

DECODING THE YOUTH

Myth vs. Reality

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In today's game of 'Myth v. Reality', we'll break down common perceptions society has about the youth, the one segment of humanity that has been scrutinised the most, regardless of geography and time.

[Do keep in mind that in this article, 'the youth' refers to the millennials of Bangladesh.]

They're unsocial and obsessed with their phones
Mostly quoted by elderly relatives during family gatherings, this is an old accusation that has been around since the time of the first young smartphone user. While 'obsessed' is a strong word for this, kids do tend to use their phones to get away from mundane activities taking place around them.

But are they unsocial? That depends on how much we've come to accept the virtual world as a society. The thing is, the insanely fast progression of technology is redefining our modes of communication and that is taking its toll on conventional means of social interaction. Either this or the youth are just tired of gossiping about the absent relative.

They lock themselves up in their rooms and play video games all day
If you thought this one's a little too old and overused to stick around, you thought wrong. Playing video games is still socially frowned upon. Kids are expected to attend all classes and coaching sessions, and play *kana machhi bho bho* with their friends at the same time.

You just cannot and should not expect kids to put up with all the borderline illegal amount of schoolwork and then play games at non-existent playgrounds. But even after such adversities, the youth are actually going outside. There are cycle rallies, national and international MUN conferences, photo walks on the narrow streets of town and the broad meadows of the countryside, and lots of travelling.

So yes, the idea of all young people being couch potatoes is definitely a myth.

They don't read books anymore
It's quite evident that kids of today don't have shelves of books like their forefathers, and the books they have are usually textbooks and guide books. But is that proof enough to say that the youth have lost appreciation for literature? I can't vouch for all the young people but from personal experience I still see a majority of people reread-

ing a Rabindranath novel, reminiscing Masud Rana stories, and waiting for the newest international bestseller.

They're all grades and no substance
This is a complaint that has been building up for a while, finally exploding early this year when a certain news report went viral on social media. What should've been a qualm with the state of our education system became a full on shaming of the young SSC graduates along with the ones who preceded them.

While reports like that create a false image of a whole community based on the response of a few, the complaints from employers about the increasing amount of less-qualified jobseekers each year and the yearning of examinees and their parents for leaked questions prove that these are not false alarms. But that also doesn't do justice to the hordes of talented students participating and winning major national and international competitions each year, and proving their worth.

They're ignorant of the nation's history and the mother tongue
Every year, on the eve of a national day, unsuspecting teens who were probably just having an *adda* near a national monument are questioned by reporters about aspects of our history. Most of the aired responses are incorrect and honestly embarrassing. These wrong answers from a bunch of random kids quickly become a shining testimony of how the nation's youth, obsessed with western pop culture and influenced by political agendas of neighbouring countries, are becoming more and more ignorant of their motherland's history.

And then there are the examples of young people speaking surprisingly casually in a foreign language. It's no secret the influence foreign media has on young minds, especially the shows the kids watch nowadays.

Though this is a blatant generalisation, answers like "December 21 is our Independence Day" and "(something in Hindi/Urdu)" are clear indications of social problems that need to be addressed and dealt with.

They don't care about real world problems
I think, of all the criticisms about the youth, this one's the most prevalent. The main complaint in this regard is that the youth are too busy with Hollywood films and internet memes, and those who aren't don't do anything more than a few status updates. It's true not all youths are concerned with the day to day news, but neither are all adults.



There are myriad reasons for the youth not being more active about various real world issues. But they cannot be blamed just because they don't appear on the streets in large numbers every other day. They care, and they've spoken loud and clear in recent times. So before anyone starts with "Kids these days..." in a condescending tone, they should do their research.

Fatiul Huq Sujoy is a tired soul (mostly because of his frail body) who's patiently waiting for Hagrid to appear and tell him, "Ye're a saiyan, lord commander." Suggest him places to travel and food-ventures to take at fb.com/SyedSujoy.

