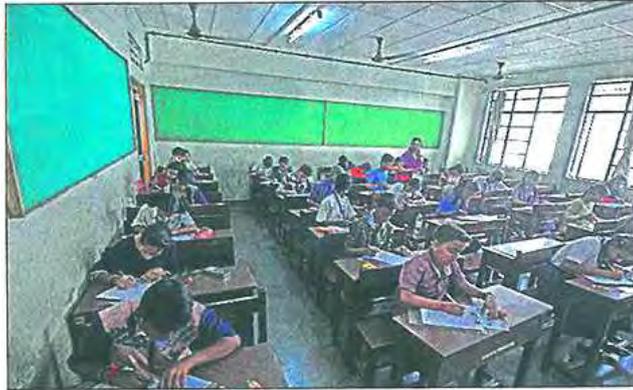


Tackling exam paper leakage



■ Papers getting leaked is becoming common news

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Papers getting leaked and exams being postponed as a result, have become common news these days. As the problem becomes more endemic, it becomes increasingly important to not JUST discuss steps to prevent leakage of papers, but also understand the problem itself; the context and environment that create this issue.

The students in classes X and XII, which see most of these paper leaks, belongs to a generation referred to as Generation Z (Gen Z).

What do we know about them? They were born between the years 1996-2010.

The strong connect with technology is a salient issue that should be discussed in the context of this problem. The first thing we need to remember, is that we are talking about the digital generation. Technology is an important part of their identity. Therefore, they are very prone to exposure and overexposure of social media and digital world (Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc). This is a generation constantly glued to their phones for information, news and chats and sharing information rapidly with each other. So, it comes as no surprise that the leaked papers spread like wild fire within seconds of its release!

Secondly, this technologically competent generation believes in working smart and is constantly on the lookout for smarter and shorter options. But because of their shorter attention spans and immediate need to gratify their needs they could be prone to making wrong choices. An impatient and individualistic generation IS MORE easily gullible to seeking shortcuts to reach their desired goal. These are also adolescents, no longer a child and not an adult yet. Because of their age and stage of life, they may not make

rational and thoughtful decisions, which REQUIRE CAREFUL analyses OF the price one pays for shortcuts! Thirdly, the parents of Gen Z are usually from the Gen X generation (born between years 1960-1980). They are highly qualified, result driven and pragmatic people. They can be pushy parents and want their children to be not just achievers but over achievers! For these parents, results tend to define them and their future and hence, children of such parents experience immense pressure to perform the best. This puts additional physical and emotional stress on the adolescents. Life comes to a standstill during these board exams. When stress is intense, any form of temporary relief whether good or bad seems to be a good option. Just as the leaked paper is a temporary solution to stress relief and increased performance. The materialistic, instant minded generation Z adolescents as a result, seeks the quickest and the shortest route to fame and success.

Perhaps, the solution lies in understanding the role of three crucial systems (home, school and coaching centers) in the lives of 10th and 12th grades. Our schools and home should provide space for open conversations about success, failures and emotional well-being. They should help identify strengths, weakness and coping mechanisms among students. Supportive parents and important resource and help children cope with stressors. There is a growing and pervasive presence of coaching centers in the lives of a large number of 10th and 12th graders. Lastly, we should acknowledge the role of multiple systems in teaching self-control, good decision-making and responsibility among our adolescents.

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