EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workforce of the 21st century termed as the ‘Multi-Generational’ Workforce is characterized with a mix of all generations from Baby Boomers, to Generation X, with recent and ongoing inclusion of Generation Y since the last few years. The expectations and expressions of this diverse workforce differ significantly resulting at times in organizational conflicts; challenging both management styles and practices related to managing generational differences across organizations (McGuire et al 2007).

(McGuire et al., 2007) point out that these differences in learning process of generational cohorts are widely exhibited through their outlook and approach, while ageing employees have high experience levels, maturity, work-orientation and stability; the younger workforce is highly mobile, impatient, and exhibit less organizational commitment but are entrepreneurial, better educated and technologically more competent than previous generations. They further argue that it is these differences in generational cohorts that give way to intergenerational conflicts impacting organizational performance; failure to understand and manage intergenerational conflicts in severe economic situations leads to further complications in terms of lower employee morale, productivity and innovation in turn impacting corporate citizenship resulting in higher employee attrition and turnover.

While studies have worked on the multigenerational context, analyzing outlook, approaches (Jorgensen, 2005), intergenerational conflicts and even intergenerational differences in values (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008); there is dearth of research on understanding values and characteristics of Gen Y employees and implications of their outlook and approaches (albeit their learning process and values) on organizational processes and practices.

This study was formulated with an objective to understand the most happening Generation of the Millennia, aptly termed Generation Y or Millennial. With the aspect of ‘Multi Generational’ workforce existing and work alongside in the Industry, it is getting increasingly difficult for Industry Practitioners/ Human Resource Managers and Trainers to understand how to manage the aspirations and psychological expectations of the varied workforce that seem to have a strong impact on their outlook towards their respective organizations and their productivity at the workplace. Numerous research initiatives in the direction of generational research have tried to understand varying characteristics of different generations, their
context of working together and also how the differences in their cohorts impact their organizational outlooks. However research has been limited in the context of Generation Y employees, specifically with relation to the Indian subcontinent and on the linkage of psychological constructs like Work Values, Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Attitudes. This research work is an attempt in that direction to give an insight to Industry Practitioners/Human Resource Managers and Trainers about what does the Indian Generation Y think in terms of organizational outlook and how do their Work Values impact their understanding of Organizational Support and how does this further have an effect on their Job Attitudes like Felt Obligation and Affective Commitment with an impact on their levels of Job Satisfaction and intention to stay on or leave their respective organizations.

Industry today is facing major challenges with managing aspirations and expectations of a diverse workforce, specifically with the inclusion of this happening, demanding and wired Generational cohort (Gen Y). This generation is also at times referred to as the ‘Wired Generation’ that needs to be connected at all times and feels most comfortable in digital environments. Born and brought up mostly in urban nuclear families, and having early access to communication medium; this generation believes in three major factors, Expectations, Expressions and Acceptance. They are increasingly demanding, wired and virtually connected, questioning traditional practices cum authority, displaying and openly voicing their disagreements and opinions without paying heed to set cultural norms and organizational practices. This is a generation that knows what it wants, in terms of their space, comfort levels or communication channels. They are open and brash about their expectations and expressions, seeking to collaborate and rapidly exchange knowledge/information, networking for acceptance, thus challenging ways traditional organizations functioned.

Global survey by IABC and Deloitte Consulting towards understanding GEN Y imperatives, discusses how important it is for GEN Y employees to feel connected, updated and involved in an organization. Gen Y is dynamic and eager to collaborate, they respect leaders who are honest, forthright and open, hence their relationship to an organization is not just based on their perception of the organization but also of the leader they are associated with. This emotionally charged enthusiastic young workforce seeks to contribute to their organizations through a plethora of ideas, suggestions and informed opinions; which at times challenge the
of organizational management. Their ideas are creative, innovative and at times exceptional; being based on the knowledge acquired by being part of a socially networked cum connected domain. However this generation also believes in the concept of instant acceptance and open feedback, these being critical factors for their enthusiasm and satisfaction towards organizational processes (Rai, 2011).

Similar survey on Global Workforce Innovation was conducted by Johnson Control in association with Haworth, iDea and Oxygenz.com (Generation Y and Workplace Annual Report 2010). The survey also puts up interesting facts related to why GEN Y’ers opt to work for specific organizations; prominent factors being Learning & Development opportunities, Quality of Life and Work Colleagues (includes peers & superiors).

Preliminary studies linking GEN Y and HRM practices have generally been conducted in the western countries focusing on the aspects of attracting, engaging and retaining this talented but impatient workforce. However there seems to be limited research in relation to growing economies, like India wherein work values are strongly influenced by national cultural values which may have an impact on employee perceptions and expectations from the workplace.

Research work in classification of the Indian generational cohort has generally been limited with initial focus being on generational research in the context of cohorts defined by the western world (Bijarpurkar, 2007; Erickson, 2009; Ghosh and Chaudhari, 2009; Roongnerngsuke, 2010). However in recent years some researchers have attempted to outline generational cohorts in the Indian context with specific reference to social, economical and political changes that have happened in India and their impact of the related generational cohorts. Srinivasan (2012) in her research done with 1600 Indian employees classifies Indian employees as per their professional work experiences into Pre-Liberalization (exp>21 years), Pre-Liberalization (exp between 10-21 years), Rapid growth (exp 5-10 years) and Plateaued growth (exp 0-5 years) (SHRM Report, 2012). The research focused on understanding ranking of Instrumental and Terminal values by multi-generational Indian employees. Rajesh and Ekambaram (2014) in their study on 250 corporate representative samples in India have classified Indian generational cohorts based on birth years as Veterans (1920-45), Free-Gens (1946-1960), Gen X’s (1961-1970), E-Gen’s (1971-1980) and Gen Y’s (1981-1990).
CRISIL 2010 Report on Skilling India highlights the tremendous opportunity and challenges for Indian business organizations. The country with a population of 1.2 billion (as on 2010) has 17.6% share in the world population pie making it the second largest country after China in terms of demography. This is slated to change by 2030, with India reaching 1.5 billion population crossing China and becoming the largest populated country in the world. While this may seem challenging, there is also an opportunity; India’s working population (15-59 years) will swell from 749 million to 924 million by year 2030, making it the most desired location of talent acquisition (employee availability) heightening business growth and progress in the country. Interestingly as on 2010, half of India’s working population that is around 362 million is below the age of 25 and this number shall only increase with the population figures making it one of the youngest countries of the world. Research report by Haworth, iDea and Johnson Control on Gen Y and Workplace, 2010 gives a different picture relating to Indian youngsters (Gen Y employees) through their global survey. Indian Gen Y workforce is considered the most demanding population with high expectations from the work environment in terms of better on-site support facilities and norms for work-life balance. They believe in not only socially collaborating but also engaging socially as an extension of their workplace to enhance learning opportunities and maintain a balance between their personal and professional lives. This generation of Indian youngsters is tech-savvy, entrepreneurial, ambitious, optimistic and ready to walk the extra mile for achieving their dreams and goals. They are strongly influenced by social opinions and base their judgments on peer factors much like their counterparts across the globe. They are a generation tuned to opportunities and consumerism, which make them more open for change, demanding with higher levels of expectations, impacting their perception towards organizations and their engagement processes.

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) states that expectations of the workforce related to organizational support and their perceptions of HR practices and work outcomes are correlated. Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986) evolved the concept of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) based on the effect-outcome expectancy and the aspect of affective attachment to one’s organization based on exchange ideology. They outline that employees are likely to develop higher levels of POS when the organization cares about their well-being and values their contributions. Research on effect of POS on outcomes by Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Eisenberger,
Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997; Settoon et al., 1996; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997 outline that based on the norm of reciprocity in social exchange, employees with higher levels of POS are more likely to repay the organization with positive attitudes and favorable work behaviors.

This study was an attempt to look at Indian Gen Y employees who comprise almost half of the Indian working population and is growing at a rapid pace. Preliminary studies and efforts related to deciphering these young employees have classified them as the most demanding population with high expectations from the work environment in terms of better on-site support facilities and norms for work-life balance. The research proposed to link outlook and approaches of this generation based on their work values (extrinsic, intrinsic, status-related, freedom-related, and social related) to their expectations from organizations (POS) in terms of organizational support and its impact on outcomes related to job satisfaction and turnover intention through a critical analysis and fact finding process. The research aimed to work towards this objective through understanding a sample population of Indian Generation employees in the age group of 19-29 years.

The study has looked into the following research questions, with an attempt to understand the antecedents and consequences of Perceived Organizational Support with relation to the same being impacted by Work values and its (POS) moderating effect on Job attitudes, as per the study objectives.

1. How does Generational Difference affect Work Values of Indian Employees, specifically in the context of Generation Y employees?

2. Can Work Values impact the perception of Organizational Support amongst Indian Generation Y employees?

3. Can Work Values moderated by Perceived Organization Support have an impact on Job Attitudes and Employee Behavioral Outcomes?

The study hypothesized relationships amongst key constructs, Work Values, Perceived Organizational Support and Job Attitudes (Affective organizational Commitment, Felt
Obligation, Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention). While most of the hypothesized relationships were accepted in line with the reviewed literature on the key constructs, the results also showed some interesting anomalies which lead to part acceptance of some of the hypothesized relationships. The research study summarizes from its initial understanding that Indian Generation Y employees do seem to have different work values than other generational cohorts and even partly differing viewpoints from their western counterparts. Research by Smola and Sutton (2002) had outlined Gen Xer’s as being the ‘ME’ generation with strong emphasis on individual aspects; ‘what’s in it for me?’ (p.378). The researchers had outlined that compared to previous generations, the coming generations exposed to a different economic and social upbringing develop differing work values and the trend of being the ‘ME’ generation categorized with Gen Xer’s may well continue with Gen Y or the Millennial generation. This was further evidenced by Chen and Choi (2008), wherein they depicted Gen Y employees to be ahead of their Gen X counterparts. While Gen X employees were concerned with ‘Security’ and ‘Independence’, Gen Y employees emphasize more on ‘Supervisory relationships’ and ‘Economic returns’. The evidences based on responses of Gen Y cohort in the U.S. is supported by the current study on Indian Gen Y employees. The current study found that Indian Gen Y employees in line with their counterparts worldwide (specifically based on U.S. studies) give more importance to Extrinsic Work Values that covered elements of economic returns (pay & rewards), growth opportunities and supervisory relationships. However additionally Indian Gen Y employees also give higher level of importance to Intrinsic Work Values related to challenging work and independence. This implies that Indian Gen Y employees are not only concerned with extrinsic values but also seeks to balance it with intrinsic values that allow them to grow in a holistic aspect, this characteristics of the Indian Gen Y cohort finds favor with an earlier study conducted by Haworth, iDea and Johnson controls (2010).

The aspect of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) introduced in this study exhibited an interesting mediating relationship with Job Attitudes; Work Values when mediated through POS showed inverse relationship with major Job Attitudes like Affective Organizational Commitment and Felt Obligation. However when Work Values was directly related with Job Attitudes it showed a positive relationship, indicating that there exists a strong relationship between the perception of organizational support and importance given to work values by Indian Gen Y employees.
The study displayed an interesting and differentiating aspect of this particular generational cohort (Indian Gen Y); while they value the organizational support (POS), have a sense of obligation (Felt Obligation) and, feel committed (Affective Commitment) towards their respective organizations, it does not necessarily translate into continuing with the organization for a longer time period.

This research fact from the current study challenges the notion of relationships that exists between POS, Felt Obligation, Affective Commitment and Turnover Intention; as previous studies (Eisenberger et al., 1986, 1997, 2001, 2002) done across generational cohorts (general population samples) in the western countries have exhibited Felt Obligation and Affective commitment being positively impacted by POS, further leading to lowering of Turnover Intention. This study on the flip side displays that for Indian Gen Y employees while organizational support does bring in obligation and commitment towards the organization, it doesn’t translate into long term retention with the organization. Indian Gen Y employees are quite comfortable in positively valuing organizational and feeling obliged and committed for it, but they would not hesitate to take up a viable and promising opportunity if it comes their way. The indication through this survey analysis is; that while Indian Gen Y employees may not think of actively quitting their organizations before a year yet they are not averse to checking out better opportunities hence, both Felt Obligation and Affective Commitment show a positive relationship with Turnover Intention than a negative or inversely proportional relationship.