

## TRUMP AT G-7

At Evian, France, where leaders of major economies met under the banner of G-7, US President Donald Trump stood out. He did not come up as an extraordinary leader or a statesman, but as someone with whom the world doesn't know how to deal with. Trump through his body language and words once again proved that the world is dealing with not just a difficult but an global thug as the leader of the USA. He is like a bully in the classroom, who breaks all the rules of even basic engagement with peers. He exhibits lack of seriousness while attending sessions of G-7. He tends to mock or ignore important leaders who are there for work. First of all, he displayed his utter contempt and probably disapproval of his host French President Emmanuel Macron. This is not the first time, he has made his face at Macron and held his hand without looking at him; Trump had infamously spoken against him for not joining NATO invasion of Russia and that time even attacking his personal life. At Aivan, he picked former US President Barack Obama for criticism, leveled serious charges of helping Iran with huge amount of money and calling him names was an insane behaviour from the world leader. While the summit was going on, he even dozed off showing his utter disinterest in how the world works. However, he paid a lot of left handed compliments to Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling him a "tough guy" a "good bargainer" and his "friend for a long time." Most shockingly, while the US-Iran deal for ending the war is yet to be signed he choose the Summit to warn Tehran that he will throw bombs on their heads if they chose to violate the terms of the ceasefire. With such a whimsical leader as head of one of the most powerful countries, the world faces difficulties.

## Media and the future of geostrategic communication

Chaitanya K Prasad

Conversations as part of narrative-building exercises in the geostrategic space are influenced by complex factors, identities and tools. In this day and age of instant communication, where ideas and views are churned out on a 24x7 basis, narrative-building and perception management suffer within the overall framework of consistency, authenticity and transparency. This is particularly relevant to the dissemination of information and messaging. Narrative-building today is viewed as a stepping stone for agenda management and power equations between nations, stakeholders and entities. The challenge before narrative-building in the geostrategic space is to wean itself off coercion disguised as influence through content, values, non-state stakeholders and compelling yet resonant tools and ideas.

A critical element in the ecosystem is the integration and interconnection between ideas, perception, storytelling, engagement and strategic messaging, and its relationship with the role of AI in driving the narrative ecosystem. In this algorithmic age, where tools drive and assess sentiments, moods and perceptions, narrative discourse has become increasingly obsessed with technology-driven ideas, integrated with complex and diverse stakeholders and the intense push of data-driven communication.

As a consequence, the geostrategic communication space today is witnessing narrative manipulation to suit particular nations, blocs, entities and national interests. The contours of the media space emerging from this narrative conflict reflect a tug of war between ideas, opinions, perspectives and algorithms, leading to a confusing media literacy environment within the communication space. As opinions change instantly, thanks to the information blitz, it is critical that the foundations of media literacy remain sound, deep, robust and stable. The ability to evaluate content objectively and access information through the prism of accuracy, credibility and trust



must become central to the communication ecosystem. The media literacy ecosystem should distinguish information through facts, credible sources, responsible tools and strong media support structures.

The media literacy architecture is influenced by multiple narratives and instruments of information dissemination that shape the language and angles of public debate, views and perceptions. Today, media literacy is subject to multiple influences and perspectives. It must constantly contend with the power of ideas and concepts that continue to flow from stakeholders at all levels.

Today, in the geopolitical space, there is an urgent need to balance communication contests that are taking place at different levels and serving several purposes. The challenge within the media literacy framework is to create proactive "communication understanding" between stakeholders, communication instruments, national priorities, audience perceptions, national image and identity, and emerging communication interpretations. One needs to understand that the communication order operates in a borderless world, wherein narrative-building techniques are strategically positioned to influence viewpoints, communication outreach, resources, campaigns, and emerging collaborations and partnerships. Hence, in 2026, it is critical that media literacy frameworks reinforce the foundations of communication coherence, understanding and appeal.

At the same time, the idea of national image has become far more layered than

before. It is no longer shaped only by official statements, diplomatic exchanges, press briefings or institutional communication. It is also shaped by clips, memes, influencers, explainers, podcasts, digital campaigns and citizen-led conversations. A single image, phrase, headline or edited video can travel faster than a formal clarification. This has made strategic communication more immediate, but also more vulnerable. In the geostrategic space, perception often moves ahead of policy explanations. Therefore, communication systems must not merely react to narratives after they have gained momentum. They must be designed to anticipate, interpret and respond with clarity, credibility and speed.

This is where media literacy becomes more than a civic skill. It becomes a strategic necessity. A society that can distinguish between information, misinformation, disinformation and propaganda is better placed to protect its democratic discourse and national interests. Similarly, institutions that understand the emotional, cultural and technological behaviour of audiences can communicate more responsibly. The goal is not only to counter falsehoods, but also to create trust-based communication ecosystems where facts are accessible, public reasoning is encouraged and informed participation is strengthened.

The growing role of artificial intelligence adds another layer to this challenge. AI tools can assist in translation, outreach, sentiment mapping, content creation and audience analysis. However, the same tools can also be used to manufacture synthetic realities through deepfakes, automated propaganda, manipulated visuals, fake amplification and targeted psychological messaging. The future of geostrategic communication will therefore depend on how societies build ethical safeguards around technology. Algorithms cannot be allowed to become invisible editors of pub-

lic perception without accountability. Transparency on digital platforms, responsible AI use, verification protocols and institutional preparedness will be central to protecting the information space.

The critical idea within the media literacy architecture is to design a process that understands and interprets the communication ecosystem. In the age of instant communication, a robust media literacy process will ensure a level playing field and ward off misinformation, manipulation and information malpractice. It is the strong foundation of media literacy that will prevent fakery, fake news and deliberate propaganda. As media platforms become increasingly diverse and complex, it is critical to design a process that consumes content through the checks and balances of the media dissemination framework.

It is a reality today that every individual is a citizen journalist. Each person is a source of dissemination, interpretation, evaluation and response. The gateway for consuming and processing information is circuitous, complex and accessible on a 24x7 basis.

This gateway must empower every individual with the skills to access, analyse, process, evaluate and participate in communication discourse. The challenge, therefore, is to connect with the core message, understand it and interpret it effectively.

The media literacy landscape also faces the challenges of communication diversity, participation, technology-driven content, multimedia messaging and communication symbolism. A robust media literacy framework must also address communication fabrication, including fake news, manipulated images, deepfakes, statistical distortion and algorithm-driven influence.

Going forward, the strength of any communication ecosystem will depend on how effectively it can combine speed with responsibility, influence with ethics, and technology with trust. In the geostrategic space, the most powerful narratives will not merely be the loudest or fastest, but the most credible, consistent and rooted in public confidence.

## CAN WE TRULY UNDERSTAND ANOTHER GENERATION?

Sharmila Vaidya

I often heard terms like Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, etc. used in everyday conversations, especially by younger people. To be honest, I did not know much about these terms or pay much attention to them. One day, out of curiosity, I decided to look into them.

I discovered that these labels refer to groups of people born within a span of roughly 15 to 18 years. Each of these periods, or generations, is associated with similar social trends, value systems, technology, culture and other characteristics unique to that period of time. Baby Boomers were people born between 1946 and 1964. They grew up in the post-World War II period and witnessed significant political unrest, as well as economic and social change.

Gen X, born between 1965 and 1980, served as a bridge between the traditional world of their parents and the digital world of their children. Similarly, all the other generations had their own unique trends and changes that defined them, whether Millennials, Gen Z or the latest one, Gen Alpha.

I also found that these categorisations originated in the United States and later spread throughout the world because of social media, technology and globalisation.

As I explored these generations, I began to wonder whether these labels were truly



meaningful. To find out, I conducted an informal survey targeting both older and younger adults. It was interesting to note that most people over sixty saw these groups as stereotypes that failed to recognise individuality.

Some felt it made more sense to divide time into broad periods such as the World War era, the age of computers, mobile phones and AI, or even into decades such as the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The younger generation, however, was more accepting of these labels. There was a general consensus

that grouping people into different generations was important. It helped explain how people from one generation differed from those of another with respect to education, technology, lifestyle and social values.

According to these labels, I would be classified as Gen X. Looking back, some of the major events that influenced my life were the war with Pakistan, the Emergency period and the assassination of our then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. I also witnessed the arrival of computers, cable television and later smartphones.

Life seemed simpler, yet it was also a period of rapid social and technological change. I remember the excitement of watching television and the thrill of flying for the first time. The impact of those experiences shaped my value system and influenced the person I am today.

However, the main question is whether these categorisations are meaningful and useful in helping us understand people better. Do the events and changes people experience during their formative years help shape their outlook on life? As parents, can we truly comprehend the experiences and struggles our children face today?

Can we appreciate the pressures of social media, the demands of a rapidly changing world and the emotional stresses they encounter daily? As we counsel and advise them based on our own experiences, are we helping them or unintentionally adding to their struggles? Can we truly stand in their shoes and see the world through their eyes?

Maybe these labels are worthwhile after all. They not only define generations but also offer a glimpse into the world that shaped them. If they help us better understand the experiences, pressures and struggles faced by our children, they may also encourage us to listen more and judge less quickly. Only then can we truly appreciate the challenges faced by each generation.

## Reimagining India-Japan relations: The transformative role of universities

C Raj Kumar

India and Japan are at a pivotal moment in their relationship. Both countries are trying to find their place in the rapidly changing global environment. In this context, the most important investment they can make is not only in infrastructure or technology, but in education.

I believe that India and Japan need to build a transformative relationship for the 21st century, where education transitions from the margins to the centre of bilateral engagement between India and Japan. The next chapter of India-Japan relations should have a multi-pronged approach focusing on academic collaboration, developed through universities.

Academic collaboration large-scale student mobility

The most important policy priority should be to dramatically increase student mobility. India sends thousands of students abroad every year. Most students

prefer destinations such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Europe. Unfortunately, Japan rarely appears among the preferred destinations for Indian students despite possessing world-class universities.

Japanese universities are leaders in advanced technology, with strong research capabilities, world-class laboratories, and prolific scholars. They provide learning opportunities leading to potentially significant employment outcomes.

This impasse vis-à-vis Indian students must change. India and Japan should focus on bringing at least 50,000 Indian students to Japanese universities over the next decade.

We need to develop scholarships, tuition fee support, language training programmes, preparatory programmes, and a significantly simplified admission system, all of which should support this objective.

On the other hand, Japanese

students should be encouraged to spend semesters, summer and winter programmes, and pursue research opportunities in Indian universities. The vision of educational mobility must become a central feature of India-Japan relations rather than a peripheral activity of marginal significance.

Reforming the visa regime and employment policies

Indian students tend to prefer English-speaking destinations because these countries are believed to have clear and predictable pathways from education to employment. The visa regimes in these countries have enabled graduates to have post-study work opportunities.

Japan should adopt an attractive framework that draws on the vision of these countries when it comes to creating incentives for Indian students to study and then plan towards working in Japanese society.

Indian students who choose to complete their higher studies in Japanese universities should be

awarded streamlined work opportunities and work visas after their studies.

There is a case for a multi-year automatic work visa pathway pursuant to graduation, which would significantly enhance Japan's attractiveness for Indian students.

This suggestion assumes significance in the light of the fact that Japan faces demographic decline, labour shortages, and an ageing population. On the other hand, India is gifted with the world's youngest population. The complementarities between India and Japan are obvious.

The focus on educational mobility and skilled migration between India and Japan should be seen from the perspective that is mutually beneficial than an independent policy domain.

Establishing Japan studies centres in India and India studies centres in Japan

There is a case for establishing a nationwide network of Japan Studies centres in leading Indian

universities, anchored by a flagship institution inspired by Hiroshima's remarkable journey from devastation to renewal. Such centres of Japan Studies would not only study Japan's history; they would also examine how universities, research institutions, companies, business enterprises and innovation ecosystems contributed to Japan's rise from the ashes of war to become one of the world's most advanced and thriving economies. Instead of functioning as symbolic academic centres, they ought to become vibrant hubs of learning, knowledge sharing, and experience gathering, through language training, policy research, public lectures, collaborative projects, interdisciplinary initiatives, capacity-building programmes, and experiential learning.

In the same way, universities in Japan should establish or strengthen India Studies centres that would examine India's history, economy, political system, technological transformation, so-

cial diversity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

A holistic partnership between India and Japan requires a range of experts and, in the absence of their availability, despite strong diplomatic and economic ties, the outcome can remain superficial. Therefore, universities have a critical role in cultivating the longitudinal intellectual understanding that transcends beyond government engagement.

Corporate funding for research Japanese corporations have achieved extraordinary success in India. Indian companies are beginning to expand their presence in Japan. These companies should invest systematically and substantially in university partnerships.

Japanese corporations operating in India and Indian companies in Japan should support: Research Chairs; Research Centres; Fellowships; Scholarships; Academic Exchanges; Policy Research Initiatives.

Such programmes would help

universities focus on developing long-term expertise while recognising that students who gain exposure to real-world industry perspectives can make a significant contribution to the relationship. Corporate involvement will also help bridge the gap between academic learning and workforce requirements. These investments may be viewed as acts of corporate philanthropy.

They also are, or ought to be seen as, strategic investments in future talent, innovation, technology transfer, and cross-border collaboration. Over a period of time, sustained corporate engagement can also contribute to the establishment of a powerful knowledge partnership that connects universities, industries, and governments.

Such an initiative would strengthen intellectual exchange, institutional partnership, and economic cooperation, resulting in the India-Japan relationship being more resilient and future-oriented.