International Journal for Novel Research in Economics , Finance and Management
www.ijnrefm.com
Volume 4, Issue 2, Mar-Apr-2026, PP: 01-10
ISSN:3048-7722

Manipur's Forgotten Crisis: Urban Gen Z's Awareness Blindspot

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***Abstract* – The ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur has emerged as one of the most significant yet under-discussed humanitarian crises in contemporary India. Despite widespread violence, displacement, and socio-political instability, awareness among urban Gen Z populations remains limited and fragmented. This study investigates the awareness gap among young individuals in metropolitan areas, focusing on their sources of information, engagement levels, and perception of the crisis. Drawing on survey data, media consumption patterns, and digital behavior analysis, the research highlights how algorithm-driven platforms such as Instagram, X (Twitter), and YouTube contribute to selective exposure and issue fatigue. The findings suggest that while Gen Z demonstrates high digital connectivity, their awareness is often shaped by trends, influencer narratives, and short-form content, leading to superficial understanding or complete disengagement from complex regional conflicts. The paper argues that this "awareness blindspot" is influenced by media framing, geographic distance, and competing online content. It concludes by emphasizing the need for responsible digital literacy, inclusive media representation, and educational interventions to bridge the gap between national crises and youth consciousness.**

***Keywords* – Manipur; Ethnic Conflict; Gen Z; Urban Youth; Awareness Gap; Social Media Influence; Instagram; X (Twitter); YouTube; Digital Media; Information Consumption; India; Crisis Perception.**

I. INTRODUCTION

This research comes under Political Science and it looks at what Gen Z understand and feel toward major national matters particularly when it comes to political awareness and voting. This study mainly focuses on those born between 1997 to 2012 which are referred to as Gen Z. With nearly 377 million Gen Z make up around 27% of voters in India. According to recent voter demographic reports, Gen Z is the biggest voting group in India, making their awareness and political behaviour highly important.[News9 / Vijay Grover (2025)]

This research studies how certain communal issue like the Manipur crisis remains invisible to the Gen Z, the youth of India. Even though there has been massive displacement and suffering upon the north-eastern people in Manipur, the youth from India (excluding North-eastern youth) seems to know very little about it.

This creates a very serious issue i.e. if the voters are unaware about the crisis the politicians face no pressure to act on it.

This study uses three main ideas to explain this disconnect.

- **Agenda-setting Theory –** Proposes that what media chooses to cover becomes important to the public. Issues like Manipur might not be regularly covered on Instagram and other such platforms because of user interests and the platform's algorithm.

Studies conducted on Gen Z and political activism have also found that Instagram fuels passive activism rather than political education. [Priya Sharma (2025)]

• **Rational Ignorance –** Voter apathy towards issues that don't seem to affect them.

• **Electoral Accountability** – When the public is apathetic towards an issue there is no incentive for politicians to solve it.

Other literature has found that low youth voter turnout lowers the accountability pressure on our democracy to react to issues. [Drishti IAS (2024), Scroll.in, BBC news]

Youth in India, specifically those in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities help shape national conversation. A majority of these young voters are on Instagram for a few hours everyday. However, the usage of Instagram has been found to be passive. They might see posts going by on their feed but will not take any civic or political initiative. Northeast India's turmoil does not find it's a way onto their Instagram feeds, which prevents proper awareness regarding the current affairs of the country.

If a whole generation of voters that make up the majority of the electorate are passively consuming content on Instagram, there can be low regional awareness on serious crises.

A small sample survey done on Google forms in Feb of 2026 and 11 secondary sources also backs this claim that Instagram-induced passivity can create national apathy which leads to political inaction by the government.

This study attempts to fill the gap between existing research on youth political behaviour and the limited understanding of how youth apathy may turn into political apathy in India.

Research Initiative Profile

Title: Manipur's Forgotten Crisis: Urban Gen Z's Awareness Blindspot

Researcher: Samia Khan, Mumbai, Maharashtra. Independent academic researcher focusing on Gen Z political behavior and survey methodology.

ISSN:3048-7722

Timeline:

Phase 1(February 15th – 20th): Literature review, where 11 sources were selected and studied.

Phase 2 (February 23rd – 27th): Primary data collection through a Google Form survey.

Phase 3(March 1st–20th): Data analysis, which produced the 2.5 out of 10 awareness score.

Phase 4 (March 20th–25th): Final report writing and submission.

This study aims to measure the awareness level of urban Indian youth about the Manipur crisis and to understand whether their low awareness contributes to reduced civic and political responsiveness.

This study focuses on Gen Z aged 18-28 from Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities in India who use Instagram every day.

This study matters because it gives a clear-cut awareness score and explains how low awareness may result in low public and political attention on communal issues. The study also creates a new idea called the "Indifference Trap" which explains this complete chain step-by-step, and gives practical suggestions for how to teach young people about important issues they currently ignore.

Ethical Considerations: No respondents from the Northeast were included. This was done deliberately to capture the blind spot of Gen Z outside North-East India.

Research Output Profile

First result: The 2.5/10 awareness score. This study measures the level of awareness among Indian youth know about Manipur. When I asked them to rate their knowledge from 0 to 10, they averaged just 2.5.

Second result: The "indifference trap" model. It is an idea that explains the entire problem step by step. It shows how Instagram algorithm never shows Manipur posts (91% see zero monthly), how youth awareness level score is 2.5/10, and only 12.6% of the respondents were sure about voting for the cause, thus supporting the idea that politicians face low pressure which might cause inaction.

Third result: Literature review table with 11 sources. I organized all 11 research papers into a table that proves this isn't just my survey - it's a bigger pattern.

Fourth result: Practical suggestions to fix the problem.

What makes this study special: This study creates the 2.5/10 scale to track ignorance of regional crisis. The "indifference trap" is a concept that showed this exact cycle:

Instagram → ignorance → politician freedom chain.

This research is connecting Gen Z voting power with ignoring humanitarian crises.

Resources Used: Google Forms for the survey

II. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Scope of the Study

The focus of this study is to measure the extent to which Gen Z is aware about the present conflict situation in Manipur and to determine if the lack of awareness among this segment results in political apathy. The focus is on those living in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities, excluding those living in North-East, hence the Northeast segment was deliberately avoided. This was done to know the national blind spot without mixing this with the views of those who are already affected because of this crisis.

The study is based on the timeline starting from May 2023, when the conflict started, until early 2026 when the study was collected. The study is based on the knowledge level, the influence of social media on the knowledge level or lack thereof, and the link between youth apathy and political inaction.

The study does not aim to provide information about the Manipur conflict. Also, it does not intend to study individuals living in the affected areas. Rather, it measures the gap in knowledge possessed by individuals living far away from the crisis but with significant voting power.

Statement of the Problem

Due to the Meitei group's demand for ST status, the Manipur conflict began in May 2023 between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo, Naga, and other similar communities. As a result, over 70,000 people were displaced, over 227 people were killed, over 200 villages were destroyed, women were sexually assaulted, ambulances were filled with children, and there was still no appropriate government intervention.

As a result, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) affected 65.8% of displaced people. India has experienced a serious humanitarian crisis in recent years. According to previous reports, the conflict in Manipur has caused significant displacement, deep social division, and severe mental trauma among the impacted communities. [Scroll.in, 2024; Journal of Family Medicine, 2022]

The majority of young people outside North-East India seem to know very little about this suffering, despite how severe it is.

A Google Form was sent out to people across the country in February 2026, and the results showed that the urban Gen Z population scored an average of 2.5 out of 10 on Manipur awareness.

This is a dangerous cycle. The people who make up the largest voting group are unaware of this crisis and they are unaware that action needs to be taken by the politicians that represent them. The politicians, therefore, are unaware that action is required, and the crisis goes on, getting worse and worse, with the people affected remaining invisible to the rest of the country.

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www.ijnrefm.com
Volume 4, Issue 2, Mar-Apr-2026, PP: 01-10
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The problem this study addresses is simple but urgent, India's most powerful generation of voters is almost completely unaware of one of the country's ongoing humanitarian crisis, and this ignorance directly enables political inaction.

Objectives

- To measure the awareness level among Gen Z from Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities about the Manipur conflict using a survey.
- To understand the role of social media, particularly Instagram, in either spreading or failing to spread information about the Manipur crisis among the youth.
- To examine the attitude of urban Gen Z toward the issue, specifically whether they express indifference, concern, or willingness to learn more.
- To trace the connection between youth unawareness and political neglect, exploring how voter ignorance on regional issues leads to a lack of accountability from the decision maker.
- To suggest recommendations for improving awareness among young voters about regional humanitarian crises in India.

Statement of Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between respondents' awareness of the Manipur issue and their willingness to respond to the issue.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between respondents' awareness of the Manipur issue and their willingness to respond to the issue.

Variables of the Study

Independent Variable: The level of awareness about the Manipur crisis among urban Gen Z outside North-East India.

Dependent Variable: The degree of political apathy, emotional disconnect, or limited engagement toward the issue.

Limitations

1. **Self-selected sample:** The survey was conducted with the help of Google Forms, which implies that the survey participants chose to participate in the survey. This implies that the results of the survey may not reflect the views of the entire Gen Z population of India living in urban areas. It is possible that people who are slightly more aware or more interested in social issues chose to participate in the survey.
2. **Self-reported data:** The result of the survey is based on what they know. It is possible they over- or under-estimated what they actually know. There was no test to verify what they actually know
3. **Snapshot in time:** The time for the survey was February 2026. The level of awareness among the respondents may have increased after this time because of media reports, political situations, or a social media virus.
4. **Limited sample size:** The number of people interviewed for this research is low compared to a countrywide survey. The end results may show a trend, but they may not reflect the views of every young person in India.
5. **Secondary source limitations:** The 11 sources of secondary information used for literature review were selected based on availability and appropriateness of information for this study. There may be more information or reports not included in this review. There may be some unpublished work, especially in local tongues.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Instagram & Political Engagement Among Indian Gen Z - Priya Sharma (2025)

Hypothesis: Instagram creates passive engagement
Test Applied: Chi-square tests
Conclusion: It promotes surface-level engagement rather than deep political involvement. It can lower critical thought regarding complex conflict issues.

2. Few Indian Youngsters Registered to Vote - Scroll.in Team (2024)

Hypothesis: Voter registration gaps widening
Test Applied: Electoral data
Conclusion: Only 38% of 18–19 yr olds registered…It suggests a serious lack of political engagement among first-generation voters. This can undermine youth power in the political process.

3. Why India's Gen Z Not Protesting - BBC News (2025)

Hypothesis: Gen Z avoids street activism
Test Applied: Survey analysis
Conclusion: Online activism is not always translated into real-world engagement. Fear, professional motivation, and personal security could be factors in this case.

4. Engaging India's Youth in Voting - Drishti IAS (2024)

Hypothesis: Voter apathy threatens democracy
Test Applied: Policy review
Conclusion: Urgent youth mobilization needed 377 Million Gen-Z Indians: Youth Power - News9/Vijay Grover (2025)

Hypothesis: Quantify Gen Z as decisive voting bloc
Test Applied: Voter demographic analysis
Conclusion: 377M Gen Z = 27% electorate, which means they can decide national elections…If politically consolidated, GenZ can be a major force in determining election results.

6. Indian Youth In The Post-Pandemic World: Issues Of Education, Employment And Mental Health - Lokniti-CSDS (2022)

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Hypothesis: Unemployment is perceived as the most significant issue among youth compared to other socio-economic and political issues.
Test Applied: National survey (n=9,316 youth aged 15–34) + 500 Delhi oversample, 18 major states
Conclusion: The study concludes that unemployment remains the central issue influencing youth concern, indicating a strong demand for employment generation, economic development, and financial stability policies.

7. Impact of Manipur Conflict on Students - IJIP Research Team (2025)
Hypothesis: Conflict affects student well-being
Test Applied: Interviews
Conclusion: The study strongly indicates that media representation plays an important role in shaping how the conflict is perceived, as misinformation, biased narratives, and partial reporting influenced both emotional responses and public understanding of the crisis.

8. Manipur's Descent Into Civil War - Scroll.in (2024)
Hypothesis: Violence creates partition
Test Applied: Media tracking
Conclusion: Social splits along ethnic lines have increased social distrust. Government authority seems to be impaired in conflict areas.

9. Psychological Effects of Manipur Violence - Journal Family Medicine (2022)
Hypothesis: PTSD/GAD among 50,000+ relief camp IDPs
Test Applied: Cross-sectional survey (n=250 camps)
Conclusion: 65.8% PTSD, 15.2% severe anxiety. Women 2x risk. Zero mental health support. Trauma could impact long-term community rebuilding. Urgent psychological support is a major need.

10. PM Modi Avoids Manipur BJP MLAs - The Wire (2023)
Hypothesis: Document PM's refusal to engage own party
Test Applied: MLA delegation timeline
Conclusion: "18 BJP MLAs camped Delhi 2 weeks seeking PM meeting". Refused despite violence killing hundreds. Silence = discontent.

11. Manipur: Internet Suspended for Five Days in Ukhrul Amid Post-Riot tensions - News On AIR (2026).
Hypothesis: Post-riot tensions in Ukhrul are serious enough to require strict government intervention like internet suspension.
Test Applied: The government suspended internet services for five days to control misinformation and prevent further escalation of violence.
Conclusion: The action supports the hypothesis that tensions were significant, as authorities took preventive measures to maintain law and order.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a mixed-methods approach which means it combines both numbers and words to understand the problem. The main focus is on quantitative data, which is the numerical awareness score collected using google form survey, while qualitative data, like open-ended responses from respondents, plays a supporting role.

The research was carried out in three simple phases.

- In the first phase, a Google Form survey was used to collect information on how much Gen Z in India knows about the Manipur conflict.
- In the second phase, the open-ended responses were analysed to understand why awareness is so low, with many respondents saying things like "don't know" and even negative and unserious comments were recorded.
- In the third phase, both the results were combined to check if it supports the Indifference Trap model, which shows how youth ignorance leads to political inaction.

The study is mainly descriptive, aiming to establish a baseline of the low awareness regarding Manipur conflict among Gen Z.
This design was chosen because it directly answers the central question:
How does a low awareness level along with youth's apathy, selective behaviour, remove any electoral pressure on politicians to address the Manipur crisis?

Research Instrument
The primary tool used for data collection was a custom-built Google Form survey. It was live from February 23 to February 28, 2026, and was designed only to measure how aware Indian youth are about the Manipur conflict. The survey had 9 questions in total.

The 9 actual questions were:

- Rate your knowledge of Manipur conflict (0 = nothing, 10 = expert)
- Core result: Average 2.5/10 - most scored around 2
- If you know about Manipur, what's your main news source?
- Captured low-awareness baseline
- Rate your knowledge of India unemployment crisis (0 = nothing, 10 = expert)
- Control question - unemployment scored significantly higher than Manipur, tht may indicate issues that are trending and directly impacting the respondents are more known
- How many Manipur-related posts do you see monthly on social media?
- Instagram invisibility confirmed
- Would Manipur conflict affect your 2026 vote?
- Only 12.6% of the respondents were willing to vote for the issue
- Where are you from?
- 66% Tier 1 cities, 18.4% Tier 2 cities and others
- Age group?
- 18-28 Gen Z respondents
- Education level?
- Urban educated youth demographics

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Volume 4, Issue 2, Mar-Apr-2026, PP: 01-10
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- What do you know about Manipur conflict and from where?

This question served as the final open-ended question which was mostly don't know" responses.

Sources of Data

This study used two types of data.

Primary data was collected directly by the researcher through the Google Form survey. It was collected in February 2026. A total of 103 urban from Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities aged 18 to 28 participated. The key outputs from this data include the 2.5 out of 10 awareness score, only 12.6% of the respondents were willing to vote for the issue.

Secondary data came from 11 peer-reviewed sources that were carefully selected to support the primary findings.
All secondary sources were collected through online research.

Sampling Frame and Sampling Method

This study is concerned with is the 377 million Gen Z voters in India aged 18 to 28. Within that roughly 85 million youth living in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities were targeted.The specific group targeted was Instagram-active urban youth in this age range. The final number of respondents was 103.

- In the first stage, 25 initial respondents were selected directly from the researcher's personal and university networks in Mumbai. These were to be aged 18 to 28 and active Instagram users spending more than 2 hours daily on the platform.
- In the second stage, the researcher shared the survey with few friends outside Mumbai who fit the same criteria and told them to forward the form further.
- In the third stage, the researcher checked whether the results were becoming consistent. By the time the sample reached 103, the awareness score had stabilized at 2.5 out of 10. This indicated more responses were not likely to change the overall picture, so collection was stopped.

Who was included: Anyone aged 18 to 28, living in a in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities and using Instagram daily.
Who was excluded: Anyone from the Northeast (this was a deliberate choice to focus on the Gen Z outside North-East India blind spot), anyone over 28.

In terms of sample quality, the respondents were representative of
Gen Z, with most of the using Instagram daily. The split between Tier 1 cities at 66% and Tier 2 cities at 18% gives a reasonable spread across urban India.
The study acknowledges that the self-selected nature of the sample is a limitation, but this is justified given the exploratory nature of the research.

Statistical Tools Used

The data collected through the Google Form survey was analysed using simple statistical tools with the help of Microsoft Excel. These tools were used to study the awareness level of respondents, their response patterns, and the relationship between selected variables. The tools used in this research are explained below:

1. Mean

Research Questions 1 and 3 required awareness score for each respondent. Therefore, Mean was applied to calculate average awareness score based on respondents' rating from '0' to '10', the mean helped in finding the overall awareness level. The average awareness score was found to be 2.5 out of 10, showing that awareness was very low among the respondents.

2.Percentage Analysis

Percentage Analysis was used in simple forms of calculating percentage under each category of questions to represent the number of respondents falling in each category like awareness about the issue, visiting Manipur through social media, issue affecting their vote and etc. It also helps to compare results easily.

3.Frequency Distribution

Frequency Distribution was one of the applied statistics tool used to group response under different categories like low awareness level and medium awareness level towards the issue.

4. Charts and Graphs

Charts and graphs were used to present the findings in a visual and easy-to-understand form. Bar graphs, pie charts, and other visual tools were used to show awareness levels, social media exposure, and response patterns of the respondents.

5. Chi-Square Test

Chi-Square test statistic was applied to test the hypothesis of this study. Using this test, we came to know whether there exists a significant relationship between awareness level and willingness to respond to the situation. Here,
∴ Calculated $\chi 2$ is 32.26 > Table value 9.488
∴ We reject the Null Hypothesis (Ho) at 5% level of significance and degree of freedom 4
Conclusion: There is a significant relationship between Awareness level about Manipur conflict and willingness to respond to the situation.

6. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used for analysing data collected from the open-ended responses collected from the survey. This helped in understanding not only what respondents knew, but also how they reacted to the issue.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This shows awareness about Manipur conflict is low among Gen z

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Volume 4, Issue 2, Mar-Apr-2026, PP: 01-10
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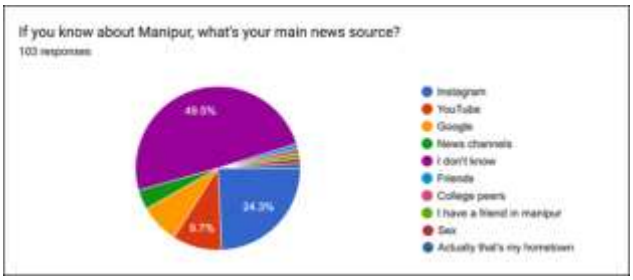
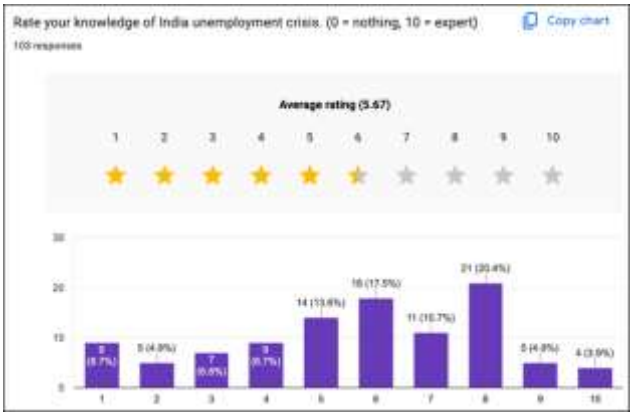
This low awareness level matches with previous reports and researches that regional conflicts often receive low attention from youth outside the directly affected area. [BBC news (2025)]



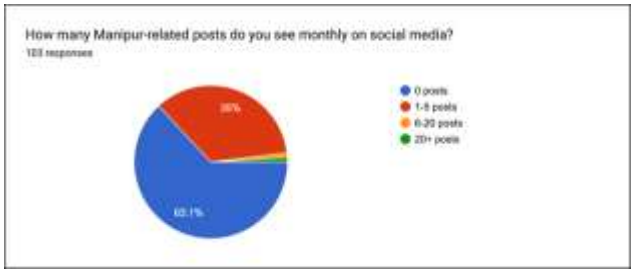
Analysis: 49.5% "Idk" means almost half of Gen Z has very low exposure to Manipur conflict. Some respondents gave unserious or dismissive responses to the topic.



Analysis: Unemployment scored 5.6/10 (2.7x higher than Manipur's 2.5/10) because it's a national issue affecting urban Gen Z directly (jobs, career anxiety).

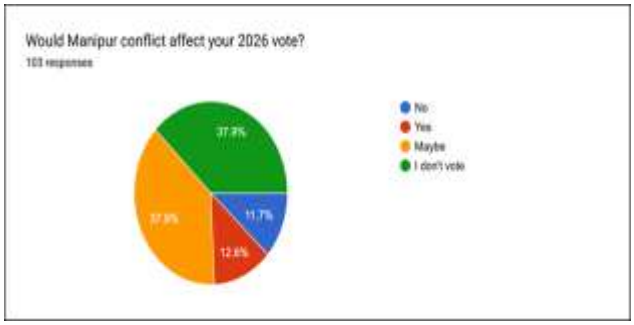
Supports indifference trap:
Youth know national problems (5.6/10) but ignore regional crises (2.5/10) → politicians prioritize urban job promises over Manipur aid → zero electoral pressure on humanitarian issues.

This finding is also supported by a Lokniti-CSDS youth survey (2022) conducted on 9,316 young people, which showed that unemployment was one of the biggest concerns among youth (3207 out of 9316). In comparison, only a very small number (59) of respondents were concerned about issues like communalism and lack of religious harmony. This suggests that young people are more likely to focus on issues that affect them directly, while larger social and regional problems often receive less attention.



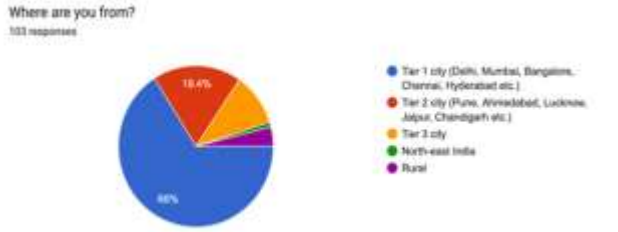
Analysis: 63.1% see ZERO Manipur posts monthly despite ongoing crisis. 35% see only 1-5 posts (mostly quick-scroll Instagram reels). This indicates passive scrolling behaviour.

Gen Z passively scrolls through feeds without engaging regional content.
No active participation + passive consumption = 2.5/10 awareness + indifference trap starts here.
This finding supports earlier research showing that Instagram often promotes passive engagement and may not expose users to complex regional issues consistently.[Priya Sharma (2025)]



Analysis: Only 12.6% would vote differently for Manipur crisis - 87.4% combined indifference ("Maybe", "Don't vote", "No"). 75.8% either don't vote or won't act on regional crises.

This Suggests low influence on voting decisions of respondents : Less than 1 in 8 Gen Z voters would hold politicians accountable. This level of ignorance means politicians face no voting consequences for ignoring Manipur completely. Supports the final step of Indifference trap i.e. no awareness → no votes → sustained neglect.



The majority of respondents in this study belong to Tier 1 cities (66%), followed by Tier 2 cities (18.4%). A smaller number of responses came from Tier 3 cities, rural areas, and even the North-East.

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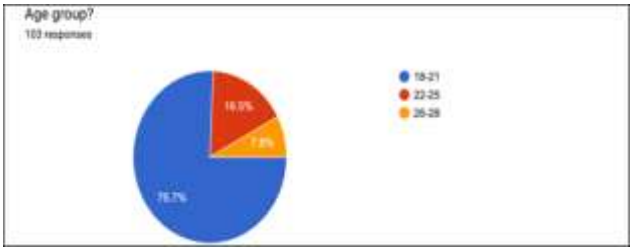
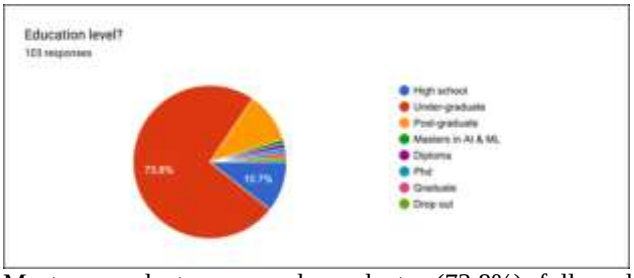
Volume 4, Issue 2, Mar-Apr-2026, PP: 01-10
ISSN:3048-7722



The largest share of respondents belonged to the 18–21 age group (75.7%), followed by 22–25 (16.5%) and 26–28 (7.8%).

This shows that the sample is mainly made up of younger Gen Z respondents, especially college-age individuals. Since this age group is highly active on social media, it is relevant for studying awareness and digital political exposure.



Most respondents were undergraduates (73.8%), followed by high school students (10.7%), while a smaller number belonged to postgraduate and other educational categories. This indicates that the sample largely consists of educated urban youth, which makes the low awareness levels found in the study more significant and noteworthy.

Analysis: 62% unaware proves the 2.5/10 awareness score, most urban Gen Z have low knowledge about Manipur despite 3 years of ethnic violence. Only 12% fully aware of Meitei-Kuki conflict details.

Extreme responses reveal dismissive and unserious attitudes: "What is Manipur? Is it in India?" shows basic lack of awareness from educated youth. "S*x", "i know f**k all", "ion run it" demonstrate lack of seriousness toward humanitarian crisis displacing 70,000 Indians.

87% combined unawareness/problematic responses = zero electoral pressure.

Supports the Indifference trap, Low knowledge and low concern may reduce public pressure on political leaders to respond to the issue.

This is also supported by news reports which highlight limited response from the government regarding the Manipur issue (The Wire, 2023).

METHOD OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING – CHI-SQUARE TEST

A Chi-square test is a statistical test used to determine whether a significant relationship exists between two variables, such as Willingness to vote and Manipur conflict awareness level in this research's context. It compares the observed frequencies (actual collected survey data) with the expected frequencies (values predicted under the assumption of no relationship) to check for dependence.

The formula for the Chi-square test is:
$\chi^2 = \Sigma (O - E)^2 / E$
where O represents the observed frequency, and E represents the expected frequency.

If the calculated Chi-square value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means there is a significant relationship between the variables.
If the calculated Chi-square value is less than the table value, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means there is no significant relationship between the variables.

Awareness	Yes (13)	Maybe (39)	No/Don't (51)	Total
Low (1-3)	1	32	44	77
Med (4-6)	7	6	5	18
High (7-10)	5	1	6	12
Total	13	39	55	107

Row no.	Column No.	O	E	(O-E)	(O-E)^2	(O-E)^2/E
1	1	1	9.36	-8.36	69.81	7.462
1	2	32	28.07	3.93	15.48	0.552
1	3	44	39.58	4.42	19.54	0.494
2	1	7	2.19	4.81	23.17	10.593
2	2	6	6.56	-0.56	0.31	0.048
2	3	5	9.25	-4.25	18.08	1.954
3	1	5	1.46	3.54	12.55	8.605
3	2	1	4.37	-3.37	11.38	2.602
3	3	6	6.17	-0.17	0.03	0.005
Total						32.315

For this research on Gen Z political awareness (n=103), the Chi-square test examines whether significantly Willingness to vote from Q5 responses correlates with awareness levels from Q1 responses.

Now when you go to the Chi-square table:

- df = (r-1)(c-1)= 4

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- significance level = 0.05

Then the table gives: 9.488

32.315>9.488

Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected indicating that there is a significant association between respondents' awareness of Manipur issue and their willingness to respond to the issue.

VI. FINDINGS

This study found that awareness level of Gen Z about the Manipur conflict only scored an average of 2.5 out of 10. A large number of respondents showed little to no knowledge about the issue.

It was also found that most respondents do not regularly see content related to Manipur on social media, which may contribute to this low awareness.

The results further show that awareness is connected to response behaviour. Respondents with higher awareness were more likely to give clear responses, while those with low awareness showed uncertainty or lack of interest.

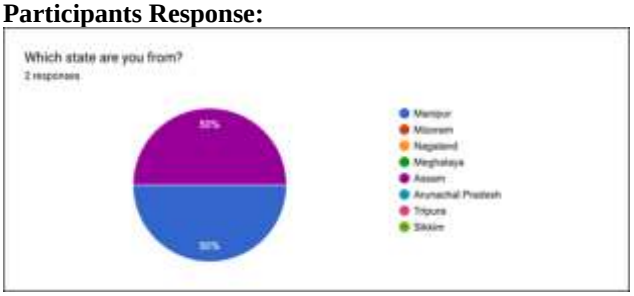
The Chi-square test confirmed that there is a significant relationship between awareness level and willingness to respond.

Additional Qualitative Insight

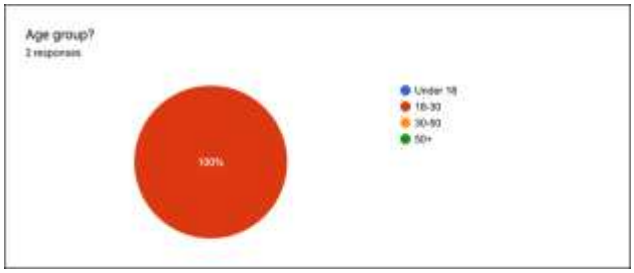
Although the primary focus of this study was on urban Gen Z outside North-East India, a separate supplementary Google Form was also created to understand how people from the North-East feel about Indians' awareness of their region. However, only two response was received, so it was not included in the formal analysis. The responses were received from young individuals from the North-East India, specifically Manipur and Assam. While these respondents cannot be treated as representative, it provides a valuable perspective from someone more closely connected to the issue.

Even a single response such as these adds depth to the findings by showing the human impact of indifference.

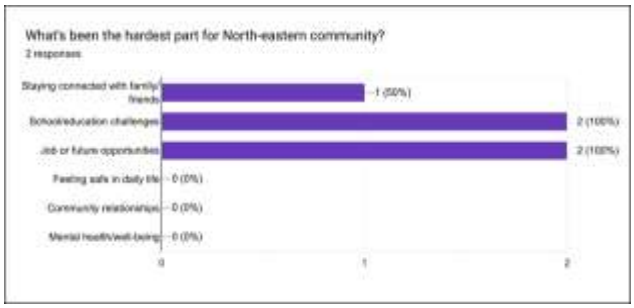
Participants Response:



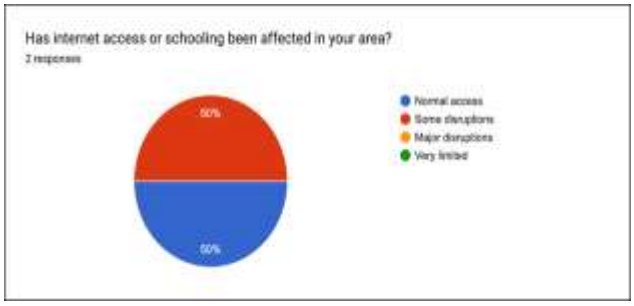
One respondent was directly from Manipur, the additional response from Assam is also relevant because it highlights the sense of disconnect that North-east Indians may feel from the rest of India.



Both the individuals belonged to the same age group i.e. 18-30, which will help to understand the perspective of these young individuals from the affected areas.



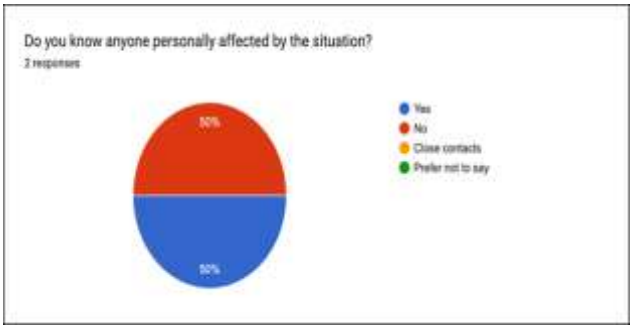
From the answers, as per the individuals' responses the most pressing issues facing the North-Eastern community are disruptions in education and lack of job or future prospects, as highlighted by both respondents. However, one of the respondents also pointed out the issue of staying in touch with family and friends, indicating social disruption

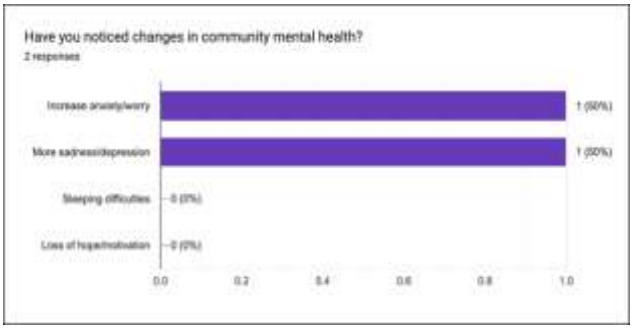


With regard to infrastructure and access, the respondent from Manipur indicated experiencing some internet and infrastructure-related disruptions, while the respondent from Assam reported no major such difficulties.

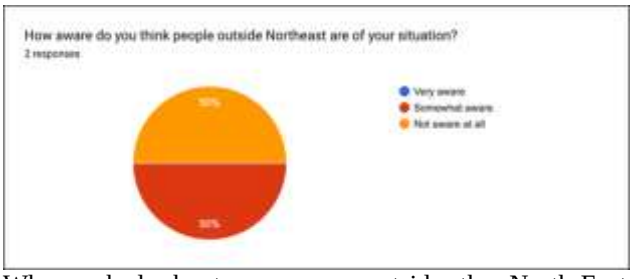
This is especially significant in the context of Manipur, where repeated government-imposed internet shutdowns were used during periods of unrest. Such shutdowns may have not only effected communication and daily life within the state, but also reduced the flow of information to the rest of India, thereby contributing to the broader lack of awareness surrounding the crisis. [News On AIR (2026)]

International Journal for Novel Research in Economics , Finance and Management
www.ijnrefm.com
Volume 4, Issue 2, Mar-Apr-2026, PP: 01-10
ISSN:3048-7722



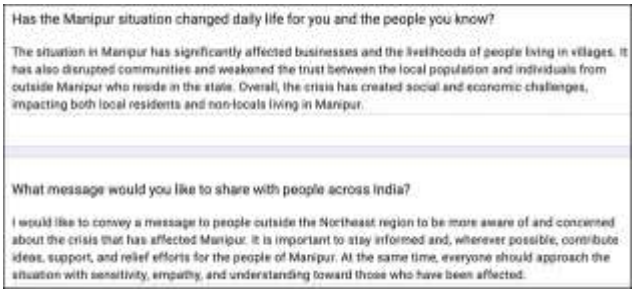


As per the responses, Mental health effects were also evident, with respondents reporting an increase in anxiety, worry, and sadness, suggesting that the crisis has psychological consequences even beyond immediate physical impact.



When asked about awareness outside the North-East, responses revealed that 50% believe people are only somewhat aware, while 50% believe people are not aware at all.

This directly supports the central argument of this study regarding the awareness gap among mainland populations.



The response from the participant from Manipur indicates that the crisis has moved beyond the violence, effecting the lives of people. The reference to disrupted business indicates that the crisis has created long-term financial liability, especially for people who live in vulnerable areas, such as villages. The damage of trust between people from the region and non-locals indicates that the crisis has an impact not only at political or physical level, but also at social or psychological level.

The message from the respondent to the people of the rest of India highlights the main concern that supports this research, that the crisis in Manipur has not recieved the level of awareness, concern, or empathy that it deserves from people who are not from the North-East. This reflects the emotional distance that people from the North-East feel from the rest of India. This supports the view that the issue is not only about conflict, but also about issues of neglect, invisibility, or lack of concern.

Although the respondent did not claim to have been impacted in their daily life, their message also represents a larger issue of identity, recognition, and acceptance. While this response cannot be taken as representative of the entire region of North-East and this cannot be treated as a formal finding, it is a perspective that represents how some people who are closer to this region may feel about such issue.

The respondent wrote: "Treat North-Eastern people as Indians and not as some other country residents."

It offers an important reflection on the emotional distance that may exist between the people outside North-East India and the North-East India. It suggests that low awareness may not only be about lack of information, but also about a deeper sense of disconnect.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Awareness about regional issues like Manipur should be included in school and college-level education to improve understanding among young people.
2. Social media platforms and influencers should promote more informative and factual content about important national issues instead of only entertainment-based content.
3. Short and simple content formats (like reels or short videos) can be used to explain complex issues in a way that is easy for Gen Z to understand.
4. Government and institutions should run awareness campaigns specifically targeting urban youth.
5. Young people should be encouraged to follow reliable news sources to stay informed about national and regional issues.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study shows that urban Gen Z in India has low awareness of the Manipur conflict, despite it being a serious national issue. The findings suggest that this lack of

ISSN:3048-7722

awareness is linked to limited exposure on social media and low personal interest.

The study also found that awareness plays an important role in shaping how people respond to issues. When awareness is low, people are less likely to care or take action.

Overall, the study highlights the need to improve awareness among youth so that important issues receive the attention they deserve.

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