

From Classrooms To Boardrooms: The Teenpreneur Era Is Here

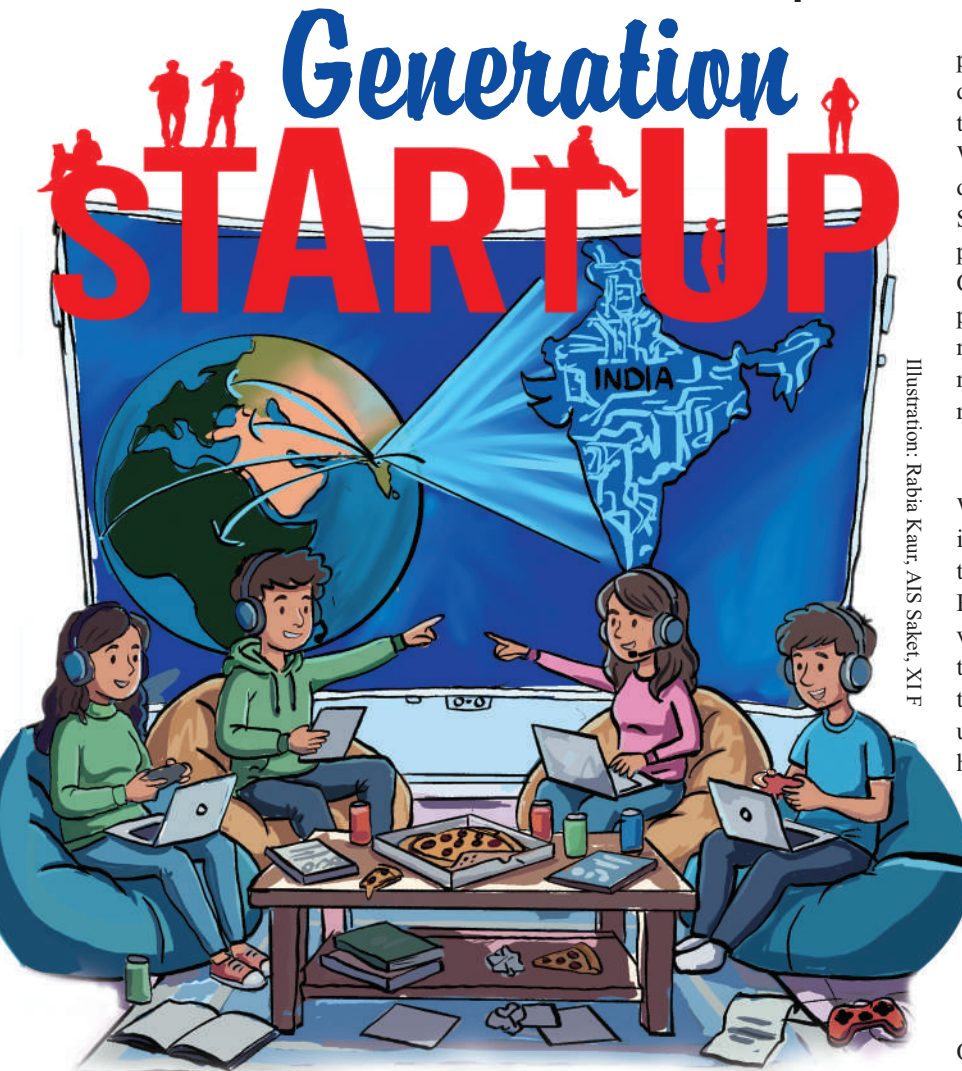
Rumela Bhowmik, AIS Saket, XI F

Review balance sheet. Check! Schedule calls with investors. Check! Homework. Check! This is no ordinary check-list; it's a morning business prep of a 15-year-old girl boss who has to meticulously plan her day. She's not an exception. In today's hustle culture, she's the norm. Bill Gates was 20 when he co-founded Microsoft, Mark Zuckerberg was 19 when Facebook took off, and even that feels late now. Once upon a time, entrepreneurship was a post-grad dream. Today, all it takes to start up is determination and a Wi-Fi connection.

India's young guns

India's new wave of entrepreneurs isn't letting age get in the way of ambition. In 2020, Kaivalya Vohra and Aadit Palicha dropped out of Stanford at 18 and 19 to build Zepto. By 2022, the quick-commerce startup was valued at over one billion USD, making them among the youngest start-up founders. Ritesh Agarwal founded Oravel Stays at age 17, which he later transformed into his very profitable venture OYO Rooms in 2013 at age 19.

Tilak Mehta was even younger. At the mere age of 13, he started Paper N Parcels, a Mumbai-based courier system which provides same-day affordable delivery using the legendary dabbawallas. His company is now valued in crores. There are several young entrepreneurs like him, including some who launched firms before they hit adolescence. To name a few: Sreelakshmi Suresh started designing websites at six and launched eDesign Technologies at age eight; and brothers Shravan and Sanjay Kumaran founded app developing firm GoDimensions when they were 12 and 10, respectively. According to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, one in



four young people in the world are entrepreneurs or self-employed. So, what's driving this revolution - ambition, opportunity, or simply the internet's magic?

Teenpreneurship fuel

Well, the internet has been a great equaliser. Today, more than 65% of the world's population is on the internet, making it possible to connect with mentors, customers, and

communities across the globe, with just a few clicks. With platforms like Canva, Shopify, and Instagram, teens are being able to turn ideas into brands. Their playfield is the social media, which 83% of marketers report is the key base for customers.

Also, Shark Tank India, which started airing in 2021, has made entrepreneurship a dinner-table conversation. The show even has a Campus Special segment, featuring

pitches from 13 and 14-year-olds. The pandemic sparked this shift. Lockdowns gave teens time and technology to experiment. What started out as hobbies during lockdown turned into full-fledged ventures!

Supporting this wave are government-aided programmes, like Atal Tinkering Labs, CBSE's Entrepreneurship Labs, and non-profit initiatives like TiE Young Entrepreneurs and Udhyam Learning Foundation, nurturing talent from an early age and connecting them to investors.

Purpose over profit

What sets young entrepreneurs apart? Their ideas are fresh and rebellious, and they intend to make a change. The very idea of Project Jeans sparked in 17-year-old Nirvaan Somany's mind when he read a report that nearly 10,000 litres of water is required to make a single pair of jeans. So he started upcycling jeans into sleeping bags for the homeless. Likewise, Papers N Parcels was born when young Tilak Mehta needed a book from across the city and couldn't get it at an affordable price right on. And Shashvat Nakrani, who co-founded BharatPe at 19, revolutionised how small merchants accept digital payments.

Balancing books & businesses

Of course, running a business at 15 isn't all glamour. Even if the start-up isn't losing cash, being a teenpreneur makes one dreadfully aware of money. Unintentionally, It also teaches how expensive time can be. Juggling between tuition and client meetings, assignments and consignments can be daunting. To add to the challenge minors can also not legally register companies under their name in India and often have to work in partnerships or under guardian's name.

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Page editors: Varnika Pradhan, XII D & Arika Vaid, X B, AIS Saket

THE GT @ POLL

A recent Financial Times survey reports a 10% drop in social media use. Are we approaching 'Posting Zero', where most users stop sharing actively?

A) Yes B) No C) Can't say

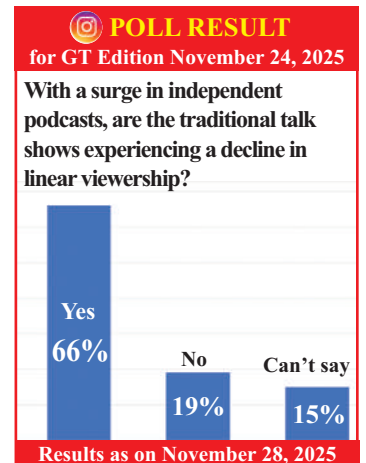
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This special edition has been brought to you by Amity International School, Saket as a part of the 'GT Making A Newspaper Contest'. Each page of this unique edition carries a special story handcrafted by the school's editorial team as a part of the competition. The inter-Amity newspaper making competition witnesses different branches of Amity schools across India churn out their own 'Contest Edition' which are pitted against one another at the end of the year, culminating with GT Awards. So, here's presenting the **fourth edition** of 'GT Making A Newspaper Contest 2025-26'.

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