

Gen Z : Economic Challenges, Unemployment, Transparency and Accountability

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In a small living room late at night, a millennial father sat across from his Gen Z son, both staring at the same newspaper headline about rising youth unemployment. The father recalled how securing a job used to be straight forward; study hard, apply, and eventually succeed. But his son, despite being more educated, more skilled, and more connected to the world, struggled to find a stable job. Their conversation revealed not just a personal concern but a generational reality shared by millions of young people today. This shift reflects a broader pattern in human history. Since the evolution of human society, every generation has been shaped by the economic, social, and technological condition of its time. As the world changes, new generations develop distinct expectations, challenges. Within this ongoing evolution, Generation Z - born between 1997 and 2012 - has emerged stands out uniquely digital, globally aware, and socially conscious generation. Growing up amid rapid technological change, economic instability, rising living costs, and political uncertainty, Gen Z has developed heightened sensitivity to issues of fairness, corruption, and opportunity. Gen Z faces growing economic challenges shaped by limited financial opportunities and rapid technological shifts, which collectively restrict their economic mobility. At the same time youth unemployment among

Gen Z is fueled by mismatch between educational preparation and market demands, leaving them highly qualified yet underemployed. Adding to these pressures, Gen Z has also witnessed persistent failures in government accountability, corruption scandals and opaque merit based decision making, intensifying their demand for transparency and accountability.

Thus, Gen Z faces significant economic challenges, rising unemployment and failures in transparency and accountability.

To begin with, understanding the economic challenges faced by Gen Z, the very first is rising living costs leading to financial insecurity. Simply put, this insecurity stems from the widening gap between stagnant incomes and rapidly increasing expenses such as housing, food, transportation, and education. In the Eurozone, high inflation in the recent years pushed thousands of young people into delayed adulthood as rent and essential goods become unaffordable. Similarly, in United Kingdom, survey shows that a significant share of Gen Z struggles to cover monthly expenses, with many unable to save or plan for long term goals due to soaring living costs. Thus, rising living costs that lead to financial insecurity is an economic challenge faced by Gen Z.

Secondly, a major economic challenge faced by Gen Z is the widening wealth gap that leaves them with fewer opportunities.

for upward mobility. The growing divide between the wealthy elite and the rest of the population limits young people's ability to secure quality education, stable employment, and long-term financial progress. In the South African region, which remains one of the most unequal societies in the world, the richest 10% control over 85% of national wealth, leaving most young people with limited career pathways and persistent financial strain. Therefore, this deep inequality narrows Gen Z's chances of achieving economic stability. Therefore, widening wealth gaps that limit opportunities is a major economic challenge faced by Gen Z.

Likewise, wage stagnation has become a significant economic challenge that decreases upward mobility for Gen Z. Despite being more educated and skilled, many young workers are entering labour markets where earnings have not kept pace with inflation. This lack of income growth limits Gen Z's ability to save, invest or plan for long-term goals such as home ownership or financial independence. In the United Kingdom, studies show that real wages for young workers have shown little to no growth over the past decade, leaving many unable to progress economically despite consistent effort. Hence, wage stagnation that restricts upward mobility is a major economic challenge faced by Gen Z.

Following this brief discussion of the economic challenges faced by Gen Z, the



next section will explore some key challenges faced by gen z in regards with unemployment.

Firstly, a major unemployment related challenge faced by the Gen Z is the growing mobilization against job injustice. Many young people experience unfair recruitment systems, limited opportunities and discriminatory hiring practices that prevent them from securing stable employment despite having the required qualifications. This growing frustration has pushed Gen Z to openly challenge systems that restrict their economic future.

In Bangladesh's 2025 Monsoon Revolution, youth employment and unjust job quota system sparked massive Gen Z led protests across the country.

Thousands of students and young professionals took to the streets demanding fair recruitment and equal employment opportunities, ultimately contributing to a nationwide uprising that led to major political change. Thus, youth mobilisation against job injustice reflects a critical unemployment challenge faced by Gen Z.

Secondly, technological displacement has become a significant unemployment challenge for Gen Z, as rapid automation continues to replace traditional entry-level positions. Advanced robotics, artificial intelligence and automated production systems have reduced the need for human labour in industries that once employed large numbers of young

workers. This shift limits job openings for new graduates and intensifies competition for the remaining roles. In Japan and South Korea, robotic automation has increasingly replaced manufacturing and assembly line jobs that previously provided stable employment for young workers, leaving many Gen Z individuals struggling to secure suitable positions in the evolving labour market. Thus, technological displacement has emerged as a major unemployment challenge faced by Gen Z.

Thirdly, a major unemployment challenge faced by Gen Z is the shortage of job creation in emerging sectors. As global economies evolve, new industries such as digital services, renewable energy and creative technologies require expansion in order to absorb the growing youth population. However, in many regions, the development of these modern industries is slow, leaving young people with limited pathways into stable and innovative careers. In Ghana and Kenya, the pace of job creation in modern sectors such as IT, digital finance and creative industries remains significantly lower than the number of young graduates entering the labour market, resulting in high levels of underemployment among Gen Z. Thus, the shortage of job creation in emerging sectors is a critical unemployment challenge faced by Gen Z.

The above discussion highlights the challenges faced by Gen Z in employment domains. Building upon this understanding



The discussion below, will examine the ~~relations~~ reasons ~~of~~ for growing accountability and transparency demanded by Gen Z.

To start with, a major challenge linked to Gen Z's expectations of accountability and transparency is their rising demand for merit based system. Young people today are increasingly dissatisfied with practices such as favouritism, political interference, and unfair recruitment processes that undermine equal opportunity. In Nepal, youth frustrations intensified when qualified applicants were repeatedly overlooked due to political patronage and internal favoritism, leading Gen Z activists to demand strict merit based hiring and transparent evaluation processes across public institutions. Thus, the rising demand for a merit based system is a central reason of Gen Z's pursuit of accountability and transparency.

Another major force shaping Gen Z's demand for accountability and transparency is their strong opposition to political nepotism and elite privilege. Youth increasingly rejects leadership structures built on family influence, inherited authority and exclusive elite networks that limit fairness and weaken democratic trust. In Sri Lanka, the #GoHomeGo movement was led largely by Gen Z protestors, who mobilised massive nationwide demonstrations against Rajapaksa family's long standing political dominance, corruption, and elite privilege ultimately

contributing to the president's resignation. Therefore, global youth resistance to nepotism and elite privilege has become a defining feature of Gen Z's demand for accountability and transparency.

Lastly, a significant aspect of Gen Z's struggle for accountability and transparency is the youth resistance to corruption within the state institutions. Young people are unwilling to tolerate bribery, misuse of funds, and abuse of power that undermine trust and weaken democratic systems. Gen Z demands honest governance, ethical decision making and accountability from officials who hold public responsibility. In Mexico, widespread youth led protests erupted after repeated incidents of police corruption and misuse of public resources, with Gen Z activists mobilising online and on the streets to demand institutional reforms and greater governmental accountability. Therefore, youth resistance against corruption has become a central part of Gen Z's demand for transparency and accountable governance.

To conclude, Gen Z faces significant economic challenges, rising unemployment and persistent failures in transparency and accountability. Their struggles with increasing living costs, widening wealth gaps and stagnant wages limit their economic mobility. At the same time, technological displacement, lack of job creation, and unfair recruitment system intensify their unemployment crisis.



Adding to these pressures, corruption, nepotism and opaque governance have deepened their distrust in public institutions, compelling them to demand fairness, accountability and transparent leadership.

Gen Z's growing activism; whether against job injustice, elite privilege or systemic corruption, reflects a generation determined to reshape existing structures. They have emerged as a powerful force advocating for economic justice, responsible governance and meaningful reform in the modern world. However, the challenges like pressures of unstable economy, unfair job system and weak governance continue to shape their struggle. Thus, Gen Z faces significant economic challenges, rising unemployment and persistent failures in transparency and accountability.