maybe yours where a lot of senior people come from the old world who have a different idea about work and attention span so some of those things. I think they have not adjusted to this phenomena and I feel we need to recognise that the world is moving in a different direction the investors have changed the board's perceptions have changed, the millennials have changed and I believe that we are stuck in the middle and we need to reorient ourselves to fit in the right way and I don't mean to say that we need to start changing jobs or allow people to change jobs but I think we need to be more agile and we do talk about agility in the IT operations and project delivery and where we want to launch projects every four weeks but in our mental models I don't think we have made that shift so I would actually sort of blame ourselves for not being agile and not being aware of what the trends outside are and being stuck in the past.



Jaya	Absolutely agree with you and I think looking back at you know careers from what you were told could be a career versus today a millennial saying that you can make a career out of every anything that you choose you know is viable is doable and you can make money from it or have a successful long term career from it I think that's the whole conversation also that is very relevant today so going to Sreela, Sreela what is the composition of your organisation looking like and how does this really influence you know work values how does it influence work styles ,communication preferences.
Sreela	So pretty much the same Gen Y is more than 90%, Gen X is pretty about 8-9%, baby boomers is less than 1 and I think if I am looking a Gen X in my interactions with the others I would say that a I think a personal set of discourse around diversity, I have found to be challenging with Baby boomers particularly around gender, because I find the discussion has to be much more, ever other diversity, whether it is LGBT inclusion and PWD inclusion, I feel that Gen Y is much more open to multiple identities than baby boomers were and even large part of gen X is and lesson learnt from baby boomers , I would say is the ability to put in hard work and incredible amount of hard work that they have given and again that is because , my way if hiring is not acceptable to the current generation, particularly Gen Y. Gen Y again is my personal bug bet is the, what's in it for me, I say we never ask questions , so but I think, my lesson learnt from Gen Y is the fact that they are very inclusive and the fact that they feel they have one life and lets follow our dreams, so my take away from my interactions with Gen Y is communications they are pretty much strong even though they are very succinct and ya they are good at communications, because probably social media gives them the levy to do so.
Jaya	You know great points from you thank you
Sreela	Most of our kids are Millennials



Jaya	Exactly most of the kids are millennials, I live with two millennials so I know what you are saying and you know though again I'm. Back to exactly most of the kids are you and I and I'm sure Pankaj's kids are also grown up so we're all dealing with it at the moment whether it's within the organisation or at home. Megha there's points that's come from Pankaj, Sreela on you know, the work style the differences when working with generations. What is your organisations have in terms of composition, what are your thoughts on some of the aspects that were shared?
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Megha	<p>So, I think CISCO as an organisation are a little behind when compared to others, as we have a little less composition when compared to a lot of other organisations, we have a lot of Gen Xers here, I'm not exactly sure of what the percentage counts, I don't want to really say it out loud.</p> <p>But we definitely moving in the right direction, because I know that at least, in the early career network. I am working very closely with all the senior executives in my organisation and they are constantly interacting with us through , through reverse mentoring sessions and boot camps and such, it's no longer them mentoring us we are mentoring them, I've attended so many reverse mentoring sessions where we tell them what we expect and we tell them on how, we give them tips on how we work and what really works for us and they actually adopt those practices and they come back us and tell us how well its working out for them so, we are definitely working in the right direction.</p> <p>One thing that I would to say is ,I think we live in a culture where people don't really confront each other much, we adopt that whole, it's you know fight or flight mode and you know we are really concerned about what other people might think and that's why we don't really open up and we don't ask too many questions and later on when the problem starts building up and later on when it's a huge problem we come back and say you know what I thought about this earlier and I just didn't want to say it out loud because I really didn't know what you'll think about it, so one thing that would really bridge the generation gap is definitely communication, and we really need to be a little more open to each other, irrespective of the age gap that is present. This problem can be solved easily if, I know each company has its own hierarchy, but a lot of senior executives and senior management you know put this hierarchy into play very seriously, they build this wall around them and they make themselves look inaccessible in some way and that's why we lose our communication and that's where a lot of things get lost , so I think if this communication gap can be bridged, this whole generation gap can be bridged as well. I think Communication is key here.</p>
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<p>Jaya</p>	<p>Great points from you thank you that lead into actually perfectly leads me into the next section of my question, really which is about bridging the generation gap and more organisations like yours are doing to bridge that gap and how relevant and important it is really to start working on this so that you we can have a you a more inclusive workforce.</p> <p>So, any of you Pankaj or Sreela, any one of you could talk about what are you doing or what is your company doing to bridge the gap.</p>
<p>Pankaj</p>	<p>Sure Jaya- So I think you know one of the points I want to make before answering that question was ' so you know outside the workplace I see two other things where the generation seem to be sort of differing which is the political and the social consciousness I think in during the freedom struggle and all of that there were a lot of history there was a lot of political consciousness in that generation which I think over time kind of went down and I think the social consciousness environment and many other issues was not very well developed. But over time I am seeing socially conscious sort of going up, the political one I'm still not really sure where it is. But when I see this generation, they are very very socially conscious much better more because maybe they have seen us destroying the environment, the society in many ways that they're reacting to that but I do hope that they become politically conscious as well because the end of the day you can't drive social change very easily if you don't also participate in politics, but anyway that was just an outside the organisational boundary which I thought I wanted to share.</p> <p>With respect to the companies you know I think you know and I used to work with DELL before coming here to Well Fargo ,I think most companies do have various groups you know special interest groups and diversity forums and you know we had a Gen X forum over there and we have a similar sort of forum over here and so I think people are I think conscious that they do need to cultivate all kinds of diversity, I think you know at least what I see is that they are unable to still figure out what is the best way to make that happen because in gender</p>



	<p>diversity I think it was an issue you know highlighted much earlier that forum is so much more in your face and you can do something about it, processes are developed from outside which you can go and attend and I have to say on this topic this is the first forum that I'm attending or that I have been to that I which is talking about generational diversity, because you know this is something which I have read about or heard of but I haven't seen being talked about as much in the Industry as has been either gender diversity, LGBT or environment or Social sustainability so I do think that this area is there but I do suspect people don't fully comprehend or share best practices on what do we need to do I mean they usually are you know those reverse mentoring sessions and there are a few others but frankly and I have to say that I haven't seen a robust process or good practices in the industry, which one can say you know what we figured this out and you know there are these five things that if you did you know you would get there because we do have those things in gender diversity and other areas So this one it is from my standpoint I think it's still developing and people are still figuring out what needs to be done and my you know hypothesis on why it is the way it is that usually some of these programs are created by the older people or the senior people and for all the other forums those people seem to have some context and some depth and they know what to do here I think they have no clue what they have to do and they're also not delegating it to the next generation to say OK we don't know you tell us what we need to do so I suspect it is somewhere sort of lost in between I think more needs to be done.</p>
<p>Jaya</p>	<p>Great thanks for those points and just going back to your point which are very right around the fact that the social impact or purpose is a big thing today for the millennium and whether it's purpose at work or purpose within society and I think that's what's going to change India for the better really because that purpose and the link to life and everything that you do is really going to increase what we look at in terms of just being more conscious about the choices we make and the way we live our lives. Great points from you and thank you.</p>



	So Sreela- Can I come to you please and you know again the same question to you.
Sreela	So, I agree with Pankaj, I think this is a space we are all trying to figure out, but just to reference a couple of things as we are learning on the job. All Tata group companies are kind of paced from a value point of view on the Tata code of conduct and which focusses on the respect for the individual which is also reflected on the TCS 4 values and that is very central to bridging any gaps actually, so it not only generational but all gaps, I think that is really essential, an creating an environment of inclusion a Culture of inclusion a value that centric to respect and inclusion, so these are things that I fell will work, where the bigger frame work or bigger purpose is larger than you action items, which is also very important. One of the things that I know is also working for us and is not being perfected is, actually trusting young people with leadership positions, so I think when Megha say people don't really listen, one of the success I have seen happening is that actually I have made Gen Y as leaders in responsible positions and is something which works. So, grooming some putting some in responsible positions and an element of reverse mentoring always stays and I would also second Pankaj on saying that we should be benevolent despots and say we should do it our way, we should also participate and be the participative voice, so back to you Jaya.
Jaya	So yeah. Yeah had I and I think that's the whole aspect about diversity and being inclusive which is you know everyone has a different opinion. Everyone is different ways of doing things how do you actually ensure it all works together so I am a huge proponent of gender diversity, very passionate gender champion and I am going to use this forum to ask you if there was one thing you know that you have in term of your perspective on how we can increase the representation of women in the workforce, in leadership positions specifically, what's the tip or advice you would give from your generational perspective.
Sreela	Can I go First, so ya I have been working on women right for 25 years, this is also kind of something which is , we are moving along the generations and I'm glad to see movement,



	<p>but I also think we have come to a space where we really need to transition from a masculine paradigm workplace to a feminine paradigm and this is neutral gender, so it does not have to be driven by women does not have to be driven by men and it is a bigger paradigm and it need to be understood that you have to break stereotypes , that pregnancy is not a disease, that child rearing and child parenting is actually a gender neutral job, so these are things that I think need to be coming out , and yes there are things like role model and everything that but, I think there is a recent research we did internally that said that men don't deliberately do marginalise woman, but when they go out for their smoke breaks, those are platforms for informal exchange of information , and information is power, so if you do not have access to that information you may not be able to get into that channel for leadership, so I think those certain old boys club barriers may have to be broken, so which is why I think the whole shift is required and we at TCS were the first corporate in India to sign up with the UN for the women leadership campaign, we have 19000 champions for gender equality at the workplace, and hope it sets the context for gender equality, and I hope I have answered your questions. I can go on and on for the rest of the day but I shall stop here.</p>
<p>Jaya</p>	<p>Thank you for your views on that. I think we can have an offline conversation on this, you and I, over a cup of coffee. Pankaj, what do you think? What is the one tip you have?</p>
<p>Pankaj</p>	<p>I have actually 4 thoughts and the last one is the tip. The first three are really the trends I see outside, one is the education, as literacy is increasing more and more women are sort of joining the workforce. I think the economic necessity or the economic need is also driving that phenomenon where the others in the family are not stopping them and saying ok you know, this is important and this is typical and that is contributing to that. I think the third is that as a society, the Me-too campaign or some of the issues, the way the society is reacting is also encouraging women to kind of not accept the things that are not right and sort of continue to feel that they have the right to go ahead and no one has the right to sort of suppress them.</p>



	<p>I think those three things are kind of happening we see that and those are kind of the positive things and those are continuing in the positive direction. The fourth one which is a tip, I will rely on the explain that Satya Nadella has recently set up, where he is talking about empathy, and which is related to, like Sreela said, the feminine qualities as the way to sort of build a more compassionate world as we go forward, the Levers CEO Polman has been talking about, triple impact to the bottom line and you know, social is a way forward to build the business. I think, there are some of those phenomena which are happening, and we can see that. I think even in the tech sector, which was the basin for the male dominance, we have seen, you know, women CEOs coming in, IBM, Yahoo and many of those companies. The banking sector which was seen to be the basin of men again, has had female CEOs in India. I think, a combination of those factors which are created in the industry, it is also, you know, sort of going to, you know, other companies and people are seeing those as things that they need to ape and follow. So, I do think that as long as companies are, you know, looking at those trends and embracing those, and putting them into their own company. I think I am fairly optimistic, I have two growing up daughters, and I think, I don't tell them but I tell others that the future belongs to them.</p>
Jaya	<p>The future is female and I am going to proudly say that and I am going to move to Megha. Megha, is this even something that crosses your mind often, you know, why are there those realities that there are not many women in senior leadership positions and we are all working towards it. But, is that something you think about as a millennial girl.</p>
Megha	<p>Actually, I have been a victim to this, so when I joined Cisco last year I was the only girl in my team, so the first day in office, everybody told me, you know what, you are the first girl in team. I was like – ok, so is that good or is that bad, and they were like, it is great to see a girl's face among all the guys sitting here. Initially, it was great and everybody was treating me like a princess and it was brilliant. And, slowly, as and when the work started getting serious, I started to realise that</p>



	<p>they have their own inner circle, that I was not allowed into, whatever happened. And every time they had a discussion and I would enter, they would go all hush and I would be like you know what happened, what you guys talking about and they would be like, it's a guy thing. And then, initially it was fine, I was like ok whatever, you guys can talk about it. And later on, it started affecting my work and I actually couldn't get a lot of work done, because I was not allowed into that inner circle of theirs.</p> <p>So, how I brought back those barriers and I actually went up and told them you know what, just cos you are guy, doesn't mean you can talk to me about all these things. And I started quoting some of the situations that I have been, and they were like, hey wait, even I have been in those kind of situations, and slowly they started including me in their conversations and I am part of the boy's club. So, it has been great that way and I think they are not just accustomed to you know, accepting women in a certain situations and when they see that women can be in that situation, they are completely open to it. So, I think it's just this resistance to change the way they have been brought up or however it is. But, I don't think that they have blocked out that idea, they are always open to change, but if they see someone doing something, or someone following something, they are like, we can do that as well. And, they adopt it immediately, but that initial resistance to change is what is bringing a lot of problems, I think. And, Cisco is a company, like the Early Career Network, we have Connected Women, which is a very active employee resource organisations, they have so many events conducted by women and led by women. And that is really making a difference in the company. In the one year that I have been in Cisco, I have seen the change. I have seen a lot senior managers coming up, there are two more girls in my team now, so that is great as well, so that is that.</p>
<p>Jaya</p>	<p>Thanks. Thanks for sharing your thoughts. You know we are going to move into you know what questions are there for you from the listeners and one of the questions that keep coming up from the people that are listening to us is on the whole</p>



	<p>aspect of reverse mentoring, and I know you have been doing a lot on this Megha, leading this for your organisation, would you be able to share little bit about how reverse mentoring really works and what is some of the strategies that someone is listening and wants to implement it. What is some of the strategies they can put in place?</p>
Megha	<p>So, the early career network in Cisco is an organisation that is completely run by us millennials, we have no interference from any of the senior management. So, it is led by us, it is run by us. All the events are done by us. So, it is fully driven by us, millennials. So, what we do as part of the early career network is, we go and educate our senior management, So when we have leadership visiting from abroad or leadership presence in CISCO Bangalore itself, we look to have sessions where we put all of them in one room and we pick out maybe 30 ECNers and we map them to two-on-one and it is basically just two-on-one conversation, where there are no barriers, we give them the privacy that whatever happens in this room, stays in this room. So, you know no one is really hesitant to talk about anything that is on their mind. And, we have seen the kind of conversations that have come up in that room, it is so good, so transparent and these leaders are so open to all listening to all those things, right. So, we tell them anything, from the kind of hierarchy we face to say, we need hot chocolate in campus and that coffee is not something we drink anymore. So, ranges from that level to the most minute level. That is really worked and we also follow up on these reverse mentoring sessions, because a lot of time, we have a bunch of leader, come to the room, sit, listen to us and do nothing about that, right. So, we do a follow up session as well, where we contact these leaders and say – hey, have you started implementing these things that we talked about, and then they know that, oh my God, if I don't implement this, an ECNER is going to be on my back next week, asking me did you do this or not. That's something that has really worked out for us.</p>
Jaya	<p>Glad to hear that I think we are starting off in that journey and initiating reverse mentoring as well. So, Sreela and Pankaj, any programs for future leaders on how you are honing the skills,</p>



	you know, this generation is really working on their leadership skills and taking up more opportunities.
Pankaj	<p>You know, in our company, there is a sort of an interesting twist, you know, we have come up with. So, we are a bank, you know, which is largely present in the US and you know, we have the India workforce. India workforce is much more in the millennial than the workforce in the US. So, we have, you know, Asian Connection, another diversity network in the US, that they thought that they could bring to India. And we said, you know, Asians in the US are a minority and they could do something for themselves, but they were keen to bring it to India. So, we kind of created a twist, so we said, how about creating this reverse mentoring type of relationships, which will also allow is to bridge the gap between the US team members, who are much older than in the generational terms than our India team members. So, we have created those types of mentoring schemes which will allow us to bridge the gaps between our two teams and also bring the generational elements. What, in the US, our business leaders are finding is that the future customers of the bank are going to be more-and-more millennials. And, they don't have enough millennials inside their own workforce for them to get feedback, talk to and so on. And what I think they are finding is that the millennials worldwide are far more digitally savvy and much more similar to each other beyond geographical boundaries. They all use the same Wechat Facebook, Whatsapp or whatever. So, I think that program, which is like reverse mentoring, although we don't call it that is working out here. But, like I said earlier, I think we are still figuring out what are the program that we could put in place which are meaningful and I am actually, looking for some ideas and best practices, from outside in the industry and right now, we don't have anything meaningful. You know, apart from the usual fun activities, CSR activities, a meaningful thoughtful program beyond the reverse mentoring, I haven't come across one yet.</p>
Jaya	Thanks Pankaj. You know, there is a question for us, on the rise of the mental health issues in the new generations, the millennials. Any thoughts on how companies can build



	resilience? Is anyone, in any of the companies you work for, doing anything around this aspect?
Sreela	<p>Yeah. Can I take that one Jaya? So, it is one area in which all the organisations need to start working on. I am also part of an International Mental Health Congregation. At TCS, we have these helplines, which are anonymous, we also have in person counselling. And, as a generation, I think younger people now have, less coping mechanisms because the exposure to vulnerability through social media is much more. And, maybe shorter spans or creates limited resilience, would say lesser resilience. We really need to be alert. I don't think we worked out a way to increase resilience, I think we have worked out a way to alert, to respond, to emotional stresses and vulnerabilities. We have our HR which is strengthen up on identifying early warning indicators, which is very helpful because otherwise, the HR is also very shaky about how to move, because sometimes the HR is the first point of contact. And the managers, we are going to train the managers regarding the early warning indicators. Also, I think networks related to engagement or young people, what they love to do, whether it is engaging in a social activity like volunteering or CSR activity. Create resilience, my analysis is because they actually work with people who are more vulnerable than they are. And, this is the best practice I have seen, both in the NGO sector and in my young people volunteering from universities, colleges or schools. This actually builds resilience because it creates their ability to see that, yes, you have people who are economically, socially, culturally, extremely marginalised. So, I think that is one route to do it. But yes, it is a very important area.</p>
Jaya	<p>Yeah, I agree that is some excellent points that has come from you Sreela. Thank you. I am going to open it out to audience questions, all those that are listening, if there are any questions for the panelists, please feel free to type in right now. And, you know, just to sort of, while the questions are coming in, just to close, due you think organisations are focusing enough on the fact that we need to look at all the generations, or a multi-generation workforce. And do something about that versus only thinking about GenY. Do you think we are doing enough, do</p>



	<p>you think there is more to be done, if yes, what should we be doing?</p>
<p>Pankay</p>	<p>I think, you know, one of the things our country has not faced yet, but clearly, it will also happen, you know, the proposition of the older age generations, which have become a big phenomenon is most of the other countries is there. I think, here we do not have a big problem because largely it is the millennials. And therefore, I would say there is still not so much of diversity, if I can say so. And therefore, most of the policies, most of the things are actually, should be rather shaped for the millennials, and sometimes they don't end up being that. But I think the answer for our, you know, Cohorts is clear, since they are 90%, they should be the centre of all programmes and all other things that are designed. And we are still far from getting there, but we can get there. I think the other countries have grown where, there are much larger pots of various generations and then it becomes far more difficult, because one size will not fit all. So, while for us it is not so critical now, but I think, we need to keep looking at what is happening in those countries and how they are tackling with these, you know, 3-4 different generations, especially in the US. Actually, in our company, we do not have a retirement age, so you could be of 70years of age, and you could still work. So, you do actually see a different generation and they have fewer millennials, they have other variety. I think we can look at them because they are far more diverse than we are. I think we are far more homogeneous at this point in time. But, we can probably learn from them as we go forward on what else we need to keep in mind, when we actually become more diverse from a generational perspective.</p>
<p>Jaya</p>	<p>Absolutely. Absolutely true and correct, the way the Indian workforce is moving. You are going to have a huge chunk of the population being millennials and reduction in the other generations over the years. Not immediately but over the years. We can already see the baby-boomers you know, single digit percentages of baby-boomers and that will evolve, so at some point the baby boomers are not going to be the part of the workforce unless we look at doing something to actually extend the working age in India. Megha, you about you? What do you think? Are we heavily focused on GenY, why should be</p>



	<p>talking about the multi-generations in the workforce? Megha, I can't hear you. Sorry.</p>
Megha	<p>Sorry. I was on mute. Sorry. I think we are used to be focusing a lot on the GenY, but now the change is happening and it is happening fast. CISCO, as a company, I know, 4 years back they were talent recruiting from colleges, but now we are recruiting like, every year, I think about 500 college grads. So, that is definitely a good change that is happening. And, one more thing that needs to happen is that like Sreela said, I think we need to be given more responsibilities and there should be more millennials as leaders. And that way when you one millennial sitting on the board of leaders, I know that one millennial can influence 10 baby boomers or GenX to make that decision towards making that work for the betterment of the millennials. So, like you said, 90% of the workforce is going to be us. So, that is one change that needs to happen. Other than that, I think we are doing great as a country. We are moving slowly but we are moving steadily.</p>
Jaya	<p>That's great. Sreela, you know, just closing comments from you and I can see that we have one question that has come up from the audience that we can address. But we leave it to you to close with the comment on the fact that how focused are we on including you know multi generations and what can we do as organisations.</p>
Sreela	<p>You know, I am going to talk in the Indian context. Even though there has been a lot of attention given to GenY, I really think that in our organisation, 90% employees are GenY but 90% of leadership is GenX. So, in a country which is primarily culturally hierarchical in nature, even now, patriarchal and hierarchical. So, if GenX is sitting in positions with power, we still need to create the space to have conversations about with, for, of, by millennials. Because I don't think we have socially moved to a democratic space where our generations have an equal voice in the social space and it gets reflected in the workplace. And I am completely in favour of having continued conversations about leadership roles going to millennials. So, yeah, that's it from me.</p>
Jaya	<p>I am going to move to Megha. Megha, this question is for you. How can we keep the millennials interested in their jobs and</p>



	reduce the chances of them leaving after a couple of years? Or, if they do leave, how do we bring them back?
Megha	That's a tough one.
Jaya	I know it is. I don't want to put you in a spot, but whatever you can share with your experience, it will be great.
Megha	I think there is a trend where you work for a year or two and then you go for your higher studies. To get a better job. So, the best thing that a company could do to keep your millennial stay put in the company itself is, you know, get them interested. I know that a lot of companies, especially, companies like Cisco, where it is stuck on to process, stuck on to routine, you know, that's where we get bored. I come to office every day, I do exactly the same thing and I go back home. There is nothing really interesting after a certain point. That's why if we adopt the whole start up culture a little up, that might keep millennials in their jobs a little longer, where we are not stuck to one position, where we can jump from, you know, today I am working on one particular product. Tomorrow, I might be bored of that product, I should have the option, you know to move to another. I think if that flexibility can be achieved in a company, that will definitely keep is longer. But the whole idea of higher education and get a better job after is just too enticing to give up, sometimes.
Jaya Virwani	True and Thank you. Thank you for everyone for sharing so authentically their thoughts, their experiences, reflections of each of your generations. It has been an excellent discussion and thank you for being here with you. Thank you. Bye.