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MODERN PERSPECTIVES IN HUMANITIES, COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT

VOLUME II

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PREFACE

The present volume, *Modern Perspectives in Humanities, Commerce and Management – Volume II*, is a thoughtful continuation of scholarly efforts to explore the dynamic intersections of human thought, economic systems, and managerial practices in a rapidly transforming world. As globalization, digitalization, and socio-cultural transitions reshape contemporary society, the disciplines of humanities, commerce, and management are evolving in both scope and significance.

This volume brings together a diverse collection of research contributions from academicians, researchers, and practitioners who examine emerging trends, critical challenges, and innovative solutions across these interconnected fields. The humanities enrich our understanding of culture, ethics, language, and human behavior, offering deep insights into the values and narratives that guide societies. Commerce, on the other hand, reflects the pulse of economic activities, trade practices, and financial systems that sustain growth and development. Management acts as a bridge, integrating human and economic resources through strategic planning, leadership, and organizational efficiency.

The chapters included in this volume address a wide range of contemporary themes such as digital transformation in business, sustainable development practices, evolving consumer behavior, financial inclusion, organizational dynamics, and the role of technology in reshaping communication and decision-making. Special attention is given to interdisciplinary approaches, highlighting how the integration of knowledge across domains can lead to more holistic and impactful outcomes.

This book aims to serve as a valuable resource for students, educators, researchers, and professionals by providing both theoretical perspectives and practical insights. It encourages critical thinking, fosters academic dialogue, and promotes innovative research that can contribute to societal progress.

We express our sincere gratitude to all contributors for their scholarly dedication and to the reviewers for their valuable feedback in maintaining the academic quality of this volume. We also thank the publishers for their continued support.

- Editors

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RECONCEPTUALIZING CAREER ASPIRATIONS ACROSS EDUCATIONAL TRANSITIONS

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Abstract

Career Aspirations are no longer static constructs formed exclusively by traditional educational experiences; rather, they are self-motivated, contextually embedded, and continuously evolving within a swiftly transforming socio-technological landscape. This chapter reconceptualizes Career Aspirations through a developmental-systems lens of the eye, highlighting their formation across main educational transitions—primary, secondary, and higher education. Mixing concepts such as self-efficacy, academic motivation, career identity, career adaptability, future orientation, artificial intelligence (AI) readiness, and career decision-making competence, the chapter delivers an inclusive and multidimensional understanding of how students navigate career development. Drawing on theoretical frameworks counting Social Cognitive Career Theory, Self-Determination Theory, Career Construction Theory, Expectancy-Value Theory, and Developmental Systems Theory, the chapter claims that Career Aspirations arise from the interaction between individual agency and circumstantial affordances. The conversation highlights how educational institutions can substitute adaptive, future-ready Career Aspirations concluded targeted interventions, digital integration, and inclusive practices.

Keywords: Career Aspirations, Developmental Systems, Self-Efficacy, Academic Motivation, Career Identity, Career Adaptability, Artificial Intelligence Readiness, Decision-Making Competence.

1. Introduction

Career Aspirations have traditionally been theorized as relatively stable preferences reflecting individuals' occupational benefits and goals. However, in the context of the twenty-first century—characterized by fast technological change, globalization, and the appearance of artificial intelligence—this still view is progressively inadequate. Students today must navigate a complex and ambiguous career landscape, where occupations progress rapidly and new skill demands incessantly emerge. Consequently, Career Aspirations must be understood as energetic, adaptive, and context-dependent concepts that develop transversely time and through interaction with several systems.

Educational transitions from primary to secondary education, and after secondary to higher education denote critical junctures in this developmental process. At each stage, students encounter new opportunities, openings, and constraints that shape their perceptions of possible futures. These evolutions are not merely academic shifts but involve profound changes in identity, motivation, and self-concept. Considerate how career aspirations evolve across these transitions requires all-inclusive framework that mixes psychological, educational, and contextual variables.

This chapter accepts a developmental-systems perception to reconceptualize Career Aspirations. It stresses the interplay of seven crucial constructs: self-efficacy, academic motivation, career identity, career adaptability, future orientation, Artificial Intelligence readiness, and career decision-making competence. By exploring these variables across educational phases, the chapter provides a nuanced considerate of how students develop, refine, and enact their Career Aspirations in a progressively complex world.

2. Theoretical Foundations: A Developmental-Systems Perspective

The developmental-systems perspective suggests that human development is the consequence of dynamic interactions between individuals and their surroundings. Rather than viewing Career Aspirations as isolated outcomes, this perception emphasizes the continuous interplay between personal characteristics, social contexts, and temporal procedures. It aligns with contemporary theories of career development that highlight adaptableness, agency, and contextual embeddedness.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) provides a foundational framework by stressing the role of self-efficacy and outcome expectations in determining career behavior (Lent & Brown, 2019). According to SCCT, students' views about their capabilities influence the range of career options they consider and the determination they invest in pursuing them. These views are shaped through learning experiences, social feedback, and environmental supports.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) equilibriums this perception by focusing on the role of motivation. It posits that individuals are more likely to comprise in meaningful and sustained activities when their needs for autonomy, competence, and linking are satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In educational settings, supportive surroundings that adoptive intrinsic motivation can meaningfully increase students' appointment with career-related study.

Career Construction Theory further ranges this framework by highlighting the role of narrative and identity in career development. It recommends that individuals dynamically construct their careers by mixing their experiences into coherent life stories (Savickas, 2005). This process is closely linked to career identity, which brings a sense of direction and purpose.

The inclusion of future orientation and AI readiness reproduces the need to incorporate current variables into career development theory. Future orientation comprises the ability to anticipate and plan for long-term outcomes, while AI readiness encompasses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential to navigate a technology-driven world. Together, these constructs high spot the forward-looking and adaptive nature of modern Career Aspirations.

3. Career Aspirations across Educational Transitions

3.1 Primary Education: Fundamentals of Aspiration

In primary education, Career Aspirations are considered by imagination, curiosity, and exploration. Children often rapid aspirations based on their immediate environment, counting family members, teachers, and media impacts. While these aspirations may seem unrealistic, they play a crucial role in influential early self-concepts and expectations.

Self-efficacy starts to progress during this stage through mastery experiences and social reinforcement. Children who experience achievement in academic tasks and receive inspiration from adults are more likely to progress confidence in their abilities. Academic motivation is largely intrinsic, driven by inquisitiveness and enjoyment of learning. Career identity remains in its early phases, with children experimenting with different parts without making firm commitments.

Future orientation is incomplete but begins to emerge as children develop an understanding of time and values. AI readiness is negligeable at this stage, although early exposure to digital tools can influence children's insights of technology-related careers. Career decision-making competence is also rudimentary, as children absence the cognitive maturity to evaluate complex options.

3.2 Secondary Education: Exploration and Differentiation

Secondary education signifies a period of significant transformation in career development. Students start to evaluate their abilities, interests, and ideals more critically, leading to more realistic and distinguished Career Aspirations. Academic performance becomes a main determinant of perceived opportunities, influencing subject choices and future plans.

Self-efficacy becomes more domain-specific, with students rising confidence in particular subjects or skills. Academic inspiration becomes more complex, influenced by both intrinsic interests and extrinsic aspects such as grades and social expectations. Career identity development accelerates, as pupils explore different roles and begin to form tentative commitments.

Career adaptability becomes progressively important, as students must circumnavigate academic transitions and moving expectations. Future orientation becomes more pronounced, with students setting goals and development for their futures. AI readiness starts to emerge as students engage with digital skills and become aware of their relevance to future careers. Career decision-making competence also progresses, enabling students to evaluate options and make informed choices.

3.3 Higher Education: Commitment and Specialization

In higher education, Career Aspirations become more absorbed and specialized. Students are expected to make actual decisions regarding their career pathways, often with important implications for their futures. This stage is considered by increased autonomy and responsibility, as students direct academic and professional tasks.

Self-efficacy the stage a critical role in allowing students to pursue their goals and overcome difficulties. Academic motivation is closely related to career outcomes, with students knowing the significance of their studies to their future aspirations. Career individuality becomes more defined, as students mix their experiences and values into a coherent logic of self.

Career adaptability is crucial in responding to changing labor market demands and technological advancements. Future orientation direct students' planning and goal-setting, while AI readiness becomes progressively important in formulating for digital and automated work environments. Career decision-making ability reaches a higher level of sophistication, permitting students to make strategic and informed choices.

4. Interplay of Multidimensional Variables

The development of Career Aspirations is best understood as a dynamic interaction of multiple variables. Self-efficacy impacts academic motivation by shaping students' beliefs about their ability to prosper. Motivation, in turn, drives engagement and persistence, leading to skill development and investigation. Career identity mixes these experiences into a coherent framework, supervise long-term aspirations.

Career adaptability permits students to respond to challenges and uncertainties, while future orientation delivers a sense of direction and purpose. AI readiness reflects the ability to navigate technological settings, which is increasingly critical in modern career development. Career decision-making competence certifies that students can evaluate options and make informed choices.

These variables interrelate in a feedback loop, where positive experiences reinforce confidence and motivation, important to stronger and more adaptive Career Aspirations. Conversely, negative involvements can undermine these processes, highlighting the importance of supportive educational settings.

5. Educational and Policy Implications

The reconceptualization of Career Aspirations has noteworthy implications for educational exercise and policy. Schools and universities must adopt a complete approach to career development, integrating psychological, educational, and technological extents. Early exposure to career options, joint with efforts to build self-efficacy and motivation, can improve students' aspirations.

Educational institutions should also emphasis on developing career adaptability and decision-making capability through experiential learning chances such as internships, projects, and mentorship programs. The addition of digital technologies and AI-related skills into the curriculum is vital for preparing students for future careers.

Policymakers should arrange equitable access to resources and opportunities, addressing disparities associated to socio-economic status and gender. Inclusive policies that support diverse beginners can help ensure that all students have the opportunity to develop meaningful and possible Career Aspirations.

6. Career Aspirations in Contemporary Education

6.1 Role of Global Competence in Shaping Career Aspirations

In progressively interconnected world, global competence has developed as a critical factor influencing students' Career Aspirations across educational changeovers. Global competence refers to the capability to understand and engage with diverse cultures, perspectives, and global matters, enabling individuals to function effectively in international and multicultural contexts. As globalization restructures labor markets and professional environments, students are required to progress not only technical knowledge but also cross-cultural communication skills, adaptability, and a wider worldview. These competencies significantly influence how students perceive career chances and define their aspirations.

From a developmental perspective, global competence starts to take shape during secondary education, when students are showing to diverse ideas through curricula, media, and digital stages. In higher education, this competence is further distinguished through international collaborations, exchange plans, and exposure to global career pathways. Students with higher levels of global skill are more likely to aspire to careers that include international engagement, such as diplomacy, global business, study, and technology-driven industries. Moreover, global competence enhances future direction by enabling students to anticipate global trends and align their aspirations with evolving opportunities. Educational institutions can foster this competence by integrating global viewpoints into teaching practices and encouraging intercultural experiences, thereby broadening students' career horizons.

6.2 Influence of Digital Learning Ecosystems on Career Development

The fast expansion of digital learning ecosystems has transformed the way students acquire information, develop skills, and envision their future careers. Digital learning environments, counting online platforms, virtual classrooms, and AI-driven educational tools, deliver students with unprecedented access to data and learning opportunities. These environments play a noteworthy role in shaping career aspirations by exposing students to diverse fields, evolving professions, and innovative career ways that may not be available within traditional educational settings.

From the perception of Self-Determination Theory, digital learning ecosystems can improve academic motivation by indorsing autonomy and personalized learning experiences. Students can explore subjects at their own pace, access global resources, and involve in self-directed learning, which strengthens their inherent motivation and curiosity. Additionally, these ecosystems contribute to the progress of digital self-efficacy and AI readiness, enabling students to navigate complex technological settings with confidence. As students cooperate with digital tools and platforms, they become more conscious of technology-related careers and develop aspirations aligned with the digital economy.

However, the impact of digital learning ecosystems is not uniformly positive, as disparities in access and digital literacy can generate inequalities in career development. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may face blockades in accessing digital resources, limiting their exposure to career chances. Therefore, educational institutions and policymakers must ensure equitable access to digital learning surroundings and provide support for developing digital competencies. By doing so, they can generate inclusive systems that empower all students to explore and follow diverse career aspirations.

6.3 Role of Social Capital and Networking in Career Aspirations

Social capital, well-defined as the networks, relationships, and social resources available to individuals, plays a vital role in shaping career aspirations across educational stages. Students' access to data, opportunities, and support is often mediated by their social networks, together with family, peers, teachers, and professional contacts. These networks impact not only the range of career options students contemplate but also their confidence in pursuing those options.

During primary education, social capital is mainly derived from family and immediate community, with parents serving as crucial role models and sources of information. In secondary education, peer impact becomes more prominent, as students share information about career options and educational pathways. In higher education, social capital develops to include professional networks, internships, and mentorship relationships, which offer valuable insights into the labor market and enable career advancement.

From the perception of Career Construction Theory, social interactions donate to the development of career identity by providing chances for exploration and meaning-making. Students who have access to various and supportive networks are more likely to progress adaptive career aspirations and establish higher levels of career decision-making competence. Conversely, incomplete social capital can restrict students' exposure to chances and constrain their aspirations. Educational institutions can play an essential role in enhancing social capital by creating networking occasions, fostering mentorship plans, and facilitating influences with industry professionals. Such initiatives can help link gaps in access and support students in achieving their career goals.

6.4 Integration of Entrepreneurial Mindset in Career Aspirations

The growing stress on innovation and self-employment has directed to the recognition of the entrepreneurial mindset as a crucial component of career development. An entrepreneurial mindset includes characteristics such as creativity, risk-taking, flexibility, and the ability to identify and exploit chances. This mindset is increasingly relevant in a fast-changing economic landscape, where traditional career pathways are being exchanged by flexible and dynamic work arrangements.

Incorporating an entrepreneurial viewpoint into career aspirations permits students to opinion careers not only as predefined roles but also as chances for creating value and driving change. This shift aligns with the values of Career Adaptability, as it inspires individuals to remain flexible and responsive to varying circumstances. Students with an entrepreneurial mindset are more likely to explore various career options, engage in innovative activities, and pursue non-linear career paths.

Educational institutions play a critical role in fostering this mentality by integrating entrepreneurship education into curricula and providing chances for experiential learning, such as projects, startups, and competitions. These experiences increase self-efficacy by allowing students to apply their assistances in real-world contexts and develop confidence in their capabilities. Additionally, entrepreneurial education encourages future orientation by encouraging students to envision and generate their own career opportunities.

The addition of an entrepreneurial mindset also has wider implications for societal development, as it pays to economic growth and innovation. By empowering students to think productively and act proactively, educational systems can formulate them to navigate the complications of the modern workforce and reach sustainable career success.

Conclusion

Career Aspirations are self-motivated, multidimensional constructs that progress through complex interactions between individuals and their surroundings. By adopting a developmental-systems perception, this chapter has highlighted the importance of participating self-efficacy, academic motivation, career identity, career adaptability, future orientation, AI readiness, and career decision-making competence in considerate career development.

As student direct educational transitions, these variables interrelate to shape their aspirations and director their decisions. Diagnosing and supporting these processes is vital for fostering adaptive, future-ready individuals who can thrive in an ever-changing world. Educational institutions, policymakers, and investigators must work collaboratively to create settings that nurture these capabilities and empower students to attain their full potential.

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MAPPING EMOTIONS THROUGH FOOD: A STUDY OF GUSTATORY MEMORIES IN AIMEE BENDER'S *THE PARTICULAR SADNESS OF LEMON CAKE*

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Abstract

Food Studies in literature often place focus on cultural affiliations, culinary habits etc. Food being an innate aspect of culture, lends itself to such exploratory studies. Among the different senses that are involved in consumption of food, taste and smell are often correlated with emotions as they are directly proportional to one another, translated into immediacy of reaction. Among these two, taste or gustation serves as a significant vehicle for evoking memories, exploring cultural traditions, and conveying emotions. This paper studies how food memories of the protagonist in Aimee Bender's *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake*, especially those of gustation, evoke a sensory experience, exploring cultural heritage, and delving into the complexities of human emotions and relationships. The individual memories in relation to the collective familial and cultural memories are explored using gustation as a trigger, wherein all the sites of memory and concepts of remembering and forgetting are analysed.

Keywords: Taste, Gustatory, Memory, Emotions, Food, Culture, Identity, Culinary

Introduction

"...articles on food have recently appeared in a diverse list of scholarly periodicals and anthologies, while new books on the topic continue to be published in ever greater numbers by both university and trade presses" (Avakian and Haber 1).

When Food Studies in Literature as a genre came into being, it was highly dependent on elements of fantasy that were explored in connection with food, since the inception of food in literature happened in the realm of children's literature. Later, there came to be a genre called 'Magical realism' that brought together elements of fantasy and reality in the same plane, making it relatable to the readers; it included aspects of food from feminist and postmodernist perspectives, that explored concepts of self and identity. However, non-fiction spoke of food from cultural and physiological perspectives, indeed.

In addition to supplying nourishment, food has a cultural significance, a personal history, and a rich fabric of associations. Fictional narratives started exploring subjects like identity, family, tradition, and society dynamics by writing about culinary recollections. Through descriptions of the food, the recipes, and the cooking process itself, writers create a sensory experience that strongly connects with readers. Using taste, smell, and culinary experiences, literature has long been evoking cultural associations, memories, and feelings. Authors have utilized food to transport readers on a sensory journey by referencing the close connections between food, memory, and personal history. This trend has been observed and studied by researchers and academicians over the past few decades.

Gregson, Nicky *et al.* addressed the influence of food habits on an individual's self-identity by stating, "Eating is a daily reaffirmation of [one's] cultural identity" (672). Many people associate the foods from their culture, their childhood with warm, good feelings and memories. Food is part of who we are and become. Foods from our culture, from our family often become the comfort foods we seek as adults in times of frustration and stress.

Thus, the sense of taste and its memories that an individual carries contribute to one's cultural identity. It is due to the fact that these memories that one has are rooted in the familial or cultural culinary habits, the dining companions and the experiences as such. The very personal quality of the whole experience evokes emotions in the individual, which reflects on how he or she chooses to identify themselves, in relation to food which is an integral part of anybody's life growing up.

Food Memories in Fiction

Literary works often depict food memories as transformative experiences, capable of transporting characters to different times and emotional states. The tastes and smells associated with certain dishes bring forth vivid recollections, emotions, and connections to people, places, and events. In this way, food memories become a powerful tool for storytelling, as they tap into universal human experiences and create a deeper connection between readers and characters.

Food memories in fiction reflect the essence of one's relationship with food and the memories it holds, whether it be the wafting aroma of a grandmother's cooking, the flavour of a long-lost recipe, or the communal joy of a shared meal. They provide a sensory journey that draws readers in and encourages reflection on personal experiences, resulting in a rich and engaging reading experience. Some of the seminal fictional works that depict such food motives are *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel, *Chocolat* by Joanne Harris, *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan, *The Mistress of Spices* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni etc. In these novels and more, it is seen how memories of food are significant to human beings in their quest for identity, building relationships, and learning about themselves and those around them.

Various sites of memory have been studied from physiological and psychological standpoints to study human behaviour. *Lieu de mémoire* is a physical place or object which acts as container of memory. They are thus a form of memorialization. It is a term used in heritage and collective memory studies popularized by the French historian Pierre Nora in his *Les Lieux de Mémoire.* Classical and modernist fictional narratives have focussed primarily on memories that a large group of people who happen to have some commonality of culture, class, religion, sex, race or creed, which enables them to have common sites of memory that they from which they harbor emotional or psychological natures.

In contrast with public sites of memory where national identities are not uncommonly reinforced, much less has been written concerning how memory erupts in ordinary, private, domestic spaces where, it can be argued, class and gender, ethnicity and family, may be more salient than national identities. (Meah and Jackson 3)

It makes sense that domestic spaces are strong sites of food memory since those are the places where an individual would probably have many numbers of memories, pleasant or unpleasant. As an individual grows, those memories feed into the mental and emotional capacity of the individual. It is strong also because of the people and places associated with the memories. Home carries personal memories that it serves "as a kind of private museum; a space in which objects of personal, artistic or cultural interest are stored and displayed to narrate the untold stories of lives being lived" (Gregson *et al.* 682).

Sense of Taste/Gustation and Memory

In his book about the historical memory of inhabitants of a Cretan town, Herzfeld (1991) indicates that senses have a specific evocative function in recalling the past. Describing the 'smellscape' of the town, which included local stories, as well as individual recollections, he highlighted the role these sensory experiences played in creating strong emotional associations between the past and the present.

Similarly, Nadia Serematakis (1993), writes of the distinctly evocative and nostalgic dimension of sensory memory. In her essay on longing for the favour of a forgotten variety of peach once cultivated in her native Greece, the author shows how taste becomes a personal narrative about change, a tale of a lost world and an unintentional judgement about the present, which no longer tastes like before.

Tracing the relationships between memory, senses, materiality, and local epistemologies, Serematakis notices that the sensory transformations are usually imperceptible on the daily life level, and only through their recollection it is possible to grasp the past with such distinctly affective power. Its peculiar affective function of the senses, when it comes to remembering, is also a subject pursued by psychologists, who, armed with knowledge from the field of neurology, explain the strong relationship between memory, senses, and emotions, by how closely together the organs responsible for these functions are in the human brain.

The sensations of smell and taste are said to have a special emotional potency when recalling memories because, when compared to other senses, they are located closer to the amygdala, which is important for processing emotions. Since the neuron connections are shorter due to this proximity than they are for the senses of sight, hearing, and touch, emotional reactions can be triggered considerably more quickly and easily. (Campen 114).

The work of Jeffrey Prager, *Presenting the Past: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Misremembering* (1998) is noteworthy despite the fact that psychologists frequently isolate memory processes from their social and cultural contexts. He contends that two elements equally influence the process of reclaiming the past: the process's embodiment through emotions and sensations, and its integration into the social context. The past is encoded in physical sensations and feelings, and the more deeply a memory is embodied, the more significant its subjective meaning, its capacity for social sharing, and its resistance to change are.

The stimulation and fusion of several sensory registers, such as taste, smell, sight, touch, and hearing, according to David Sutton, the author of *Remembrance of Repast* (2001), is what he claims gives our senses their unique potential for remembering. Taste and aroma are the sensations that are most ephemeral but also sentimental and nostalgic. Since these emotions are transitory and difficult to express, when we reflect on them, they frequently conjure up memories of everything that was present at the time and came to represent them: place, time, objects, people, events, and moods.

As Sutton points out in his *Food and the Senses* (2010), emotions are inextricably linked to the particular social and cultural environment, making them practically archetypal symbols. John Holtzman presents yet another argument in favour of the usefulness of taste memory in his article *Food and Memory* (2006). He contends that food has a distinctively symbolic power in regard to memory because of its dual nature: food has a direct relationship to our materiality while also playing a significant role in our social interactions. Food thus exists at the intersection of the personal and the social, the private and the public, and the biological and the cultural.

According to Holtzman, there are a variety of social settings in which food's capacity to gain symbolic significance is particularly pertinent. The "traditional," "ethnic," or "national" cuisines are just a few examples of the various ways that group identities are reflected via food in these sectors. These rituals improve the sense of physical, physiological, and spiritual togetherness. The memory of taste and its affective connotations are frequently investigated in cases of migration, such as the Greek diaspora in the USA as described by David Sutton (2001), which demonstrates how people experience a fragmentation of their lives because they lack access to a complete sensory world of their country of origin.

Food memories then turn into a technique to remember the past in an endeavour to relive those recollections in new material circumstances. Its "gustatory nostalgia," as Holtzman puts it, might also refer to times and places that were never actually visited, acting as a helpful prop for made-up traditions or manufactured identities (Holtzman 368). The special evocative quality of the sensory memory is attributed to its affectiveness and the ease with which it may be associated to the social context, according to all the studies on the function of the senses in memory listed above.

Emotions and Gustatory Memory in Aimee Bender's *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake*

Among the works that have been studied for their employment of food and culinary elements, there are a few that place focus on the sensory elements and their interaction with food. The sense of sight, smell, hearing and taste could be associated with food, in the various stages of its being, preparation, presentation and consumption.

Aimee Bender's *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake* is one such work wherein gustatory elements play a prominent role in devising action in plot. The novel revolves around the family of Rose Edelstein, each member of the family having some psychological issue. Rose's father is emotionally detached from the family; the mother is an insomniac; her brother transfigures to wooden chairs, and Rose of all, has a psychic food disorder. Bender gives agency to food There have been such works where the protagonist can taste emotions through food but this happening to a girl in her teens is unusual, more so because of the obscure family environment she is in.

Usually, for one to develop a liking towards a particular food item, it takes more than one item for it to grow on that person whereas it takes no effort for one to develop a bad taste or a dislike towards a food item. Towards certain food or kinds of food, one could develop an aversion or hatred since a precedented aftermath of nausea or food poisoning is present in the mind of the person. This is a common phenomenon among people, irrespective of their age. While some of them carry this aversion for a brief period, some tend to feel that way about that food for a longer period.

The koala bear doesn't worry about what's for dinner: If it looks and smells and tastes like a eucalyptus leaf, it must be dinner. The koala's culinary preferences are hardwired in its genes. But for omnivores like us...a vast amount of brain space and time must be devoted to figuring out which of all the many potential dishes nature lays on are safe to eat. We rely on our prodigious powers of recognition and memory to guide us away from poisons (Isn't that the mushroom that made me sick last week?) and toward nutritious plants (The red berries are the juicier, sweeter ones). (Pollan 3)

The subconscious mind stores information on which food brings joy and which does not. Rose acquired these gustatory powers during her ninth birthday when she tasted her birthday cake wherein, she realized how traumatic and disturbing her mother's experience of giving birth to her was. Spring Week celebration took Rose to a joyous mood where she foresaw happy, sunny days to come. The baking process involving, sifting, kneading, stirring and topping brough to her knowledge the abundant love her mother had for her.

Rose had a strong fondness for sourness, and the aroma of warm citrus baked cake sprinkled with sugar invaded her senses. Tasting lemon-chocolate cake was the first instance when she understood about her powers to identify emotions of the person who cooked the food. The chocolate and lemon cake her mother had baked makes Rose feel desolate and empty. She describes that feeling as one that she has never experienced in life: "in each bite: absence, hunger, spiralling, hollows" (Bender 10).

Eating disorders can be caused by loneliness in some. When one feels alone in life or has tense relationships, they might turn to food for consolation. A sense of joy and warmth is attained while consuming some food when one feels low. Although Rose has a family, they are not ones she can confide in or speak about the odd ability of tasting emotions in food. Even when they dined as a family, Rose's dislike towards her mother's roast chicken is not addressed by any of her family members.

"It has been found that comfort food is often eaten in times of emotional highs or emotional lows. During periods of negative feelings, comfort foods are used as a way to alleviate stress, anxiety, sadness, distress, and other emotions such as these." (Sarmiento and Marcelino 4)

While at school, in order to remove the memory of taste of different food she had, Rose keeps drinking the warm water from the fountain pipes that taste like metal. Such overpowering feelings and emotions that Rose is able to sense strongly distorts the regular childhood that a nine-year-old would have.

Sometimes, Rose would turn to George for consolation after having revealed the truth about her ability, and he takes her to places where she could try out new food. They go to a bakery in Beverly that supposedly makes the best homemade cookies. She experiences raging anger in the cookies she eats from there. They come to learn that the baker did not like the job and wanted to quit. The oatmeal cookies they try from the bakery taste of hurriedness since the woman who bakes them is not usually punctual to work.

It was George who gave her the name 'magic food psychic': "I am a food psychic, I told myself, even though the thought of it made me want to crawl under the buildings and never come out" (Bender 67).

Although Rose has this incredible ability to sense emotions through the taste of the food she consumes, the emotions evoked are not completely reliant on that magical ability but on the fact that she has so many memories in the domestic space, especially her home kitchen, the café she frequents and her school. In many occasions, Rose feels different emotions at her home kitchen with her mom, dad or brother as accomplices. The kitchen as a site of memory evokes emotions in Rose, which affects her both psychologically and physiologically.

Conclusion

It is a fact that taste or the gustatory ability is extremely subjective in nature. It depends on personal opinions and preferences. While the taste of a dish could be pleasant to one, it could be perceived as unpleasant to someone whose palate is not used to that taste or since his/her cultural affiliations do not include the gustatory sensation of that particular dish. Immediacy of perception is a significant aspect of the gustatory experience. Satiating one's hunger, appealing to one's palate, and creating a pleasurable experience for the consumer is the kind of indulgence that taste gives.

Philosopher Santayana comprehensively stated, "Our pleasures are thus described as the pleasures of touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight, and may become elements of beauty at the same times as the ideas to which they are attached become elements of objects" (5)

The subjective quality of gustation is subverted here, as Rose is given the ability to taste emotions behind each taste. By employing magical realism, Bender has brought out substantial premise to the abovementioned statement. The beauty of a food could be translated into taste which is not merely about the ingredients or preparation but also encompasses the personal disposition of the one who prepared the food.

Through the emotions evoked by taste of food and its memories, the protagonist creates an identity for herself, one which is strengthened by her cultural roots, culinary habits, dining companions, dining spaces etc., thereby placing food at the intersection of the personal and the social, the private and the public, and the biological and the cultural.

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NEW PROSPECTS IN LITERARY LANDSCAPE: WRITING, STORYTELLING AND CRITICISM IN THE AGE OF AI

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most powerful technological developments of the 21st century, restructuring industries, communication, and intellectual practices worldwide. Among its many domains of impact, Literature and creative writing occupy a particularly fascinating space. Traditionally regarded as one of the most deeply human forms of expression, literature has long been associated with imagination, emotion, lived experience, and individual voice. The increase of AI-generated text, however, has provoked a vital reconsideration of these conventions. While some critics fear that AI threatens to undermine human creativity, a more nuanced perspective reveals that Artificial Intelligence is not the end of human creativity in literature. It is a transformative force redefining authorship, expanding creative possibilities, and challenging traditional notions of originality.

Introduction

To understand the impact of AI on Literature, it is important to consider the historical evolution of literary production. Literature has never been still; it has always evolved alongside technological advancements. The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg (in England) democratized access to texts, the typewriter accelerated writing processes, and digital word processors revolutionized editing and publishing. In each case, technology was initially met with uncertainty but ultimately integrated into creative practice. "By challenging the notion that humans are the sole proprietors of creativity, one can explore alternative forms of creativity beyond the human realm and consider how humans can facilitate their emergence" (Fernandes, 2024). Subsequently, this chapter re-examines how AI represents the next stage in this continuum. It introduces new tools and frameworks to explore creativity.

Authorship- Redefined

One of the most significant ways AI transforms Literature is by redefining the concept of authorship. Traditionally, the author has been viewed as the sole originator of a text, a figure whose intentions and experiences shape the meaning of the work. The author pens down either from his personal experience, or his imagination. Whatever is said in a book is from the author's point of view. It is relevant to discuss Roland Barthes's criticism of the notion of 'the death of the author', which says, the author dies when readers' perception seeps in. Every reader looks at literary texts in different ways. "Every author has an identity, but masterpieces are written by the human mind, not by human nature, which only lends them their common smell and color, their day to day dust. The implication is that readers differ in the same way" (Gass, 1984).

Who is the true Author?

AI confuses the cooperative dynamic between human-beings and machines. When a writer uses AI to generate ideas, suggest phrases, or develop narratives, the resulting text becomes a product of interaction rather than isolated creation. This raises important questions: Who is the true author of an AI-assisted text? Is it the human who guides the process, the machine that generates the language, or a combination of both?

Literary theory has challenged the idea of singular authorship, arguing that meaning is constructed through the interplay of language, culture, and reader interpretation. AI strengthens this argument by making the process of textual production more visibly distributed. The role of the writer shifts from that of an originator to that of a curator, editor, and collaborator. This does not diminish creativity; rather, it relocates it. Creativity becomes less about producing text from nothing and more about shaping, selecting, and refining possibilities generated through human-machine interaction. "Content creators must always verify the intent, originality, and creativity behind their work, and ensure their content is original and properly sourced" (Neefischer, 2025). In addition to redefining authorship, AI significantly expands creative possibilities.

Writing with AI

AI assists writers in overcoming creative barriers. Writer's block, a common challenge for authors, can be lessened through AI-generated prompts, alternative phrasings, or narrative suggestions. This allows writers to explore directions they might not have considered independently. AI can also simulate different writing styles, enabling experimentation with voice, tone, and genre. For instance, a writer can generate multiple versions of a scene in various stylistic registers and choose the most compelling one.

Storytelling with AI

Moreover, AI enables entirely new forms of storytelling. Interactive narratives, personalized stories, and real-time content generation are becoming increasingly feasible. Readers can engage with texts that adapt to their preferences, choices, or emotional responses, creating a more immersive and participatory literary experience. This represents a shift from static texts to dynamic narratives, where the boundaries between author and reader become more fluid. In this sense, AI not only expands how literature is written but also how it is experienced. However, the expansion of creative possibilities also raises important concerns about the nature of creativity itself.

The creative writer is a kind of creator who has earned a certain fascination among people, especially readers, and especially avid readers. What does the writer do to create such interesting, entertaining, engaging, profound, scary, descriptive, prescient, insightful, even depressing thoughts put together into sentences that take form in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, film, song, and plays? How does the writer work? Why does the writer write—or not write? What happens before, during, and after writing—in other words, what is the creative process by which such artifacts emerge? (Piirto, 2018)

On the other hand, Critics argue that AI-generated content lacks genuine originality because it is based on patterns learned from existing texts. Unlike humans, AI lacks consciousness, emotions, or lived experiences. It does not "feel" the stories it produces; it calculates them. This leads to the question: Can something be considered creative if it is generated without meaning or mindfulness?

(Re)Defining Creativity

The answer depends on how creativity is defined. If creativity is understood as a process rooted in subjective experience and emotional depth, AI will definitely fail. However, if creativity is evaluated based on the novelty, coherence, and impact of the final product, then AI-generated texts can, in many cases, meet these criteria.

GenAI technology is likely to have a similar kind of disruptive effect on the creative sector as the innovations just mentioned. At the same time, it has also the potential of furthering similar beneficial advancements in both science and the arts. Throughout history, the arts have consistently been at the vanguard in driving innovation, serving as a catalyst for pushing the frontiers of knowledge and inspiring transformative change across various domains. With the upsurge of GenAI techniques for the generation of creative content, artists are occupying yet again a pioneering position. Finding the right solutions for a responsible and constructive interaction between humans and AI in the field of artistic creativity, can therefore have rippling effects in many other fields that are affected by the transformative impact of AI. (Moruzzi, 2015)

This suggests that creativity is not a fixed or singular concept but a multifaceted one that can accommodate both human and machine contributions. AI challenges us to broaden our understanding of creativity rather than abandon it.

Originality of Literariness

Another critical dimension of AI's impact on literature is its challenge to traditional notions of originality. The idea of originality has long been central to literary value, with emphasis placed on uniqueness, innovation, and individual expression. It branches out to the styles and techniques of a writer. "Creative thinking weighs originality much more heavily than correctness, convention, and (traditional) logic" (Runco, 2023). Therefore, Writers are influenced by the texts they read, the cultures they inhabit, and the languages they use. However, AI complicates this ideal by generating content through the recombination of existing linguistic patterns. Originality, thus, is not about creating something entirely new but about reconfiguring existing elements in meaningful ways.

AI brings this reality to the limelight, prompting a re-evaluation of what it means to be original. If both human and machine creativity involve recombination, the distinction between them becomes less clear-cut. The focus shifts from the source of creativity to its outcome. This does not mean that all texts are equally valuable, but it suggests that originality should be understood as a spectrum rather than an absolute standard.

Ethical Concerns of AI

Despite its probable benefits, the integration of AI into Literature also raises significant ethical concerns. AI systems are trained on vast datasets that often include copyrighted material. When these systems generate text, they may inadvertently reproduce or closely resemble existing works. But it is an undeniable fact that,

AI can enhance ideation, but not without risks. Practitioners across industries must adapt to the AI era, to test and evaluate the tools for their specific roles and contexts, and to find the most beneficial practices for their day-to-day business. (Brem, 2025)

This raises questions about ownership and attribution, leading to plagiarism. Should AI-generated content be considered original if it is derived from pre-existing texts? Who is responsible for potential copyright violations—the developer, the user, or the AI itself?

Another concern is the risk of homogenization. This is because AI models are trained on large datasets that reflect dominant cultural narratives, they may reinforce existing biases and conventions. This can lead to a narrowing of creative diversity, where certain voices and views are magnified while others are marginalized. To address this issue, it is essential to ensure that AI systems are trained on diverse and representative datasets, and that human creators remain actively engaged in the creative process.

Humanness Transformed

Furthermore, there is the question of the human voice. Literature has traditionally been valued for its ability to convey personal experience and emotional authenticity.

Traditionally, creativity has been regarded as a distinctly human trait, a pinnacle of human intelligence. However, AI challenges this human-centric view on creativity. This disruption manifests across four key dimensions: the unique status of human creativity, the transformation of creative collaboration, the evolving typology of creative acts, and the issue of copyright in creativity. (Zhang, 2025)

If writers become more dependent on AI, there is a risk that this authenticity may be weakened. But when employed thoughtfully, AI can enhance rather than replace the human voice, serving as a tool that supports creative expression rather than overshadowing it.

AI in Literary Criticism

AI also plays a huge role in literary criticism and analysis. By processing large volumes of text, AI can identify patterns, themes, and stylistic features that may not be immediately apparent to human readers. "... GenAI tool, when applied in literary studies, has several strengths. Notably, the AI tool demonstrates accuracy as it is trained on a vast amount of data, leading to relevant responses that are aligned with the original texts" (Chan, 2025). This opens up new possibilities for literary scholarship, enabling more comprehensive and data-driven analyses. However, it is important to recognize that interpretation remains a fundamentally human activity. While AI can provide insights, it cannot fully capture the cultural, emotional, and philosophical dimensions of literature.

Imminent Literary World with AI

In considering the future of literature, it is clear that AI will continue to play an increasingly prominent role. Rather than viewing this development as a threat, it is more productive to see it as an opportunity. The relationship between human creativity and artificial intelligence is a dynamic and evolving partnership. By embracing this partnership, writers can explore new forms of expression, reach wider audiences, and push the boundaries of what Literature can be.

Ultimately, the impact of AI on Literature is not defined by the technology itself but by how it is used. AI does not possess creativity in the human sense, but facilitates creative processes in powerful ways. It challenges the literary scholars to rethink long-held assumptions about authorship, originality, and artistic value. In doing so, it enriches rather than diminishes the literary landscape.

Summing Up

In conclusion, Artificial Intelligence is not the end of human creativity in Literature. Instead, it is a transformative force that redefines authorship, expands creative possibilities, and challenges traditional notions of originality. By fostering collaboration between human imagination and machine intelligence, AI opens up new horizons for literary expression. The future of literature lies not in the replacement of human creativity but in its evolution—an evolution shaped by the interplay between tradition and innovation, individuality and collaboration, humanity and technology.

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MENSTRUAL LEAVE: BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP AND PROMOTING EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

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Abstract

Menstrual leave policies have emerged as a significant topic of discussion in contemporary workplace dynamics, particularly in the context of promoting gender equity and supporting women's health. This chapter explores the concept of menstrual leave, its implications for gender equality, and its role in fostering inclusive workplaces. Drawing upon case studies and policy analyses, it examines how menstrual leave policies are framed and implemented in various organizational contexts, with a focus on both global and Indian scenarios. The chapter also addresses the challenges and criticisms associated with menstrual leave, including potential stigmatization, privacy concerns, and its impact on workplace productivity. By situating menstrual leave within the broader framework of workplace wellness and gender-sensitive policies, the chapter provides actionable recommendations for policymakers, employers, and HR practitioners to effectively integrate menstrual leave into organizational frameworks.

Keywords: Menstrual Leave, Gender Equality, Workplace Policies, Women's Health, Inclusive Workplaces, Organizational Frameworks.

Introduction

Employee well-being is a fundamental aspect of workplace productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational success. Menstrual leave has emerged as a progressive workplace policy aimed at supporting employees who experience discomfort or pain during menstruation. Research suggests that menstrual leave can enhance workplace inclusivity, reduce presenteeism[1], and promote gender equity[2] by acknowledging the biological differences that affect work performance. Menstrual health conditions such as dysmenorrhea[3], menorrhagia[4], and related

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[1] Presenteeism refers to employees being physically present at work but unable to fully function due to illness, injury, or other conditions, resulting in reduced productivity and potentially increased errors.

[2] Gender equity means fairness in treatment for all genders, ensuring equal access to opportunities, rights, and resources, addressing historical and social disadvantages that limit women's and girls' abilities to thrive

[3] Painful periods.

[4] heavy menstrual bleeding

medical issues can significantly hinder an employee's ability to work effectively (Sebert Kuhlmann *et al.*, 2017).

Providing menstrual leave allows employees to rest and recover, potentially leading to increased productivity and overall job satisfaction (Bratton & Gold, 2017). Despite its potential benefits, menstrual leave remains a contentious issue. Critics argue that such policies may reinforce gender stereotypes[5], affecting perceptions of women's reliability and employability (Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler, 2013). Also, there are concerns regarding the economic feasibility of implementing menstrual leave across diverse industries, as well as the risk of unequal access, particularly for workers in informal sectors (Sebert Kuhlmann *et al.*, 2017). Several discussions surrounding menstrual leave often exclude transgender[6] and non-binary individuals[7] who menstruate, necessitating a more inclusive approach to policy formulation (Crenshaw, 1991). This chapter explores the role of menstrual leave in fostering employee well-being, gender equality, and work-life balance. It examines the benefits and challenges associated with menstrual leave policies, drawing on global examples and emerging research. Additionally, the chapter identifies gaps in current discussions and suggests strategies for implementing inclusive and effective menstrual leave policies. This chapter also aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on menstrual leave, offering insights into its significance as a workplace policy and its broader implications for employee well-being and gender inclusivity.

Chapter Objectives

- To analyze the impact of menstrual leave on employee well-being, including its effects on productivity, mental health, and job satisfaction.
- To examine menstrual leave as a gender equality initiative, assessing its role in bridging workplace policy gaps and addressing potential biases.
- To explore the implications of menstrual leave policies on work-life balance, considering flexible work arrangements and alternative accommodations.
- To investigate global perspectives on menstrual leave, comparing policies in different countries and organizations.

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5 Gender stereotypes are generalized and often inaccurate beliefs about the characteristics, roles, and behaviors of individuals based on their perceived gender, which can be both descriptive (what people are believed to be) and prescriptive (what they should be).

6 "Transgender" is an umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. It encompasses a wide range of identities, including but not limited to, transgender women, transgender men, and non-binary individuals.

7 Non-binary individuals are those whose gender identity falls outside of the traditional male/female binary, encompassing a wide range of identities including, but not limited to, genderqueer, agender, bigender, and genderfluid.

- To identify challenges and potential resistance to menstrual leave policies, including economic feasibility, stigma, and implementation barriers.
- To propose recommendations for developing inclusive and effective menstrual leave policies that accommodate diverse workforce needs.

Methodology

Secondary sources of data, historical evidences have been used to understand this concept and also several case studies from the present scenario have been used to understand and elucidate this concept.

Policy Review: Analyze existing labor laws and corporate policies related to menstrual leave across various regions.

Case Studies: Examine organizations with established menstrual leave policies (e.g., Zomato in India, Nike, and countries like Japan and Indonesia) to identify best practices and challenges.

Review of Literature

Aboobucker and Bao (2021) explore the role of financial technology (fintech) in promoting women's financial inclusion in emerging markets. Their study highlights how digital banking, microfinance, and mobile payment systems contribute to bridging gender disparities in financial access. However, the authors identify key barriers such as digital illiteracy, inadequate policy frameworks, and socio-cultural norms that limit women's participation in the digital financial space. The findings suggest that fintech innovations can enhance women's economic independence, potentially influencing policies related to workplace inclusivity, including menstrual leave benefits.

Chandra (2017) provides a comprehensive policy review on menstrual health and hygiene management in India. The study examines the effectiveness of government initiatives, corporate policies, and non-governmental efforts in addressing menstrual health concerns. Chandra argues that inadequate menstrual health management negatively impacts women's workplace participation, resulting in decreased productivity and increased absenteeism. The study advocates for a structured policy framework that includes menstrual leave to ensure a gender-sensitive work environment.

Dube and Sharma (2019) conduct a comparative analysis of menstrual leave policies across various countries, including Japan, South Korea, and Indonesia, and assess their relevance to the Indian context. The authors argue that implementing menstrual leave in India would align with global best practices, enhance employee well-being, and reduce workplace stigma. However, they also highlight resistance from employers due to concerns about potential productivity losses. The study suggests that a balanced policy framework is essential for successful implementation.

Gupta and Kapoor (2020) analyze organizational approaches to menstrual leave policies, identifying key challenges and benefits. Their study examines how menstrual leave policies impact employee morale, productivity, and gender inclusivity. The authors emphasize the need for workplace awareness programs to eliminate stigma and promote a supportive work culture. Additionally, they provide recommendations for human resource professionals to develop inclusive policies that accommodate women's health needs while maintaining organizational efficiency.

Lahiri (2022) investigates corporate attitudes toward menstrual leave policies, categorizing responses into progressive, neutral, and resistant perspectives. The study finds that organizations with greater gender diversity in leadership are more likely to support menstrual leave policies. However, concerns about potential misuse and productivity losses persist. Lahiri highlights the necessity of proper monitoring mechanisms to ensure the fair and effective implementation of menstrual leave policies.

Reddy and Das (2021) examine the legal and socio-cultural dimensions of menstrual leave in India, evaluating its alignment with labor laws and constitutional provisions. Their study assesses case laws, government regulations, and corporate policies to determine the feasibility of national-level implementation. The authors argue that although legal provisions exist to support women's health rights, social stigma and workplace discrimination present significant barriers. They recommend legal reforms and awareness campaigns to enhance the acceptance and implementation of menstrual leave policies.

Sharma (2018) critically evaluates the impact of workplace policies on menstrual health, underscoring the need for gender-sensitive initiatives. The study reveals that inadequate workplace accommodations for menstrual health contribute to stress and absenteeism among women employees. Sharma argues that integrating menstrual leave into HR policies can improve employee satisfaction and productivity. A comparative analysis of organizations with and without menstrual leave policies further demonstrates the benefits of supportive workplace environments.

Singh and Verma (2019) analyze the impact of menstrual leave policies on employee productivity through case studies from Indian organizations. Their findings indicate that companies with menstrual leave policies report higher employee satisfaction and reduced absenteeism. However, the study also highlights concerns about potential misuse and gender-based biases. The authors recommend clear guidelines and transparent implementation strategies to ensure that menstrual leave policies benefit both employees and employers.

Tripathi (2020) presents a feminist perspective on menstrual leave, arguing that it should be recognized as a fundamental human right. The study links menstrual leave to broader discussions on labor rights, gender equality, and workplace discrimination. Tripathi critiques existing workplace policies for failing to address women's health needs adequately and calls for legislative reforms to mandate menstrual leave across industries. Additionally, the study explores international human rights frameworks that support menstrual leave as an essential component of workplace inclusivity.

Many organizations have voluntarily implemented menstrual leave policies, demonstrating their feasibility and potential benefits. For instance, Zomato in India provides up to 10 days of paid menstrual leave annually to female and transgender employees (DW, 2020). Similarly, Modibodi in Australia offers 10 days of menstrual leave annually, alongside provisions for menopause and miscarriage leave (Tech.co, 2021). Future Super, another Australian organization, has integrated menstrual leave within a broader initiative for workplace inclusivity (Tech.co, 2021). These examples illustrate how organizations can incorporate menstrual leave into comprehensive diversity and inclusion frameworks.

The literature review indicates that menstrual leave policies have significant implications for workplace inclusivity, employee well-being, and gender equality. While challenges such as employer resistance, policy implementation, and social stigma persist, research suggests that well-structured menstrual leave policies can contribute to a more equitable and productive work environment.

Historical Perspectives on Menstrual Leave

The concept of menstrual leave has traversed cultural, social, and economic landscapes, across various nations. It has its beginnings in industrial Japan and finds its place today in corporate across the globe. As Japan underwent rapid industrialization in the 1920s, a significant number of women entered factory jobs. The jobs involved long working hours and physically demanding work. Taking note of these conditions and challenges, some factories began allowing women to take leave during menstruation. This early form of menstrual leave was rooted in traditional notions of protecting women from overexertion during menstruation, reflecting societal attitudes toward female health and productivity.

Table 1: History of Menstrual Leave Policies

Year	Event	Source/Reference
1920	Japan pioneers menstrual leave policies in response to women's health needs in factories.	Historical accounts of Japan's labor reforms, 1920s
1947	Japan formalizes menstrual leave under Article 68 of the Labor Standards Law.	Japan Labor Standards Law, 1947
1948	Indonesia introduces two days of menstrual leave per month as part of labor reforms.	Indonesian Labor Laws, 1948

1953	South Korea enacts menstrual leave under its Labor Standards Act.	South Korea Labor Standards Act, 1953
1970s	Italy witnesses debates on menstrual leave policies driven by feminist advocacy groups.	Italian feminist advocacy sources, 1970s
2013	Taiwan revises its Gender Equality in Employment Act, granting three days of menstrual leave annually.	Taiwan Gender Equality in Employment Act, 2013
2015	Zambia introduces "Mother's Day," allowing women to take one day of menstrual leave per month.	Zambian Employment Laws, 2015
2017	Italy proposes a national menstrual leave bill, sparking debates but not passed into law.	Italian Legislative Proposal, 2017
2020	Kerala (India) implements menstrual leave for students and employees in select institutions.	Kerala Educational Institute Policies, 2020

This table provides a timeline of significant developments in menstrual leave history, showcasing how the concept evolved in different cultural and legal contexts.

Comparative Policy Framework

Menstrual leave policies vary significantly across regions, influenced by cultural attitudes, economic considerations, and workplace norms. While some countries have enacted progressive policies, challenges such as stigma, inconsistent enforcement, and potential hiring discrimination persist. The effectiveness of menstrual leave depends not only on legal frameworks but also on societal acceptance and employer support (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2021).

Japan was among the first countries to introduce menstrual leave, incorporating it into the Labor Standards Law in 1947. The law permits women to take leave without job security concerns if they experience severe menstrual pain (Bratton & Gold, 2017). However, workplace stigma and fears of being perceived as weak discourage many women from utilizing the policy, with a reported usage rate below 1% (Yasukawa, 2020). This reflects the gap between policy and practice, emphasizing the need for cultural shifts to ensure effective implementation (Sebert Kuhlmann *et al.*, 2017).

South Korea enacted menstrual leave in 1953 under the Gender Equality Employment Act, originally offering paid leave but later allowing employers to provide it as unpaid leave (Ghani *et al.*, 2021). Despite its legal provision, workplace stigma and concerns over appearing unproductive have led to a decline in its usage, which stood at 19.7% in 2017 (Dodds, 2020). Research indicates that many women avoid taking menstrual leave due to fears of negative career repercussions (Winkler & Roaf, 2015).

Indonesia's labor laws provide two menstrual leave days per month, reflecting cultural norms that prioritize women's health (Jain, 2020). However, enforcement remains inconsistent, with some employers requiring medical proof, discouraging women from using the leave. This highlights the importance of employer compliance and awareness campaigns to facilitate effective policy implementation (Sebert Kuhlmann *et al.*, 2017).

In Europe, Spain became the first country to legalize menstrual leave in 2023, granting three to five paid days off per month with medical certification (Ghani *et al.*, 2021). This policy aligns with Spain's broader reproductive health reforms, normalizing discussions on menstrual health. However, in its first year, only 1,559 instances of menstrual leave were recorded, indicating concerns over potential discrimination (The Guardian, 2024). In contrast, Italy proposed a similar policy in 2017, but it was ultimately rejected due to concerns that it might discourage employers from hiring women (ILO, 2021).

In India, there is no national menstrual leave policy, but private companies have introduced corporate-led initiatives. For example, Zomato implemented a 10-day annual menstrual leave policy for female and transgender employees in 2020 (Jain, 2020). While praised as a progressive step, critics argue that such policies could reinforce gender discrimination by making women appear less reliable employees (Dodds, 2020). This case highlights the role of corporate initiatives in shaping workplace attitudes in the absence of government mandates.

Australia and Canada have opted for an alternative approach by integrating menstrual leave into broader workplace wellness programs rather than treating it as a separate category (Winkler & Roaf, 2015). This strategy allows employees to take flexible work arrangements or sick leave, minimizing stigma while addressing health concerns. By avoiding the explicit classification of menstrual leave, these countries aim to prevent gender stereotyping while ensuring employee well-being (Sebert Kuhlmann *et al.*, 2017).

In Africa, Zambia introduced "Mother's Day" leave in 2015, granting women one paid day off per month for menstrual-related needs (CNN, 2020). Unlike in other regions, cultural acceptance of menstrual leave appears higher, contributing to smoother implementation. However, further research is needed to assess its long-term effects on workforce participation and employer attitudes.

In the Americas, there are no national menstrual leave mandates in the United States or Canada, though some companies offer flexible sick leave policies as an alternative. In Latin America, countries such as Mexico and Brazil have yet to implement formal menstrual leave policies, though discussions around labor law reforms addressing menstrual health are gaining traction (ILO, 2021; Ghani *et al.*, 2021).

Sector-Specific Analysis of Menstrual Leave Implementation

The technology and IT sector, including companies such as Google, Zomato, and Nike, have taken proactive steps in offering menstrual leave. The healthcare industry, including hospitals and clinics, faces challenges in adopting menstrual leave policies due to staffing shortages. In the education sector, encompassing schools and universities, exhibits limited implementation due to concerns over teaching continuity. The retail and service industry, including fast food and hospitality sectors, lacks formal menstrual leave policies, as high employee turnover and low wages deter companies from adopting such measures. Government and public sector workplaces in some Asian countries have menstrual leave policies in place, though their application varies by country and local regulations (Jain, 2020; The Guardian, 2024; ILO, 2021).

Table 2: Sector-Specific Analysis: How Different Industries Approach Menstrual Leave

Industry	Menstrual Leave Status	Challenges & Considerations
Tech & IT (Google, Zomato, Nike, Coexist UK)	Some private companies provide menstrual leave.	Policies often lack transparency and utilization data.
Healthcare (Hospitals, Clinics)	No standard menstrual leave policies.	Staffing shortages make implementation difficult.
Education (Schools, Universities)	Very limited implementation.	Concerns over continuity of teaching.
Retail & Service Industry (Fast food, Hospitality)	No formal menstrual leave policies.	High turnover and low-wage employment discourage leave policies.
Government & Public Sector	Some government offices in Asia have policies.	Varies by country and local regulations.

(*Sources: Jain, 2020; The Guardian, 2024; ILO, 2021*)

Global Case Studies on Menstrual Leave

The case studies discussed below demonstrate the varying approaches countries and corporations have taken toward menstrual leave.

Nike has included menstrual leave in its global employee benefits package since 2007 as part of its broader work-life balance framework to enhance employee satisfaction (ILO, 2021).

In the United Kingdom, **Coexist** has implemented a flexible menstrual leave policy based on employee feedback, allowing employees to adjust their work schedules instead of taking formal leave. This initiative has led to increased workplace satisfaction and reduced absenteeism (The Guardian, 2024).

Cooperatives and Small Enterprises (Zambia): Zambian companies often comply with the government-mandated "Mother’s Day" policy, offering one day of menstrual leave per month. (**Source**: Zambian Employment Laws, 2015)

Modibodi (UK): The UK-based company offers menstrual leave as part of its commitment to employee well-being and breaking menstrual stigma. (**Source**: Modibodi workplace policy, 2020)

France Télévisions (France): France Télévisions provides menstrual leave under their progressive workplace policies focusing on gender equity. (**Source**: HR policy reports, France Télévisions)

Culture Amp (Australia) offers menstrual leave as part of its broader health and wellness benefits. (**Source**: Culture Amp official policy statements)

Descomplica (Brazil): The Brazilian edtech company offers menstrual leave as part of its focus on employee inclusivity. (**Source**: Descomplica HR announcements, 2022).

Table 3: List of a few organizations across the globe with well-established menstrual leave policies:

Organization	Country	Policy Details	Year Introduced	Source
Zomato	India	Offers female and transgender employees up to 10 days of paid menstrual leave annually.	2020	DW
Swiggy	India	Provides female delivery partners two days off per month with a 'no questions asked' policy.	2021	Tech.co
BYJU's	India	Offers up to 12 period leaves annually, allowing one day off per month or two half-day leaves.	2020	HerCircle
Nuvento	USA	Provides female employees with 12 days of menstrual leave annually.	2022	Tech.co
Chani	USA	Offers unlimited menstrual leave for employees to manage period symptoms.	2020s	Tech.co
Modibodi	Australia	Grants employees 10 days of menstrual leave annually, along with paid menopause and miscarriage leave.	2021	Tech.co
Future Super	Australia	Introduced menstrual and menopause leave policies, offering additional time off for health symptoms.	2021	Tech.co

Case Studies and Success Stories from India: Menstrual Leave Policies

In recent years, the conversation around menstrual leave policies has gained footing in India, with several forward-thinking organizations stepping up to implement such policies. These case studies focus on organizations implementing menstrual leave effectively, and outcomes from these policies.

The implementation of menstrual leave policies by Indian organizations such as Zomato, Byju's, and Gozoop has set a benchmark for progressive workplace practices. These policies have not only empowered menstruating women, but also fostered a culture of inclusivity and openness. Quantitative metrics like reduced absenteeism and increased retention, coupled with qualitative outcomes such as employee satisfaction and stigma reduction, underscore the transformative potential of menstrual leave. These success stories demonstrate that when organizations prioritize gender-sensitive policies, they not only enhance employee well-being but also create a thriving, equitable workplace environment.

Zomato: In August 2020, Zomato became one of the first major Indian companies to introduce menstrual leave for its employees. The policy allows up to 10 days of paid menstrual leave annually to women and transgender employees. Zomato actively encouraged its employees to utilize the policy without stigma. CEO Deepinder Goyal emphasized the need to build a culture of empathy and inclusivity in the workplace. The policy sparked widespread discussions about menstrual health and workplace equality in corporate India, making Zomato a trailblazer in gender-sensitive workplace policies.

Byju's: The ed-tech company introduced a menstrual leave policy in 2021, offering its female employees one day of paid leave per month. The policy was paired with workplace wellness initiatives to create a safe and supportive environment for women employees. Employee satisfaction surveys indicated a positive response; with many employees reporting that the policy helped them feel valued and understood by the organization.

Gozoop: The digital marketing agency introduced a menstrual leave policy called the "first day of period leave" in 2021. Women employees can take leave on the first day of their menstrual cycle each month. Gozoop actively encouraged employees to take the leave without fear of judgment or repercussions. The company reported improved morale and stronger loyalty among women employees, with testimonials praising Gozoop for being a progressive employer.

The success of menstrual leave policies depends on cultural acceptance, economic considerations, and organizational support. Organizations seeking to implement menstrual leave as a policy must ensure promotion of inclusivity without reinforcing gender discrimination.

Menstrual Leave Policy and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Menstrual leave policies are closely tied to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, particularly those emphasizing gender equality, health, and decent work. These policies recognize the biological challenges faced by menstruating individuals and seek to foster an inclusive and supportive environment in workplaces and educational institutions. By aligning menstrual leave with the SDGs, policymakers can ensure that these initiatives contribute to broader societal development and well-being.

- **SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being:** Menstrual leave supports the physical and mental health of women by acknowledging the challenges associated with menstruation. Providing designated leave fosters a supportive work and education environment, reducing stress and absenteeism linked to menstruation-related discomforts. Additionally, menstrual leave policies help promote awareness and destigmatization of menstrual health, contributing to overall well-being and encouraging open discussions about reproductive health.
- **SDG 4: Quality Education:** In educational settings, menstrual leave ensures that students experiencing severe period pain or related health issues can take time off without academic penalties. This provision is particularly significant for girls and young women in rural and underserved areas, where menstrual health issues often contribute to high absenteeism rates. By addressing these barriers, menstrual leave policies help improve participation and completion rates in education, ensuring that menstruation does not hinder academic progress.
- **SDG 5: Gender Equality:** Menstrual leave policies challenge societal stigmas surrounding menstruation by normalizing discussions about women's health in public and professional domains. By addressing the unique biological needs of women, these policies promote inclusivity and reduce gender biases in workplaces and educational institutions. Recognizing menstrual health as an integral aspect of gender equality helps create more equitable policies that support women's participation in the workforce and education.
- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Menstrual leave policies contribute to equitable and supportive workplaces, enhancing employee satisfaction and productivity. By providing a formal mechanism to accommodate menstruation-related challenges, these policies foster a more inclusive work environment and address workplace discrimination. Organizations that implement gender-sensitive policies, including menstrual leave, are better positioned to attract and retain a diverse workforce, ultimately contributing to economic growth and stability.
- **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities:** Menstrual leave policies have the potential to address inequality by offering support to individuals from marginalized backgrounds who might otherwise have limited access to menstrual health resources. By ensuring that menstruation-related challenges do not disproportionately affect certain groups, these policies contribute to reducing disparities in workplace participation and educational attainment.

Menstrual Leave Policy - Challenges and Criticisms

Despite their progressive intent, these policies have drawn wide spread criticisms and raised significant challenges. These include concerns about the potential for misuse and discrimination, financial and operational burdens on employers, and the perpetuation of workplace stigma and stereotypes about menstruation. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure the policies are effective and equitable.

- **Misuse of the Policy**: Several critics argue that menstrual leave policies may be exploited by individuals seeking additional leave. Such misuse could undermine the credibility of the policy and discourage other organizations from adopting it.
- **Perception of Preferential Treatment**: Non-menstruating employees may view menstrual leave as unfair or preferential, leading to resentment and division within teams. This could harm workplace dynamics and create friction between colleagues.
- **Risk of Discrimination in Hiring and Promotions**: Employers may perceive menstruators as less productive or more likely to take leave. This can lead to biases during hiring or promotion, further leading to gender-based discrimination and deterring organizations from employing women or other menstruating individuals in key roles.
- **The possible solutions**: For such emerging issues, clear guidelines should be specified regarding the eligibility and usage for menstrual leave. Monitoring the policy utilization to prevent misuse while protecting employee privacy and raising awareness about the policy’s purpose to prevent bias and foster mutual understanding among all employees.

Framework for Designing and Implementing Menstrual Leave Policies

- **Inclusive Language and Clear Guidelines:** Menstrual leave policies should be clearly articulated with inclusive language that accounts for all individuals who menstruate. Clear guidelines on the number of leave days, process for requesting leave, and documentation requirements should be established.
- **Workplace Integration and Support Systems:** Care should be taken to ensure that menstrual leave policy is fully integrated into the organization’s leave management system. Confidential reporting channels and support systems should be established to encourage employees to use their leave when needed without fear of discrimination.
- **Gradual Implementation and Monitoring:** The menstrual leave policy should be gradually implemented, possibly with a pilot program. This will help understand the impact of this policy on the employees and will enable refine the policy. Monitoring its effectiveness through employee feedback and tracking its use should also be ensured to help refine the policy and address any emerging concerns.

Ensuring Equity and Avoiding Unintended Negative Consequences

- **Inclusive Policy Design:** Organizations should ensure that the menstrual leave policy is designed with inclusivity at its core, so that no employee—regardless of gender identity or cultural background—is excluded from the benefits. Gender-neutral policies and recognition of diverse health needs are the need of the hour.
- **Avoiding Stigmatization:** Menstrual leaves could create negative stereotypes or further entrench gender-based inequalities in the workplace. As such, organizations must ensure that taking menstrual leave is normalized and employees are not penalized for doing so.

Key Recommendations

To bridge the menstrual leave gap and promote workplace equity, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Inclusive Policies:** Menstrual leave should be integrated into broader workplace flexibility policies rather than framed as a gender-specific entitlement.
- **Workplace Education:** Organizations must promote menstrual health awareness to reduce stigma and encourage employees to use available policies without fear.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Employers should conduct internal assessments to understand how menstrual leave impacts productivity, retention, and gender disparities in promotions.
- **Legal Frameworks:** Governments should provide clear guidelines to ensure menstrual leave policies are implemented equitably and do not contribute to hiring biases.

Recommendations for Policymakers, Employers, and Advocacy Groups

- **For Policymakers:** Menstrual leave policies should be included in national labor laws, by providing a clear and equitable framework for implementation across various industries. Policymakers should also work towards standardizing benefits across organizations to reduce disparities.
- **For Employers:** Employers should champion the cause of menstrual leave policies as part of their broader commitment to health and gender equality, thus ensuring that they are properly communicated, accessible, and supportive for all employees.
- **For Advocacy Groups:** Advocacy groups should continue pushing for menstrual leave policies to be implemented across all sectors, both organized and unorganised. They should also focus on educating the public and employers about the importance of the policy and work towards reducing the stigma surrounding menstruation.

Conclusion

Menstrual leave is a multifaceted issue that intersects cultural, economic, and organizational considerations. While such policies have the potential to enhance gender equity and employee well-being, their effectiveness depends on thoughtful implementation and cultural sensitivity.

Organizations must design policies that foster inclusivity without unintentionally reinforcing gender disparities. By integrating menstrual leave within broader workplace equity and wellness initiatives, employers can create supportive environments that address employee health concerns without contributing to workplace discrimination.

The global discourse on menstrual leave highlights significant variations in acceptance and implementation. From an employee perspective, such policies can improve well-being and productivity; however, they may also contribute to stigma or career setbacks if not carefully structured. Employers must strike a balance between inclusivity and economic considerations, ensuring that menstrual leave does not inadvertently lead to hiring biases or operational difficulties.

To advance gender equity meaningfully, menstrual leave should be incorporated within comprehensive workplace wellness strategies rather than being treated as an isolated benefit. Its long-term success will depend on cultural shifts, legislative support, and organizational commitment to fostering inclusive work environments. As discussions on menstrual health evolve, organizations must approach menstrual leave as part of a broader effort to promote workplace equity and employee well-being.

Key Terms and Definitions

- **Menstrual Leave:** A workplace policy that grants employees time off during menstruation, either as paid or unpaid leave, to address menstrual-related discomfort and health concerns.
- **Gender Equity:** The principle of fairness in treating individuals according to their respective needs, ensuring equal access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender.
- **Workplace Inclusivity:** The practice of creating an equitable work environment where all employees, regardless of gender or health conditions, feel valued and supported.
- **Intersectionality:** A framework that examines how overlapping social identities (such as gender, class, race, and health) contribute to discrimination or privilege in workplace policies, including menstrual leave.
- **Absenteeism:** The habitual pattern of being absent from work, often due to health-related concerns, including menstrual pain and discomfort.
- **Presenteeism:** The act of attending work while unwell or in discomfort, which can lead to reduced productivity, particularly in the context of menstruating employees who feel compelled to work despite severe symptoms.
- **Reproductive Health Rights:** A broad concept that encompasses an individual's right to access menstrual health management, contraceptive choices, and medical support for reproductive health.

- **Social Stigma:** The negative perception and cultural taboos surrounding menstruation, which can affect the implementation and acceptance of menstrual leave policies.
- **Occupational Health and Safety (OHS):** A multidisciplinary field focused on the well-being of employees in the workplace, including policies that support menstrual health.
- **Paid Sick Leave:** A labor policy that allows employees to take time off work due to health conditions while still receiving their wages. Menstrual leave is often debated within the broader framework of paid sick leave policies.

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DETERMINANTS OF CAREER ASPIRATIONS AMONG SECONDARY STUDENTS: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF TECHNOLOGY, PSYCHOLOGY, AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

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Abstract

Career aspirations shaped during secondary school years show a decisive role in formative individuals' long-term educational and occupational courses. In the contemporary digital era, these aspirations are no extended influenced completely by traditional factors such as family background or academic act; instead, they are shaped by a dynamic interplay of psychological traits, technological exposure, and socio-cultural environments. This chapter presents a complete and multidimensional analysis of the factors of career aspirations among secondary school students. Drawing upon theoretical contexts such as Social Cognitive Career Theory, life-span developmental viewpoints, and socio-cultural theories, the chapter critically examines how self-efficacy, inspiration, identity formation, digital literacy, artificial intelligence interaction, family influence, socio-economic status, and school environment interrelate to influence career decision-making. The chapter further highlights emerging tendencies such as digital career awareness, the gig economy, and future-oriented skills, contribution implications for educators, policymakers, and researchers. It advocates for a combined and inclusive style to career guidance that aligns with the demands of the 21st-century workforce.

Keywords: Career Aspiration, Adolescents, Self-Efficacy, AI, Digital Learning, Socio-Economic Status, Education, Career Development.

1. Introduction

Career Aspiration represents a student's intended future in terms of occupation, professional identity, and socio-economic status. During adolescence, mainly at the secondary school stage, students begin to conceptualize their future characters and explore possible career pathways. This stage is critical because it bridges the transition from education to employment and lays the foundation for lifetime career development.

Historically, Career Aspirations were mainly influenced by limited factors such as family occupation, local opportunities, and societal expectations. However, the quick advancement of digital technologies, globalization, and the emergence of novel industries have transformed the career landscape. Today's students are visible to an unprecedented range of career opportunities, many of which did not exist a decade ago. Consequently, understanding the factors of Career Aspirations involves a multidimensional perspective that participates psychological, technological, and social variables.

Moreover, disparities in access to resources, data, and opportunities remain to shape career outcomes. Students from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds experience varying stages of exposure and provision, leading to unequal Career Aspirations. Therefore, examining these factors is essential for promoting reasonable and informed career progress among secondary school students.

2. Theoretical Foundations of Career Aspirations

2.1 Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

Social Cognitive Career Theory highlights the role of cognitive and contextual influences in career development. It classifies three crucial components: self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and individual goals. Self-efficacy denotes to an individual's belief in their capability to perform specific tasks, while outcome expectations include beliefs about the costs of those actions. Together, these influences form career interests and aspirations.

In the background of secondary school students, SCCT recommends that students who believe in their academic and technical capabilities are more likely to aspire to complex and high-status careers. Moreover, positive reinforcement from teachers and parents improves self-efficacy, thereby influencing career choices.

2.2 Life-Span, Life-Space Theory

This theory views career development of all-time process influenced by evolving self-concept and social roles. During adolescence, individuals start to crystallize their career likings based on their understanding of personal strengths, benefits, and societal expectations. Career aspirations, therefore, reflect not only individual partialities but also the parts students anticipate occupying in society.

2.3 Socio-Cultural Theory

Socio-cultural lookouts highlight the influence of social interactions, cultural norms, and environmental settings on career development. Students' aspirations are formed by their social surroundings, together with family values, cultural expectations, and community norms. For instance, in many societies, firm professions are careful more prestigious, influencing students' preferences.

2.4 Identity Formation and Career Development

Adolescence is a critical period for identity development. Students explore diverse roles and identities, including professional identities. Career aspirations are closely related to how students perceive themselves and their place in the social order. A strong sense of identity increases clarity in career goals, while uniqueness confusion may lead to uncertainty in career decision-making.

3. Psychological Determinants of Career Aspirations

3.1 Self-Efficacy and Confidence

Self-efficacy is one of the most significant psychological determinants of career aspiration. Students who be certain of in their abilities are more likely to set ambitious career goals and continue in achieving them. For example, students with high mathematical self-efficacy are more motivated to pursue careers in engineering or data science.

3.2 Academic Achievement and Cognitive Ability

Academic performance pointedly influences career aspirations. High-achieving students tend to seek to professional careers such as medicine, engineering, or law. Academic success strengthens self-confidence and expands perceived career possibilities.

3.3 Motivation and Goal Orientation

Motivation drives students to set and chase career goals. Inherent motivation, characterized by genuine curiosity and inquisitiveness, leads to additional sustainable and meaningful career aspirations. In contrast, extrinsic motivation, driven by outside rewards or pressures, may result in less stable career choices.

3.4 Personality Traits and Interests

Personality behaviours such as openness, conscientiousness, and resilience influence career likings. Students' interests in specific subjects or activities guide their career aspirations. However, interests alone are unsatisfactory; they must be supported by skills, opportunities, and guidance.

3.5 Career Maturity and Decision-Making Skills

Career maturity states to the eagerness to make informed career decisions. Students with advanced career maturity demonstrate improved understanding of career options, self-awareness, and decision-making skills.

4. Technological Factors of Career Aspirations

4.1 Digital Literacy and Access to Information

Digital literacy allows students to explore career choices, access online resources, and develop applicable skills. The internet serves as a powerful tool for career exploration, providing data about emerging professions and educational pathways.

4.2 Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Careers

Artificial intelligence is **reshaping** the job market by producing new career opportunities while converting existing roles. Students exposed to AI technologies are more likely to develop interest in arenas such as data science, robotics, and machine learning.

4.3 Online Learning Platforms and Skill Development

Digital stages have democratized access to education, allowing students to gain skills beyond the traditional curriculum. These platforms play a key role in influential career aspirations by exposing students to diverse fields.

4.4 Social Media and Career Awareness

Social media phases impact Career Aspirations by showcasing success stories, career journeys, and professional existences. While they can encourage students, they may also create unrealistic expectations.

4.5 Digital Divide and Inequality

Despite technological progressions, disparities in access to digital resources persist. Students from underprivileged backgrounds may have inadequate exposure to career information, affecting their aspirations.

5. Social Determinants of Career Aspirations

5.1 Family Influence and Parental Expectations

Family plays an initial role in shaping career aspirations. Parents influence career selections through supervision, expectations, and resource provision. In many cases, parental aspirations may dominate students' personal interests.

5.2 Socio-Economic Status (SES)

Socio-economic status affects access to excellence education, career guidance, and extracurricular chances. Students from higher SES backgrounds often have wider career aspirations due to better exposure and support.

5.3 Peer Influence and Social Comparison

Peers impact Career Aspirations through shared experiences and competition. Students often compare themselves with peers, shaping their insights of achievable careers.

5.4 School Environment and Institutional Support

Schools play a critical role in career progress by providing guidance, mentorship, and exposure to career chances. A supportive school environment nurtures confidence and aspiration.

5.5 Cultural Norms and Gender Roles

Cultural beliefs and gender stereotypes impact Career Aspirations. In some frameworks, certain careers are considered unsuitable for specific genders, limiting students' choices.

6. Interaction of Multidimensional Aspects

Career Aspirations are not determined by a single feature but by the interaction of multiple influences. For instance, a student with high self-efficacy and strong family provision may pursue ambitious careers contempt socio-economic constraints. Conversely, lack of technological exposure may bound aspirations even among capable students.

This interaction highpoints the importance of adopting a holistic approach to career progress that addresses psychological, technological, and social extents simultaneously.

7. Emerging Trends in Career Aspirations

7.1 Increase of Non-Traditional Careers

Students are progressively exploring careers beyond traditional fields, together with content creation, digital marketing, and entrepreneurship.

7.2 Gig Economy and Flexible Work

The gig economy has presented flexible career options, inducing students' perceptions of work and success.

7.3 Globalization and Cross-Cultural Opportunities

Global connectivity has extended career opportunities, allowing students to aspire to international careers.

7.4 Focus on 21st Century Skills

Skills such as critical thinking, inventiveness, collaboration, and digital competence are becoming crucial for career success.

8. Educational and Policy Implications

8.1 Integrating Career Education in Curriculum

Colleges should mix career education into the curriculum to help students make informed choices.

8.2 Enhancing Digital Access

Policies should emphasis on reducing the digital divide and ensuring equitable access to technology.

8.3 Strengthening Career Counselling Services

Professional career counselling can direct students in aligning their aspirations with abilities and chances.

8.4 Promoting Inclusive Education

Efforts should be made to eradicate gender and socio-economic blockades in career development.

9. Conceptual Model of Career Aspirations

To better recognise the multidimensional factors of Career Aspirations among Secondary School Students, it is appreciated to conceptualize a framework that integrates psychological, technological, and social variables into a combined model. This conceptual model positions Career Aspiration as the reliant on variable, influenced by three primary areas: psychological aspects, technological exposure, and socio-cultural environment.

Within the psychological sphere, variables such as self-efficacy, drive, personality traits, and career maturity act as inner drivers. These aspects determine how students observe their capabilities and possible for success. For example, a pupil with strong self-belief and intrinsic motivation is more likely to aspire in the direction of complex and high-status careers.

The technological area comprises digital literacy, access to online learning platforms, exposure to artificial intelligence, and engagement with social media. These aspects expand students' responsiveness of career possibilities and equip them with relevant skills. Technological exposure acts as mutually an enabler and a mediator, enhancing the influence of psychological aspects on Career Aspirations.

The socio-cultural area encompasses family background, socio-economic status, peer inspiration, school environment, and cultural norms. These exterior influences provide the setting within which Career Aspirations are formed. They can either enable or constrain students' drives depending on the level of support and resources available.

Importantly, the model highlights the interaction among these domains. For example, technological exposure may increase self-efficacy, while family support may rise access to digital resources. Thus, career aspirations occur from the dynamic interplay of internal and external impacts rather than from isolated factors.

In conclusion, empowering students to make informed career choices is not only essential for individual success but also for societal development. By understanding and addressing the determinants of career aspirations, we can contribute to the creation of a skilled, adaptable, and future-ready workforce.

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EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING:
CREATING MEMORABLE BRAND EXPERIENCES

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Abstract
Experiential marketing has become an influential concept in contemporary marketing that aims at developing significant and memorable experiences between the brands and the consumers. Experience marketing, as opposed to the traditional marketing strategies that focus on the features of the product and advertising messages, are used to attract customers to participate in the interactive and immersive experiences. The experience enables consumers to identify with brands and results in better brand-relationships and enhanced customer loyalty. The current forms of business incorporate events, live demonstrations, the use of digital interactions, and social media interaction to generate the unique brand experience that makes a long-lasting memory in the mind of consumers. Experiential marketing assists brands in providing a distinction in a very vast market place by promoting active engagement. This paper will talk of the phenomenon of experiential marketing and its significance in modern-day marketing practices and how companies can develop memorable brand experiences to increase customer engagement and brand recognition.

Keywords: Experience Marketing, Brand Interaction, Customer Interaction, Brand Loyalty, Customer Interaction, Marketing Innovation.

Introduction

With the modern-day marketing environment, companies are moving towards the development of meaningful connection with their customers as opposed to mere promotion of products and services. The conventional methods of marketing that were largely dependent on advertisements and marketing communications are slowly phased out in favor of the more interactive and interactive marketing techniques. Experiential marketing is one of these strategies and focuses on making the experience memorable where direct interaction between the consumers and the brands is implemented. Schmitt (1999) defines experiential marketing as the approach that concentrates on the use of the sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral experiences to enhance the attachment between the brands and customers. The idea of experience marketing has become popular due to the advent of the experience economy whereby organizations are looking to offer special experiences beyond the functional product advantages. Pine and Gilmore (1998) claimed that the contemporary consumers do not merely consume the goods or services but prefer to experience them in a memorable way. Consequently, firms are developing marketing programs which incorporate immersion programs, brand experiences, product experiences, and online interactions in order to attract the interests of consumers and create favorable brand image. In addition, the development of online technologies and social media has made experience marketing much more productive. Businesses are now leveraging on digital channels in order to develop interactive campaigns which attract customer participation and engagement. Smilansky (2009) argues that experiential marketing helps consumers to experience the brands which allows them to have greater emotional attachment and have better brand loyalty. Such experiences usually prompt consumers to provide social media communications about their interactions which also increases brand awareness and impact. Within the exceptionally competitive business environment, the need to establish memorable brand experiences has come out as a key measure that companies wanting to stand out and differ. The concept of experiential marketing will not only increase the participation of the customers but also help to develop long-term relationships between the brand and the customers. As such, companies are combining experiential approaches with virtual marketing technologies in the production of effective and unique brand experiences that affect consumer attitudes and buying patterns.

Review of Literature

The recent research has highlighted the increasing significance of experiential marketing in developing meaningful customer interaction and building brand relationships. According to researchers, the idea of experiential marketing is based on the emotional, sensory, and interactive experiences with consumers, which enhance brand perception and loyalty. Carmo, Marques, and Dias (2022) investigated how the interventions of experiential marketing, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty relate. The results indicated that sensorial and emotional experience have a big impact on customer satisfaction, which in effect affects brand loyalty in a positive way. The research concluded that emotional and behavioral engagement activities that are executed in the form of experiential marketing can be useful in strengthening long-term customer relationships. Likewise, Bramantoko and Maridjo (2023) examined the impact of experience marketing dimensions of sense, feel, think, act and relate on customer loyalty. Their study established that senses and relational experiences had direct impact on customer loyalty whereas other experiential factors had an indirect impact on customer loyalty in the form of customer satisfaction. This shows that the strategy of experiential marketing can greatly boost customer loyalty in cases where its customers go through positive experiences with the brand. The other recent research conducted by Asyhari and Dermawan (2024) compared the effects of experiential marketing and emotional marketing on customer loyalty in the service sector. The findings revealed that experiential marketing has a positive effect on customer loyalty because it establishes emotional relationships between customers and the brands. The research emphasized that customers with memorable experiences with the brands will have more chances to become long-term loyal. A study carried out by Girard (2024) within the area of tourism also revealed that experiential marketing can greatly enhance customer interaction and loyalty through providing unique and in-memorable experiences. The research proposed that experiential approaches to consumer satisfaction, including interactive services, personalized communication, and immersive activities, can be used to increase consumer satisfaction and improve brand relationships. All in all, the available literature suggests that experiential marketing is very essential in enhancing customer engagement, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. All studies have highlighted that those organizations are able to establish robust consumer relationships and sustainable competitive advantages through being able to create memorable brand experiences.

Theoretical notion of Experiential Marketing

An example of such a marketing situation is the so-called experiential marketing which is based on designing memorable and captivating customer experiences as opposed to mere product or service promotion. It calls the consumers to engage with the brand via live event, product demonstrations and immersive campaigns. This strategy aids in creating emotional associations with the consumers and as such, businesses can have better brand associations and they can also have more loyal customers. Through experiences, the brands can now make memorable impacts on the customers that affect their buying behaviors.

Historical Development of Experiential Marketing

Over the years, experiential marketing has developed considerably due to the improvement in consumer demands and technology. The previous marketing techniques were primarily based on the conventional forms of advertising like the television and the print media along with the bill boards. But with the competition in the markets, companies started to turn their attention to the interaction with consumers by means of their engagement. The idea became popular with the advent of experience economy in which businesses began to focus on customers experiences as opposed to products. Nowadays, experiential marketing combines digital technologies, social media, and new campaigns to build more personal and interactive brand experiences.

The Important Aspects of Experiential Marketing

The elements of experience marketing have various aspects that lead to the development of successful brand experiences. These are sensory, emotional, customer involvement and brand narrative. Sensory enrichment enables the customers to feel the brand either by sight, hearing, touch, taste, or smell. Emotion engages to establish good relationships between the brand and the consumers. It guarantees active customer involvement so that the consumers feel part of the experience as opposed to spectators. All these combined enable brands to make their marketing campaigns effective.

Memorable Brand Experiences Strategies

Companies embrace several approaches to develop endearing brand experiences to consumers. These are the strategies like conducting live events, launching products, interactive exhibitions, and promotions campaigns. Storytelling is also an aspect of brands that are communicated to convey their values and emotional connection with the customers. The other strategy that is commonly used is the establishment of immersion environments where the customers can have a direct experience of the product or the service. Such experiential plans can assist a business to draw attention, a higher engagement rate, and a better brand identity.

Technology Role in Experiential Marketing

Technology is also significant in the augmentation of the experiential marketing activities. The technologies that enable brands to develop new and interactive experiences include modern technologies like augmented reality, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and interactive digital displays. As an example, virtual reality can be used to enable customers to view products using a simulation that is created by companies. The social media is also able to market the brand by allowing customers to transmit their experience to others, which will widen the brand visibility and reach.

Effects on Consumer Behaviour

Experience marketing is an important technique that affects consumer behaviour by working on emotional attachments to the brands. Whenever customers get into their engaging experiences, they have a positive perception of the brand and become more likely to recall it in future. Positive experiences can boost customer satisfaction, stimulate a repeat purchase and improve positive word-of-mouth communication. Consequently, experiential marketing is very important in consumer attitude and purchase decision making.

Experiential Marketing has a Number of Challenges

Experiential marketing has a number of challenges to businesses even though it has its benefits. The initial one is a significant cost of hosting events and developing immersive elements. Businesses need a great amount of funds on planning, logistics, and promotion. The other issue is the effectiveness of experiential campaigns which are hard to measure since it might not be possible to establish a direct relationship between experiences and sales. There is also need to make sure that the experiences that businesses bring about are in line with their brand image and the expectations of their customers.

Future Trends Experiential Marketing

Experience marketing is likely to be affected by new technologies and shifting consumer demands in the future. Digital technologies like AI, virtual reality and data analytics will make businesses capable of creating a more personalized and digitally interactive brand experience. Moreover, the interventions of physical events and digital interaction are growing in popularity as the so-called hybrid experiences. The experiential marketing will also be a relevant business strategy as consumers are still in need of experiences that are unique and meaningful.

Conclusion

Experience marketing is now a potent marketing strategy which aims at establishing memorable and interesting experiences between brands and consumers. Focusing on experiences instead of the conventional promotional techniques allows businesses to establish closer emotional ties with their clients. Even the use of technology and innovations add to the efficiency of the experiential marketing. Notwithstanding some pitfalls, organizations that effectively deem the use of experiential marketing have the ability of enhancing customer engagements, building brand loyalty, and gaining competitive edge in the market.

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YOUNG CONSUMERS' APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS: A STUDY IN MUMBAI

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Abstract

Sustainability has moved from a global concern to a practical necessity as environmental degradation, climate change, and resource pressure intensify. Consumer choices now extend beyond price and quality, increasingly reflecting environmental and ethical considerations. Young consumers, especially in India, show awareness and concern for sustainability, yet their actual purchasing behaviour often remains inconsistent. In urban markets such as Mumbai, the availability of eco-friendly products is rising, but regular adoption is limited. This study explores the gap between awareness and action by analysing the factors influencing sustainable buying behaviour among youngsters. It focuses on how economic constraints, social influences, and perceived value shape decision-making, offering insights to strengthen sustainable consumption in emerging economies.

Keywords: Climate Change, Sustainability, Buying Behaviour

Introduction

Growing environmental challenges have made sustainability an essential part of global and local discussions. Increasing consumption and industrial expansion continue to strain natural resources, making responsible consumption more important than ever. In this context, consumer behaviour plays a critical role in shaping demand patterns and influencing market practices.

Today's consumers are gradually incorporating environmental and ethical concerns into their decisions. However, these considerations often compete with practical factors such as cost, convenience, and brand preference. Sustainable buying behaviour therefore reflects a balance between awareness and real-world constraints.

Young consumers in India represent a particularly important group due to their exposure to digital information and global trends. Despite their awareness, their behaviour is not always aligned with their values. Factors such as price sensitivity, peer influence, and lifestyle priorities often limit consistent sustainable choices. In cities like Mumbai, where sustainable alternatives are becoming more visible, adoption remains selective rather than habitual.

This study aims to examine whether sustainability genuinely influences purchase decisions or continues to remain secondary. It also provides insights for businesses, policymakers, and educators to encourage more consistent sustainable behaviour. By connecting awareness with actual practices, the study contributes to a clearer understanding of consumer behaviour in an emerging market context.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant as it provides insights into young consumers' sustainable buying behaviour, which is crucial for businesses, policymakers, and society. For businesses, it helps in designing effective marketing, pricing, and product strategies. For policymakers, it highlights how awareness translates into action, aiding in better policy formulation. Socially, it reflects the role of youth in shaping future sustainable consumption trends. Academically, it contributes to research in the Indian urban context and helps explain the attitude–behaviour gap. Overall, the study links sustainability awareness with actual consumer behaviour and practical implications.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of awareness regarding sustainability and sustainable products among youngsters.
2. To analyse the factors influencing sustainable buying behaviour.
3. To evaluate the impact of economic factors, especially price sensitivity, on purchase decisions.
4. To study the relationship between attitude towards sustainability and actual buying behaviour.

Research Methodology

Geographical Scope

The study is confined to Mumbai, a metropolitan hub marked by rapid urbanization, diverse consumer segments, and growing availability of sustainable products. This context is ideal due to its exposure to global trends, eco-conscious brands, and a vibrant youth population engaged in consumption.

Demographic Scope

The research targets youngsters—specifically students, early professionals, and young earners—who form the emerging consumer class shaping future demand. This digitally connected, socially aware group is influenced by global sustainability movements but remains sensitive to price, brand appeal, and lifestyle factors.

Methodological Boundaries

Drawing on primary data from structured questionnaires, the study examines behavioral and attitudinal patterns—particularly the interplay of awareness, economic constraints, and purchase behavior. It excludes experimental, longitudinal, or direct environmental outcome analyses.

This defined scope in geography, demographics, products, and variables enables a focused, structured investigation of sustainable buying behavior among Mumbai's youth

Sampling Method and Size

For the purpose of this study, a sample size of approximately 100 respondents has been considered. The respondents mainly consist of youngsters, including college students and young individuals who represent the target consumer group for the research.

The sample was selected using the convenience sampling method, which involves selecting respondents who are easily accessible to the researcher. This method is commonly used in academic research where time and resources are limited.

Although convenience sampling may not provide a perfectly representative sample of the entire population, it allows researchers to gather useful preliminary insights regarding consumer behaviour patterns.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to Mumbai, which may not represent the behaviour of youngsters in other regions.
2. It uses a small sample size with convenience sampling, limiting generalisability.
3. Data is based on self-reported responses, which may lead to response bias.
4. Time and resource constraints restricted the use of advanced analytical techniques.
5. Findings are time-bound, as consumer behaviour may change due to evolving market and economic conditions.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Age Profile of Respondents

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below 18	11	10.7%
18–21	56	54.4%
22–25	22	21.4%
26–30	14	13.6%
Total	**103**	**100%**

The majority of respondents (54.4%) are aged 18–21, followed by 22–25 (21.4%) and 26–30 (13.6%), while 10.7% are below 18. This indicates that the sample is predominantly composed of young adults.

Occupational Status of Respondents

Status	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Student	50	48.5%
Working Professional	27	26.2%
Both Studying and Working	26	25.2%
Total	**103**	**100%**

Most respondents are students (48.5%), followed by working professionals (26.2%) and those both studying and working (25.2%), indicating a sample largely dominated by students.

Understanding of Sustainable Products

Interpretation of Sustainable Product	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Environment-friendly products	61	59.3%
Ethical brands	26	25.2%
Expensive products	10	9.7%
Not very clear	6	5.8%
Total	103	100.0%

The findings show that most respondents (59.3%) associate sustainable products with environment-friendly characteristics, indicating strong environmental awareness. About 25.2% link sustainability with ethical brands, reflecting some understanding of its broader social aspects. A smaller group (9.7%) perceives sustainable products as expensive, while a few remain unclear about the concept. Overall, sustainability is mainly viewed from an environmental perspective, with limited awareness of its wider dimensions.

Awareness Level about Sustainable Products

Awareness Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Well informed	12	11.7%
Moderately informed	67	65.0%
Not informed	24	23.3%
Total	**103**	**100%**

The data shows that most respondents (65%) are moderately informed about sustainable products, indicating a basic level of awareness. A smaller group (11.7%) is well informed, while 23.3% lack sufficient knowledge. Overall, awareness exists but remains limited and not deeply developed, highlighting the need for better education and information to promote sustainable consumption.

Sources of Information about Sustainable Products

Source of Information	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Social media	35	34%
Educational Institutions	26	25%
Friends and Family	23	22%
Advertisements	19	19%
Total	**103**	**100%**

Social media is the leading source of information on sustainable products (34%), indicating the strong influence of digital platforms on consumer awareness. Educational institutions (25%) also play a significant role, reflecting the importance of formal learning in promoting sustainability. Friends and family (22%) highlight the impact of word-of-mouth communication, while advertisements (19%) have a comparatively lower influence. Overall, the results suggest that interactive and knowledge-based sources are more effective than traditional promotional methods in spreading awareness.

Perception of Brand Sustainability Claims

Opinion	**Number of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Very genuine	14	13.6%
Somewhat genuine	46	44.7%
Neutral	18	17.5%
Mostly exaggerated (Greenwashing)	25	24.3%
Total	**103**	**100**

The data shows that most respondents (44.7%) consider brand sustainability claims as somewhat genuine, indicating moderate trust. However, a significant portion (24.3%) believes these claims are mostly exaggerated, reflecting skepticism about greenwashing. While 13.6% express strong trust, 17.5% remain neutral, suggesting uncertainty. Overall, consumers exhibit cautious trust, with notable concerns about the authenticity of sustainability claims.

Attitude Towards Sustainable Consumption

View	**Number of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Essential for the future	48	46.6%
Important but difficult	33	32.0%
Responsibility of government/companies	16	15.5%
Temporary trend	6	5.8%
Total	**103**	**100%**

The findings show that nearly half of the respondents (46.6%) view sustainability as essential for the future, indicating strong awareness and long-term concern. Another 32% consider it important but difficult, highlighting practical challenges in adoption. A smaller group (15.5%) believes it is mainly the responsibility of governments and companies, suggesting limited personal accountability. Only 5.8% see it as a temporary trend. Overall, the data reflects a positive attitude toward sustainability, though challenges and shared responsibility perceptions remain.

Feeling of Contribution Through Sustainable

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	41	39.8%
Agree	39	37.9%
Neutral	23	22.3%
Total	**103**	**100.0%**

The data indicates a high level of agreement, with a majority of respondents either strongly agreeing (39.8%) or agreeing (37.9%). A smaller portion (22.3%) remains neutral, suggesting some uncertainty. Overall, the responses reflect a positive inclination toward the statement, with limited opposition.

Perception of the Genuineness of Brands' Sustainability Claims

Response Category	No.	%
Very genuine	14	13.6
Somewhat genuine	46	44.7
Neutral	18	17.5
Mostly exaggerated (Greenwashing)	25	24.3
Total	103	100

The data reveals that a majority of respondents (44.7%) perceive brands' sustainability claims as somewhat genuine, indicating moderate trust. However, a notable proportion (24.3%) believes these claims are mostly exaggerated (greenwashing), reflecting skepticism. While 13.6% express strong trust by considering them very genuine, 17.5% remain neutral, suggesting uncertainty. Overall, the findings indicate cautious consumer trust, with significant concerns about the authenticity of sustainability claims.

Price as a Barrier to Sustainable Buying

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	45	43.7%
Agree	36	35.0%
Neutral	22	21.3%
Total	**103**	**100.0%**

The findings indicate that price is a major barrier to purchasing sustainable products. A majority (78.7%) of respondents either strongly agree (43.7%) or agree (35.0%) that high costs discourage sustainable purchases, highlighting the strong influence of economic factors on buying behavior. While 21.4% remain neutral, no respondents disagreed, reinforcing the widespread perception of price as a constraint. This suggests the presence of an attitude–behaviour gap, where consumers support sustainability but are limited by affordability.

Perception of Quality of Sustainable Products

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	49	47.6%
Agree	16	15.5%
Neutral	38	36.9%
Total	**103**	**100%**

Most respondents agree (47.6%) that sustainable products are better in quality, indicating a positive perception. However, a significant portion remains neutral (36.9%), showing uncertainty, while 15.5% disagree, reflecting some scepticism. Overall, although perceptions are favorable, lack of clarity and confidence still limit wider acceptance of sustainable products.

Importance of Sustainability When Choosing Between Similar Products

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Always choose sustainable	26	25.2%
Choose sustainable if affordable	59	57.3%
Prefer regular products	11	10.7%
Sustainability is not a major factor	7	6.8%
Total	103	100%

The findings show that sustainability is important to most respondents, but affordability remains the key deciding factor. A majority (57.3%) choose sustainable products only if they are affordable, while 25.2% always prefer them, reflecting strong environmental commitment. However, a smaller group prefers regular products (10.7%) or does not prioritize sustainability (6.8%).

Overall, 85 out of 103 respondents show some preference for sustainable products, indicating growing awareness. However, the results highlight that economic considerations strongly influence actual purchasing behavior, and improving affordability could significantly boost adoption.

Willingness to Pay Extra for Sustainable Products

Extra Price Willing to Pay	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Nothing extra	43	41.7%
Up to 10% more	54	52.4%
11–20% more	5	4.9%
More than 20%	1	1.0%
Total	**103**	**100%**

The findings show that a majority (52.4%) are willing to pay up to 10% more for sustainable products, indicating moderate support. However, a large portion (41.7%) is not willing to pay any extra, highlighting strong price sensitivity. Only a small percentage is willing to pay higher premiums.

Overall, while awareness exists, willingness to pay is limited, showing a clear trade-off between environmental concern and affordability. Reducing price differences could significantly increase adoption of sustainable products.

The findings show that youngsters have moderate awareness and positive attitudes toward sustainable products, but their willingness to pay is limited, with most accepting only a small premium. Price remains a major barrier, and sustainability is often secondary to factors like cost, quality, and brand.

A clear attitude–behaviour gap exists, as support for sustainability does not always translate into actual purchases due to price sensitivity, lack of trust, and limited information. Concerns about greenwashing further influence decisions.

Overall, while young consumers show strong potential, affordability, transparency, and awareness are key to increasing sustainable consumption.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Encouraging sustainable consumption requires changes at multiple levels. Consumers need clearer understanding of long-term benefits and should gradually shift focus from short-term cost to overall value and impact. Awareness can be strengthened through education, social influence, and everyday practices.

Businesses must prioritise affordability and transparency. Clearly communicating product benefits, maintaining honesty in sustainability claims, and expanding availability can improve consumer trust and adoption.

Policymakers play an equally important role by supporting sustainable markets through incentives, regulations, and standardised labeling systems. Educational institutions can further reinforce these efforts by integrating sustainability into learning and promoting responsible habits among students.

Conclusion

The study reveals that young consumers generally hold favourable views toward sustainability and recognise its long-term importance. However, this positive outlook does not always translate into consistent purchasing behaviour. Affordability emerges as the most significant limiting factor, with many respondents preferring sustainable products only when they are reasonably priced.

Another important observation is the presence of uncertainty and partial knowledge. While basic awareness exists, deeper understanding of sustainability concepts remains limited. In addition, trust in brand claims is not absolute, as concerns about exaggerated or misleading information influence consumer decisions.

These factors collectively create a gap between intention and action. Consumers may support sustainability in principle but hesitate in practice due to financial constraints, lack of clarity, and competing priorities.

Despite these challenges, the potential for growth in sustainable consumption is strong. Strengthening awareness, improving product accessibility, and ensuring transparency can encourage more consistent behaviour. A combined effort from businesses, institutions, and policymakers is necessary to make sustainability not just an option, but a practical and preferred choice.

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COLONIAL TRANSFORMATION OF BIHAR:
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CHANGES

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Abstract

British colonial rule brought far-reaching changes to the socio-economic and cultural fabric of Bihar. This chapter analyzes how colonial policies reshaped agrarian structures, weakened indigenous industries, and created new social hierarchies. While certain modern institutions were introduced, the overall impact resulted in long-term economic challenges and structural imbalance in the region.

Keywords: Colonialism, Bihar, Agrarian System, Economic Change, Social Structure, Nationalism.

1. Introduction

Bihar has historically been an important region in India’s cultural and economic landscape. Before the advent of British rule, the region was characterized by a predominantly agrarian economy supported by traditional crafts and localized systems of governance. However, colonial intervention significantly altered these systems. The integration of Bihar into the broader colonial economy led to structural transformations that affected its economic base and social fabric. This chapter examines these changes in a comprehensive manner.

2. Agrarian Changes under Colonial Rule

The introduction of the Permanent Settlement in 1793 brought a major shift in land relations. Under this system, zamindars were recognized as landowners, while cultivators lost their traditional rights over land.

High land revenue demands placed immense pressure on peasants, often forcing them into debt. Agricultural productivity did not improve significantly, as the system provided little incentive for investment in land development. Over time, this led to stagnation in agriculture and long-term rural distress.

3. Commercialization of Agriculture

Colonial economic policies encouraged the cultivation of cash crops such as indigo and opium. Farmers were compelled to shift from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture.

This transition reduced the availability of food crops and increased dependence on market forces. As a result, peasants became vulnerable to price fluctuations and economic uncertainties. The emphasis on cash crops often worked against the interests of local farmers and contributed to food insecurity in certain regions.

4. Decline of Traditional Industries

The influx of British manufactured goods had a detrimental impact on local industries in Bihar. Traditional sectors such as handloom weaving and handicrafts faced severe competition from machine-made products.

As a result, many artisans lost their livelihoods and were forced to move towards agriculture. This increased pressure on land resources and reduced economic diversification. The decline of indigenous industries contributed to economic stagnation and unemployment.

5. Social Transformation

Colonial rule led to significant changes in the social structure of Bihar. A new class of zamindars and intermediaries emerged as dominant elites, while peasants and laborers were pushed to the margins.

At the same time, the introduction of Western education contributed to the rise of an educated middle class. This group played an important role in promoting social reforms and spreading awareness about rights and equality. However, social inequalities continued to persist and, in some cases, became more pronounced.

6. Cultural Developments

The spread of modern education under colonial rule introduced new ideas such as liberty, equality, and rational thinking. These ideas influenced the mindset of the educated population and led to a gradual questioning of traditional practices.

Cultural interaction between Indian traditions and Western influences resulted in a blend of old and new values. This process contributed to the intellectual and cultural evolution of society in Bihar.

7. Nationalist Movements

Bihar played a significant role in India's struggle for independence. Various movements emerged in response to colonial exploitation, particularly in rural areas.

The Champaran movement became a landmark event, highlighting the plight of indigo farmers and marking the beginning of mass political mobilization. Participation in nationalist movements increased political awareness and fostered a sense of unity among the people.

8. Critical Evaluation

Although colonial rule introduced modern administrative systems and education, its overall impact on Bihar remained largely negative. Economic exploitation, decline of traditional industries, and growing social inequalities hindered the region's development. The benefits of colonial policies were limited and often served the interests of the colonial administration rather than the local population. Bihar remained economically underdeveloped compared to other regions.

Conclusion

The colonial transformation of Bihar brought about significant changes in its economic, social, and cultural structures. While certain modern institutions were introduced, the adverse effects of colonial policies were far-reaching and long-lasting.

Understanding these historical developments is essential for analyzing present-day socio-economic challenges and planning for future development in the region.

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STYLE OF CITATION IN ACADEMIC WRITING

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Abstract

Citation Style plays a significant role in academic writing by ensuring clarity, credibility, and consistency in scholarly communication. Different disciplines follow specific citation formats such as APA Style, MLA Style, Chicago Style, IEEE Style, Harvard Style and Vancouver Style. These styles provide guidelines for in-text citations, reference lists, footnotes, and bibliographies. The purpose of citation is to acknowledge source, avoid plagiarism and allow reader to locate original material. In this Chapter APA (American Psychological Association) and MLA Modern Language Association are discuss how APA style and MLA are used In-Text Citation and in Reference List (at the end).

Keyword: Reference List, Bibliography, In-text citation, Academic Writing.

Introduction

Citation is also called Referencing. Citation is an essential component of academic writing. Citation is the documentation needed to make your paper acceptable for academic purposes. A Citation is a way of giving credit to individuals for their creative and intellectual works that you utilized to support your research. The reference section is a very important component of the report. It contains all the necessary literature that have been referred to before, during and after the study and contain books, Journal articles and documents from where the material have been referred to. Reference can also be used to locate particular source and combat plagiarism.

Meaning of Reference Style

A Reference Style is a Standardized system for citing sources in academic Writing. It provides rules for formatting in-text citations and reference lists or bibliographies. These styles maintain uniformity and clarity in scholarly communication. It provides rules for writing in- text citations and preparing the reference list or bibliography.

Why You Need Citing Sources in Your Paper

Your readers cannot know where any word, idea or information in your sentence comes from unless you tell them. It could be your own idea or from the source you mentioned or from a completely different source. That’s why you need to tell them once you told them; they may want to find out more about that source. Referencing has become a necessary element of academic writing.it helps the reader to find the original source.it gives credit to other people’s work. It is to fight with plagiarism.

Major Citation Styles

1. American Psychological Association (APA Style)
2. Modern Language Association (MLA Style)
3. Chicago Style
4. Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE Style)
5. Harvard
6. Vancouver

American Psychological Association (APA Style)

APA Style is a citation and formatting style mainly used in education, Psychology and Social Sciences.

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Example

- One Author: (Sharma,2024)
- Two Authors: (Sharma & Gupta, 2024)
- Three or more authors (Sharma *et al.*, 2024)

Reference List (at the end)

Reference list is the complete list of sources used in writing, which has also been referred as works cited, literature cited, sources cited, references etc. It is usually given at the end of the work in alphabetical order with full bibliographical details of all sources used in the work.

1. Book (Single Author)

Sharma, S.K.(2025).*Digital libraries in Punjab.*Tata McGram-Hill.

2. **Book (Two Authors**)

Sharma,S.K.,& Singh.P.(2025).*Digital libraries in Punjab.*Tata McGram-Hill.

3. Book (Three Authors)

Gupta,S.,Mehta,R.,& Arora,K.(2025). *Research methodology in education.* Tata McGram-Hill.

4. Chapter in Edited Book

Gupta,S.(2025). Digital Learning Trends.In P. Kumar (Ed.),*Innovations in education*(pp.65-75).Khanna Publisher.

5. An article in a print Journal

Weinstein,J.(2009).The market in Plato's Republic."*Classical Philology,104*(4),439-458.

6. An Article in an electronic journal

Kelly,P.J.A.,Snyder,a.m.,Agenor,m.,Navalta,C.R.,Misquith,C.,Rich,J.D.,&Hughto,J.M.W.(2025) .A Scoping review of methodological approaches to detect bias in the electronic health record.*Stigma and Health, 10*(3),393-405.https://doi.org/10.1037/sah0000497

7. A Website

National Education Policy. (2020). *NEP 2020 Highlights.*

http://www.education.gov.in/nep

8. Article in Magazine

Peterzell,J.(1990,April). Better late than never. *Time,135*(17),20-21.

9. Article in Newspaper

Sinha,Saurav.(2026, February 26). The smartphone can wait, childhood can't.

The Hindustan Time,p.12.

Modern Language Association (MLA)

MLA style is a widely used system for writing and citing sources in academic work. The style given by the Modern Language Association of America for scholarly manuscripts and research papers. It has been widely adopted not only by journals and University presses but also by graduate Schools, College Departments and individual instructor.

MLA style is mainly used in subjects related to the humanities, such as English Literature, Language Studies and Cultural Studies. It helps writers organize their research paper properly by using In-text Citation and a works cited list at the end of the document. By following MLA guidelines Students and researchers can present their work in a standard and professional format.

In –Text Citation

1. Single Author

MLA style uses surname and pages instead of year of publication. Surname and pages written in a bracket.

Example: (Ranganathan 115)

2. Two Or Three Author

MLA style uses surname of all the authors (two or three author) and pages with in a bracket.

Example: (Girja Kumar and Krishan Kumar 83)

Example: Three Authors

(Chowdhry, Shera and Tripathi 83)

3. Multi-Authorship or Four or more Authors

MLA two styles are prescribed

First Author's Surname followed by et al and all surnames of all the authors.

Example:

(Shera et al 88)

(Chowdhry, Shera, Tripathi and Kumar 88)

4. Editorial Works:

The term author includes editor as well as compiler therefore, the abbreviations ed.and comp, etc are not included in the text reference but they appear in reference list entries given at end.

Example

(Brown 45)

5. Corporate Authorship:

MLA prefers use of shorter name, particularly for commonly abbreviated terms. MLA gives a list of standard abbreviations to be used to shorter the title.

Example:

(World Health Organization 25)

Or

(WHO 25)

6. Chapter in a Book/Conference Proceeding

Chapter in book as well as conference proceeding papers are cited on the analogy of simple book.

Example:

(Sharma 198-200)

Reference List (At the End)

Reference list is usually given at the end of the work in alphabetical order with full bibliographical details of all sources used in the work. For providing citations to books following elements are important

- Author,editor,compiler or the institution responsible for thought contents of the work
- Year of publication.
- Title and sub-title of work
- Series and individual volume number
- Edition
- Place of publication
- Publisher

1. Single Author

In MLA Style Author's surname comes first.Book title is written in Italics.Publisher and year are written at the end

Example: Gibaldi, Josph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.*6th ed. New Delhi: Affiliated East West Press, 2004.

2. Two Author

In MLA Style only First Author's Surname is written first and other
Author is written in its natural order.

Example: Chowdhry,G.G and Sudhata Chowdhry.*Information Reterival System.*2nd ed.London: Facet Publishing, 2004.

3. Three Authors

In MLA Style Only first author is inverted and other authors are given in its natural order.

Example: Kraus, David H., Pranas Zunde and Vladimir Slanme. *National Science Information Systems.* United States of America: Halliday Litrograph,1972.

4. Multi-Authorship or Four or more Authors

In MLA Style two styles are prescribed First authors surname followed by et al and all surname's of all the authors.

Example 1: Gilman, Sander *et al. Hysteria beyond Freud*. Berbley: California Publisher,1993.

Example 2: Gilman, Sander, Helen King, Roy Porter, George Rousseau and Elaine Showalter. *Hysteria beyond Freud.* Berblet: California Publisher,1993.

5. Editorial Work

The term author includes editor as well as compiler therefore,the abbreviation ed.and comp.

Example: Lakshmi,Vijay,ed.*Digital Libraries.*Delhi: Isha Books,2004.

6. Corporate Authorship

Example: American Medical Association. *The Health Programme*.
New York: Random, 1999.

7. Chapter in a Book

If article or chapter given in a book,author,title and if relevant translator part being cited.The title of the chapter is written in equation marks.

Example:

Hanzlik, Josef. 'Vengeance." Trans. Ewald Osers. Interference: *The Story of Ezecheslovakia in the Words of its Writers.* Comp.and ed.Peter Spafford.Cheltenham:New Clarion1992.54.

8. Conference Papers and Proceedings:

MLA treats the published proceedings of a conference like a book but adds the pertinent information about the conference, like place of publication, publisher and year.

Example:

Shukla, A.K.ed. *International Conference on Cataloguing*.Proc.of Knowledge Organization.Oct 1990.University of Delhi: Allied, 1990.

9. Printed Journal:

This category includes periodicals,Journals,Serial,Popular magazines and newspaper.

Example:

Natrajan,M. Digital Preservation of cultural Heritage and its Implication." *Journal of Library and Information Science,* vol.29,no 2,2004,pp.14-25.

10. Internet Sources:

Citations for Internet sources in the text have been given just like printed documents.in the reference list,an internet source should contain the following information

Author's Last name,First Name.Title of the Website. Name of the website publisher,Day Month Year,URL

Example: Kaur,Simar. Importance of Reading Books." *Educational World*, 12 Jan.2003,www.educationalworld.com/reading-books

Conclusion:- In conclusion, citation style are an essential part of academic writing because they ensure clarity,accuracy and academic honesty.Different styles such as APA Style, MLA Style, Chicago Style, IEEE Style, Harvard Style and Vancouver Style. Proper use of citation styles helps writers give credit to original authors, avoid plagiarism and maintain uniformity in scholarly writing.

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TRAUMA, DISPLACEMENT, AND THE SEARCH FOR HOME: THE DIASPORIC EXPERIENCE IN INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Abstract

This paper explores the themes of trauma, displacement, and the search for home in Indian English diasporic literature. By examining works of authors such as Jhumpa Lahiri, Salman Rushdie, and Bharati Mukherjee, it highlights how these writers articulate the psychological and cultural dislocation experienced by migrants. The narratives depict the challenges of negotiating dual identities, the burden of memory, and the longing for belonging in a foreign land. The paper also investigates how the notion of "home" evolves, reflecting a blend of nostalgia, loss, and redefinition. The literature provides a nuanced portrayal of the diasporic condition, revealing how trauma and displacement shape the sense of self and community. Ultimately, these works offer insight into the universal human quest for identity and stability amidst cultural transitions.

Keywords: Diaspora, Displacement, Trauma, Identity, Indian English Literature.

Introduction

Definition of Key Terms: Trauma, displacement, diaspora, and the concept of "home" are central to understanding Indian English diasporic literature. Trauma refers to the psychological and emotional distress caused by deeply distressing events, often leaving long-lasting effects on identity and perception (Caruth, 1996, p. 4). Displacement involves the physical or psychological process of being uprooted from one's native land or culture, resulting in a loss of stability and continuity (Said, 2000, p. 176). The term diaspora describes the dispersion of people from their homeland, often accompanied by a sense of loss, nostalgia, and cultural hybridity (Bhabha, 1994, p. 123). The notion of "home" in this context transcends geographical boundaries and represents a fluid, often contested space of belonging and identity (Brah, 1996, p. 192). Together, these terms help articulate the struggles of Indian diasporic writers and their characters as they navigate cultural identities in foreign lands.

Context of Indian Diaspora: The Indian diaspora is rooted in multiple waves of migration caused by colonialism, economic aspirations, and globalization. During British colonial rule, indentured laborers were sent to the Caribbean, Africa, and Southeast Asia (Lal, 2006, p. 32). Post-independence, skilled professionals migrated to the United States, Canada, and Europe in search of better opportunities (Radhakrishnan, 2003, p. 54). Globalization and the liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1990s further accelerated these patterns (Mishra, 2007, p. 17). These historical movements have created a diverse Indian diaspora marked by varying degrees of assimilation, hybridity, and cultural retention. The experience of being caught between two cultures, compounded by the trauma of dislocation, is a recurring theme in the works of Indian diasporic authors.

Significance of the Study: Exploring trauma and identity in Indian diasporic literature is essential because it reflects the ongoing struggles of postcolonial identity formation and cultural negotiation. Diasporic literature offers insights into how historical traumas, such as colonial displacement or cultural marginalization, continue to shape contemporary identities (Rushdie, 1991, p. 15). By engaging with themes of loss, memory, and adaptation, this literature not only humanizes the migrant experience but also highlights the psychological impacts of living between cultures (Lahiri, 2003, p. 60). Furthermore, diasporic narratives often challenge dominant discourses on race, ethnicity, and belonging, making them crucial for understanding multicultural societies in the globalized world (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2).

I. Theoretical Framework

Diaspora Theory: Diaspora theory provides a critical lens to understand the experiences of Indian diasporic communities. Stuart Hall's concept of "cultural identity" highlights the fluid and evolving nature of identity within diasporic contexts. According to Hall (1990, p. 223), identity is "always in process, never complete," reflecting the ongoing negotiation between the homeland and the host culture. Homi Bhabha's notion of "hybridity" challenges fixed notions of cultural identity by emphasizing the interstitial spaces where different cultures interact and produce new, hybrid identities (Bhabha, 1994, p. 4). Vijay Mishra's exploration of the "diasporic imaginary" considers how diasporic communities construct imagined connections to their homeland, often mediated through collective memory and nostalgia (Mishra, 2007, p. 18). These theorists help frame the dynamic and multifaceted identities depicted in Indian diasporic literature.

Postcolonial Theory: Postcolonial theory, particularly the works of Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak, offers valuable insights into cultural dislocation and hybrid identities. Said's concept of "exile" highlights the psychological and cultural dislocation experienced by those removed from their homeland (Said, 2000, p. 181). He describes exile as "a condition of terminal loss," where individuals are forever caught between two worlds. Gayatri Spivak's idea of "subalternity" addresses the marginalization of diasporic subjects, emphasizing how power structures silence their voices (Spivak, 1988, p. 295). Spivak's work underscores the importance of representation and the struggle for visibility within dominant cultural narratives. Together, Said and Spivak provide a framework for understanding the tensions and conflicts inherent in diasporic identities.

Trauma Theory: Cathy Caruth's trauma theory focuses on the relationship between trauma, memory, and identity. Caruth (1996, p. 4) argues that trauma "is not simply an effect of destruction but also the enigma of survival." For Caruth, the repetition of traumatic memories reflects an inability to fully process or assimilate the traumatic event. In diasporic literature, trauma often manifests through fragmented narratives, flashbacks, and the characters' struggles to reconcile their past with their present (Caruth, 1995, p. 153). Displacement exacerbates this trauma, as the loss of a familiar cultural and geographic context intensifies the sense of alienation and psychological rupture. Caruth's perspectives help illuminate the ways in which diasporic writers represent trauma and its lingering impact on identity.

II. Trauma and Displacement in Indian English Diasporic Literature

Psychological Trauma of Migration:

The experience of migration is often accompanied by psychological trauma, as individuals grapple with the loss of their homeland and the challenge of integrating into a culturally alien environment. The internal conflict of leaving behind familiar cultural norms, traditions, and social structures creates a deep sense of dislocation. This sense of loss is not merely physical but psychological, as migrants struggle to reconcile their past identities with their new circumstances. Stuart Hall (1990, p. 223) describes this experience as a "constant negotiation between continuity and rupture," where the sense of belonging is always in flux. For many Indian immigrants, the trauma of migration is compounded by the expectation to assimilate while retaining ties to their heritage. This dual pressure often results in identity fragmentation, where the individual feels torn between two worlds. As Vijay Mishra (2007, p. 45) points out, the diasporic subject experiences "a continual oscillation between nostalgia for the homeland and the reality of the hostland," leading to psychological distress and a perpetual sense of unbelonging. The disorientation of living in a culturally alien environment can manifest in feelings of alienation, anxiety, and even guilt for having left one's homeland. Edward Said (2000, p. 181) captures this sentiment in his reflections on exile, describing it as "a condition of terminal loss" where the migrant is always aware of their displacement. This psychological burden is especially pronounced in Indian diasporic literature, where characters often struggle to construct a stable sense of self amidst cultural upheaval.

Case Studies:

1. **Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*:**

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003) poignantly explores the psychological burden of first and second-generation immigrants. The protagonist, Gogol Ganguli, embodies the trauma of cultural hybridity and the struggle for identity. His parents, Ashoke and Ashima, experience profound dislocation after migrating from Kolkata to the United States. Ashima, in particular, feels an acute sense of loneliness and loss, reflecting on how "being a foreigner is a sort of lifelong pregnancy" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 49). Her trauma is rooted in the loss of familial and cultural familiarity, which leaves her feeling perpetually out of place. Gogol's trauma, on the other hand, stems from his dual identity as both Indian and American. He wrestles with the expectations imposed by his parents and the pressures to conform to American cultural norms. The tension between his name, which signifies his Bengali heritage, and his desire to assimilate into American society symbolizes his internal conflict. Lahiri (2003, p. 76) illustrates this when Gogol rejects his name and tries to reinvent himself, stating, "He hates that his name is both absurd and obscure, that it has nothing to do with who he is." This rejection underscores the psychological burden of navigating dual identities, a common theme in diasporic literature.

2. **Salman Rushdie's *Shame*:**

Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983) examines the trauma of displacement through the lens of collective historical events. The novel, set in a fictionalized version of Pakistan, addresses the dislocation caused by the partition of India and the subsequent creation of Pakistan. The characters in *Shame* experience both personal and collective trauma, as the violent history of partition haunts their lives. Rushdie (1983, p. 87) writes, "Memory, like a faulty mirror, fractures and distorts," highlighting how the trauma of historical dislocation affects both individual and collective identity. The character of Sufiya Zinobia embodies this collective trauma, as her "shame" symbolizes the guilt and dislocation felt by an entire generation. Her descent into madness is a metaphor for the psychological rupture caused by forced migration and cultural upheaval. Rushdie's narrative technique, blending magical realism with historical critique, underscores the complex ways in which trauma and displacement shape diasporic consciousness.

3. **Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters*:**

In Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters* (2002), the protagonist, Tara Chatterjee, navigates the challenges of cultural alienation and identity crises as an Indian woman living in the United States. Tara's trauma is rooted in her struggle to reconcile her traditional upbringing with her life in an American society that often seems alien and indifferent. Mukherjee (2002, p. 23) captures Tara's sense of dislocation when she reflects, "I am not American enough for my son, nor Indian enough for my sisters." Tara's identity crisis is further compounded by her failed marriage and her attempts to find a sense of belonging in a multicultural environment. The cultural alienation she experiences highlights the psychological toll of being caught between two worlds. Mukherjee's narrative explores the idea that the trauma of displacement is not merely a result of physical migration but also of the emotional and psychological negotiations that accompany it. As Tara's story unfolds, it becomes clear that her trauma is intertwined with her quest for a stable identity in a fragmented world. Indian English diasporic literature offers a rich exploration of the psychological trauma associated with migration and displacement. Through the works of Jhumpa Lahiri, Salman Rushdie, and Bharati Mukherjee, we see how characters struggle with the internal conflicts of leaving behind a homeland and adapting to a new cultural environment. These narratives provide a nuanced understanding of how trauma, memory, and identity intersect in the diasporic experience, highlighting the enduring impact of dislocation on the human psyche.

III. Negotiating Dual Identities

Identity in Flux: How Characters Balance Indian Heritage and Western Influences

Indian diasporic literature frequently addresses the complex negotiation of dual identities, where characters attempt to balance their Indian heritage with the influences of their adopted Western cultures. This process of identity formation is dynamic and fluid, often marked by a sense of conflict, adaptation, and reconciliation. Stuart Hall (1990, p. 225) suggests that identity is "not an essence but a positioning," reflecting how individuals continuously redefine themselves based on cultural contexts and personal experiences. Characters in diasporic fiction frequently inhabit a liminal space where neither their heritage nor their adopted culture provides a fully stable identity. This state of "in-betweenness" often leads to a sense of alienation but also offers opportunities for creative identity formation. Homi Bhabha's concept of the "third space" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 56) articulates this idea well, suggesting that diasporic individuals occupy a hybrid space where cultural identities blend and reconfigure. The experience of dual identities manifests differently across generations. First-generation immigrants often maintain strong ties to their homeland, while second-generation immigrants grapple more directly with assimilation and the pressures of conforming to Western cultural norms. This generational gap adds another layer to the identity struggle, as seen in the works of Jhumpa Lahiri, Salman Rushdie, and other diasporic authors.

Cultural Hybridity and the "Third Space"

Homi Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity offers a useful framework for understanding how diasporic identities are negotiated. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha introduces the idea of the "third space," a conceptual realm where different cultural identities intersect, allowing for the creation of new, hybrid identities. This "third space" is not a site of fixed identity but of negotiation and transformation, where cultural meanings are constantly reinterpreted and redefined. According to Bhabha (1994, p. 56), "The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present." In this sense, the diasporic experience is characterized by the tension between preserving cultural heritage and adapting to new cultural influences. This hybrid space offers both challenges and opportunities, allowing characters to navigate multiple cultural affiliations and forge identities that transcend binary oppositions.

Examples in Indian Diasporic Literature

1. **Gogol Ganguli in *The Namesake***

In Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003), Gogol Ganguli embodies the struggle of negotiating dual identities. Born to Bengali immigrants in the United States, Gogol finds himself caught between the expectations of his traditional parents and his desire to assimilate into American culture. His name itself becomes a symbol of this identity crisis. Gogol resents his unusual name, which ties him to his Indian heritage, and attempts to reinvent himself by adopting the name "Nikhil." Lahiri captures Gogol's internal conflict when she writes, "The name he resents, the name that is both absurd and obscure, is a constant reminder of his otherness" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 76). This rejection of his name signifies his struggle to balance his Indian roots with his American identity. Despite his efforts to distance himself from his heritage, Gogol ultimately realizes that his identity cannot be easily compartmentalized. His journey reflects the fluidity of diasporic identity and the challenges of living in a "third space" where cultural boundaries blur.

2. **Characters in *Midnight's Children***

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) explores the intersection of personal identity and historical legacy. The protagonist, Saleem Sinai, is born at the moment of India's independence, symbolizing the nation's transition from colonial rule to self-governance. Saleem's identity is shaped by both his personal experiences and the broader historical forces at play. Saleem's narrative reflects the trauma of partition and the challenge of constructing a coherent identity amidst political upheaval. Rushdie writes, "To understand just one life, you have to swallow the world" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 109). This statement underscores the interconnectedness of personal and collective histories, suggesting that diasporic identities are shaped by both individual and cultural narratives. Saleem's journey also highlights the hybrid nature of identity, as he embodies multiple cultural influences. His ability to navigate these influences reflects Bhabha's idea of the "third space," where identities are constantly negotiated. The novel suggests that identity is not a fixed essence but a fluid construct shaped by historical, cultural, and personal factors.

3. **Tara in *Desirable Daughters***

In Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters* (2002), the protagonist, Tara Chatterjee, experiences an identity crisis as she navigates her life in the United States. Tara's struggle to balance her traditional Indian upbringing with her modern American lifestyle reflects the challenges of cultural hybridity. Mukherjee writes, "I am caught between the world I was born into and the world I have chosen to live in" (Mukherjee, 2002, p. 34). This statement captures the essence of dual identities, where the past and present coexist in tension. Tara's journey illustrates the psychological burden of negotiating dual identities, as she attempts to reconcile her cultural heritage with her desire for autonomy and self-definition. Her story highlights the fluid and dynamic nature of diasporic identity, where individuals must continually adapt to changing cultural contexts. The negotiation of dual identities in Indian diasporic literature reveals the complexities of balancing heritage with the demands of assimilation. Through characters like Gogol Ganguli, Saleem Sinai, and Tara Chatterjee, we see how identity is not a fixed construct but a dynamic process of negotiation and adaptation. The concept of the "third space," as articulated by Homi Bhabha, provides a valuable framework for understanding how diasporic individuals create hybrid identities that transcend cultural binaries. These narratives offer a rich exploration of the psychological and cultural dimensions of diasporic identity, shedding light on the ongoing struggle to define oneself in a multicultural world.

IV. Memory and Nostalgia as Narrative Devices

Role of Memory: How Memories of the Homeland Influence Characters' Identities and Decisions

In Indian English diasporic literature, memory plays a crucial role in shaping characters' identities and influencing their decisions. Memory serves as a bridge between the past and the present, allowing characters to remain connected to their homeland while navigating their lives in diasporic settings. Diasporic memory often reflects a blend of personal recollections, cultural heritage, and historical narratives, creating a complex tapestry of identity. Stuart Hall (1990) articulates that "diasporic identities are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (p. 235). Memory provides the raw material for this transformation, as characters draw on their past experiences to make sense of their present circumstances. For example, memories of traditional customs, family relationships, and cultural practices help diasporic individuals retain a sense of belonging, even when they are physically distant from their homeland. In *Midnight's Children*, Salman Rushdie (1981) emphasizes the fragmented and subjective nature of memory. The protagonist, Saleem Sinai, reconstructs his personal and national history through a series of disjointed memories. Rushdie writes, "Memory's truth... because memory has its own special kind. It selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies also; but in the end, it creates its own reality" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 211). This passage highlights how memory shapes identity by constructing a version of reality that may be subjective but is deeply meaningful to the individual. Similarly, in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003), Ashima Ganguli's memories of her life in Calcutta influence her decisions and shape her sense of identity in the United States. Ashima's recollections of her homeland provide her with comfort and stability, even as she struggles to adapt to a new cultural environment. Lahiri writes, "For being a foreigner, Ashima is beginning to realize, is a sort of lifelong pregnancy—a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 49). This metaphor underscores how memory sustains Ashima's connection to her homeland, even as she remains physically displaced.

Nostalgia and Loss: The Longing for a Lost Past and Its Impact on the Present

Nostalgia is a powerful emotional force in diasporic literature, reflecting a longing for a lost past and an idealized homeland. This sense of loss can have a profound impact on characters' present lives, shaping their identities, relationships, and decisions. Nostalgia often manifests as a yearning for cultural practices, familial bonds, and a sense of community that may be difficult to replicate in a diasporic setting. Diasporic nostalgia is not merely a passive longing; it is a dynamic force that influences how characters engage with their present realities. As Svetlana Boym (2001) argues, "Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy" (p. 13). This romanticized longing can lead to a tension between the past and the present, as characters struggle to reconcile their memories with their current experiences. In Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters* (2002), Tara Chatterjee experiences nostalgia for her traditional Indian upbringing even as she embraces a modern American lifestyle. Her longing for the past is tinged with a sense of loss, as she reflects on the cultural and familial ties that have been weakened by her migration. Mukherjee writes, "I sometimes think of my life as a series of disconnections, each one taking me further away from who I once was" (Mukherjee, 2002, p. 78). This sense of disconnection highlights how nostalgia shapes Tara's identity and her ongoing struggle to integrate her past with her present.

Examples in Indian Diasporic Literature

1. **Rushdie's *Midnight's Children***

In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie uses fragmented memories as a narrative device to explore the relationship between personal and national histories. The protagonist, Saleem Sinai, reconstructs his identity through a series of disjointed memories that reflect the chaos and complexity of postcolonial India. These memories are not linear or coherent; instead, they mirror the fragmented nature of diasporic identity. Rushdie writes, "I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of everything done-to-me" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 440). This statement encapsulates the idea that memory is integral to identity formation. Saleem's memories allow him to make sense of his personal experiences and his place within the broader historical context of post-independence India.

2. **Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies***

In Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), memory and nostalgia intersect in the lives of characters who grapple with cultural dislocation and identity. In the short story "Mrs. Sen's," the protagonist, Mrs. Sen, clings to memories of her life in Calcutta as she struggles to adapt to her new life in the United States. Her nostalgia is expressed through her attachment to traditional practices, such as cooking with fresh fish, which reminds her of home. Lahiri writes, "Everything is there... everything is there" (Lahiri, 1999, p. 113), as Mrs. Sen describes the vibrant markets of Calcutta. Her longing for the past reflects a desire to preserve her cultural identity in the face of displacement. This nostalgia shapes her interactions with her surroundings and underscores the emotional challenges of migration. Memory and nostalgia serve as powerful narrative devices in Indian diasporic literature, allowing authors to explore the complexities of identity, displacement, and belonging. Through fragmented memories, characters reconstruct their identities and navigate the challenges of living in a culturally alien environment. Nostalgia for a lost past influences their present lives, creating a dynamic tension between heritage and adaptation. Works by Salman Rushdie and Jhumpa Lahiri illustrate how memory and nostalgia shape the diasporic experience, offering a nuanced understanding of identity in flux.

V. The Evolving Concept of "Home"

Home as a Fluid Concept: From a Physical Place to an Emotional and Psychological State

In diasporic literature, "home" transcends its traditional definition as a fixed geographical location. It evolves into an emotional and psychological state shaped by experiences of displacement, cultural hybridity, and memory. For individuals caught between two cultures, the concept of home is rarely stable or singular; it becomes a site of negotiation and transformation. This fluidity reflects the complexities of diasporic identity, where belonging is constantly redefined. Stuart Hall (1990) argues that identity and home are "always in the process of becoming" rather than static entities (p. 235). For diasporic individuals, home is not a destination but an idea shaped by memory, nostalgia, and the realities of migration. The experience of being torn between two worlds means that home is often split between past and present, reality and memory. This fluid notion of home is evident in Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter* (1971). The protagonist, Tara Banerjee, returns to India after years of living in the United States. She discovers that the Calcutta of her childhood no longer exists, and the emotional connection she once felt has eroded. Mukherjee writes, "Calcutta seemed to be mocking her, challenging her to love it again" (Mukherjee, 1971, p. 89). This statement encapsulates the dissonance between the physical reality of home and the emotional expectations of belonging. Tara's return reveals that home is not a fixed location but a mutable construct shaped by time and distance.

Redefining Belonging: Creating New Meanings of Home

Diasporic literature frequently reflects the need to redefine what it means to belong. In the face of cultural dislocation, characters must create new definitions of home that reconcile their heritage with their present realities. This redefinition of belonging is often situated within Homi Bhabha's concept of the "third space," a liminal zone where cultural identities intersect and transform (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). In this third space, individuals can construct new meanings of home that incorporate multiple cultural influences. For diasporic individuals, home may manifest as a hybrid identity rather than a singular place. In Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003), Gogol Ganguli's struggle to reconcile his Bengali heritage with his American upbringing illustrates this hybridity. Gogol's journey of self-discovery leads him to understand that home is not confined to a physical location but exists in the emotional connections he builds. Lahiri writes, "He realizes that his parents' world is not his, yet it is inextricably part of him" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 188). This duality reflects the need to create new meanings of home that accommodate both heritage and personal experience. In *Americanah* (2013) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ifemelu's experience of living between Nigeria and the United States highlights the tension between homeland and host country. Ifemelu's blog posts reflect her attempts to make sense of her dual identity. Adichie writes, "She was no longer sure where she belonged. America had become home, but it was not the home of ease and certainty. Nigeria was home, but it was the home of memory and longing" (Adichie, 2013, p. 178). This passage captures the ambivalence of belonging for diasporic individuals, where home is both a place of comfort and a source of alienation.

Examples in Diasporic Literature

1. Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter*

In *The Tiger's Daughter*, Tara Banerjee's return to India underscores the challenges of homecoming for diasporic individuals. The Calcutta she remembers is no longer the same, and her own experiences abroad have changed her. Mukherjee describes her sense of dislocation: "The streets were familiar, yet they felt strange, as if the city had turned its back on her" (Mukherjee, 1971, p. 104). This failure of homecoming reflects the fluid nature of belonging, where home becomes an evolving concept shaped by personal transformation.

2. Adichie's *Americanah*

In *Americanah*, Ifemelu's return to Nigeria after years in the United States reveals the complexities of defining home. While she feels a deep connection to her homeland, her experiences in America have altered her perspective. Adichie writes, "She felt like a visitor in her own country, caught between two worlds that did not fully claim her" (Adichie, 2013, p. 214). Ifemelu's journey highlights the need to redefine home as a space that accommodates both her Nigerian heritage and her American experiences. In Indian English diasporic literature, the concept of home is a fluid and evolving construct. Characters like Tara Banerjee in *The Tiger's Daughter* and Ifemelu in *Americanah* illustrate the challenges of defining home in the context of migration and cultural hybridity. Through their experiences, diasporic literature reveals that home is not merely a physical location but an emotional and psychological state shaped by memory, identity, and cultural negotiation. This dynamic understanding of home offers a nuanced exploration of belonging in a world marked by displacement and hybridity.

VI. Community and Sense of Self in Diaspora

Formation of Diasporic Communities: The Role of Shared Experiences in Forming a Collective Identity

Diasporic communities are formed through shared experiences of migration, displacement, and cultural negotiation. These shared experiences provide a foundation for collective identity, offering a sense of belonging in foreign environments. For many diasporic individuals, these communities become surrogate homes, spaces where cultural traditions, language, and memories are preserved and celebrated. In the face of cultural alienation, diasporic communities act as a buffer, helping individuals maintain their connection to their heritage while navigating life in a new environment. Stuart Hall (1990) notes that diasporic identities are not fixed but are constantly produced through shared histories and experiences (p. 236). In literature, these communities often provide emotional support and a sense of continuity. For instance, in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003), Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli find solace in the Bengali community in Massachusetts. This community helps them maintain cultural traditions and raise their children with an awareness of their heritage. Lahiri writes, "They gather together, not because they are friends, necessarily, but because they are Bengali" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 38). This collective identity is essential for preserving a sense of self in an alien environment. Diasporic communities also function as spaces where cultural practices and languages are kept alive. Vijay Mishra (2007) argues that diasporic communities are often "imaginary homelands," where members reconstruct their culture through memory and shared experiences (p. 13). This sense of collective identity helps diasporic individuals feel anchored even when they are physically displaced.

Individual vs. Collective Identity: The Push-Pull Between Self and Community

While diasporic communities provide a sense of belonging, they can also create tensions between individual desires and collective expectations. Literature frequently explores this dynamic, reflecting the struggle to balance personal identity with the demands of the community. The push-pull between self and community highlights the complexities of diasporic life, where the need for autonomy often clashes with the desire for cultural continuity. In Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters* (2002), the protagonist Tara Lata struggles with the expectations of her traditional Indian family and her desire for personal freedom in America. Tara's choices are influenced by the collective values of her community, but she also seeks to define her own identity. Mukherjee writes, "I wanted to be my own person, but the shadow of my community was always there" (Mukherjee, 2002, p. 112). This tension reflects the broader diasporic experience, where individuals must navigate the boundaries between selfhood and collective identity. Similarly, in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988), the characters Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha grapple with their identities as immigrants in Britain. Saladin's rejection of his Indian heritage and his desire to assimilate into British society highlight the internal conflict between personal identity and community expectations. Rushdie writes, "He wanted to be a proper Englishman, yet the pull of his roots was undeniable" (Rushdie, 1988, p. 45). This duality underscores the struggle of maintaining a sense of self while being part of a diasporic community. Homi Bhabha's concept of the "third space" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37) provides a useful framework for understanding this tension. The third space is a site where new identities are formed through the interaction of different cultures. In this space, diasporic individuals negotiate their personal identities while participating in collective cultural practices.

This negotiation often leads to hybrid identities that reflect both the individual's autonomy and their connection to the community.

Examples in Diasporic Literature

1. Lahiri's *The Namesake*

In *The Namesake*, Gogol Ganguli's journey of self-discovery is shaped by the epectations of his Bengali community. While his parents find comfort in the collective identity of their diaspora, Gogol struggles to reconcile his American upbringing with his Indian heritage. His name, a symbol of his cultural duality, becomes a source of internal conflict. Lahiri writes, "He wonders if this is what it means to belong to a community, to feel both comforted and confined" (Lahiri, 2003, p. 127). This duality reflects the broader diasporic experience of negotiating between individual and collective identity.

2. Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters*

Tara's struggle with community expectations highlights the challenges of balancing personal freedom with collective identity. Her decision to live independently in America is seen as a rejection of her cultural roots, yet she remains emotionally connected to her heritage. Mukherjee's exploration of Tara's identity reflects the broader theme of diasporic individuals redefining themselves within the context of community expectations. The formation of diasporic communities provides a sense of belonging and cultural continuity, but it also creates tensions between individual and collective identity. Diasporic literature captures this dynamic, illustrating the push-pull between personal autonomy and community expectations. Through characters like Gogol Ganguli and Tara Lata, authors explore the complexities of maintaining a sense of self while being part of a collective identity. The negotiation of these identities reflects the evolving nature of diaspora, where the boundaries between self and community are constantly redrawn.

Conclusion

Indian English diasporic literature captures the intricate interplay of trauma, displacement, and identity negotiation. Through narratives that explore psychological trauma, cultural dislocation, and the evolving concept of "home," writers such as Jhumpa Lahiri, Salman Rushdie, and Bharati Mukherjee illustrate the multifaceted experiences of migration. These works delve into the personal struggles of individuals torn between their heritage and the cultures of their adopted countries. Characters like Gogol Ganguli in *The Namesake* grapple with dual identities, while Tara Lata in *Desirable Daughters* confronts the expectations of community versus personal freedom. These stories reflect not just the pain of displacement but also the resilience required to redefine belonging and identity in new contexts. The broader implications of these narratives extend beyond the Indian diaspora. They provide critical insights into global migration patterns and the universal challenges of identity formation in multicultural societies. In an increasingly interconnected world, issues of cultural hybridity, collective memory, and nostalgia resonate with various displaced communities. Diasporic literature serves as a mirror to contemporary migration issues, highlighting themes of alienation, assimilation, and the quest for belonging that many communities experience globally. These stories help foster empathy and understanding of the migrant experience, shedding light on the psychological and emotional costs of displacement. Future research directions could explore comparative studies with other diasporic literatures, such as African, Caribbean, and Middle Eastern diasporas. Examining the similarities and differences in themes of trauma, identity, and home across various diasporic contexts would enrich the field of migration studies. Additionally, interdisciplinary approaches that incorporate sociology, psychology, and history could deepen our understanding of the diasporic condition. By expanding the scope of inquiry, scholars can further illuminate the diverse ways in which literature negotiates the complexities of displacement and identity in a globalized world.

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EXAMINING SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES AND INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS IN INDIAN MEDIA EDUCATION

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Abstract

In 2026, Media education in India is in transition phase. Media Training should be based on Media Industry Phase-5.0 but the reality is different. Universities are struggling with admission, placements and quality media training. Students want courses built around AI, stratus, tech tools - yet most Indian universities move like they're stuck in mud. The central, state, deemed and private universities carries its own baggage and have their own limitations of proper media education and training which ultimately slowing real progress. The most of the universities and institutes are just keeping media courses to showcase their institutional academic activities for branding and actually they are not serious as their other programs. Most of the media activities, workshops, debates, deliberations and excursions are just to fulfil the targets of semester actually they don't cater the need of actual demand of undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programs of media studies. The faculty members are not trained as per the requirements of media education. The independent private news channels are running their own media institutes are treated as money making and profit-making instrument in the society which a common man and student from ordinary financial background can't afford. Leadership crisis is also a big challenge for media department. Most of the leaders are not from the core Journalism and Mass Communication background they are either from allied discipline or from multidisciplinary background. So that the person holding leadership positions in media institutes are lacking the basic vision to run the media school and always fearing of losing their position. Therefore, this book chapter is an effort to examine the real challenges media training is facing from and its findings will definitely benefit the media education community.

Keywords: Media Education, Media Training, Media Institutes, Media Pedagogy, Faculty-Industry Gap.

I. Introduction: The Industry 5.0 Disconnect

By 2026, the global media landscape has shifted toward **Industry 5.0**, where the focus is not just on digital automation but on the "Human-Centric" collaboration with Artificial Intelligence. In this phase, journalists are expected to be "Prompt Engineers," "Data Forensics Experts," and "Virtual Production Directors."

However, the Indian academic machinery is suffering from **Structural Sclerosis**. While the industry moves at the speed of light, Indian media classrooms are often operating in a time-warp. This chapter analyzes how different categories of institutions contribute to this stagnation, each burdened by its own unique set of "baggage."

India's media moves at breakneck pace. Not just fast - shaped by algorithms that decide what gets seen, how fast it spreads. Truth blurs now, blurred further by deepfakes and machine-made videos that feel real. Yet walk into any university classroom - central, state-run, private, or deemed - and time slows. Outside, debates rage about who owns AI-generated art; inside, chalk still meets blackboard. Tech reshapes attention spans daily, but lectures stay rigid, built for a world before smartphones. Change swirls everywhere except here, where old routines hold firm like rust on hinges. What students face online bears little resemblance to what they're taught between walls. Reality splits: one half sprinting forward, the other stuck in yesterday's rhythm. Ideas evolve at light speed beyond campus gates, while within them, silence hums louder than innovation. Close to ten years now, newsrooms across India have echoed with talk of Digital Transformation. But look closer. What appears as change sometimes sticks to the surface only. Swap a typewriter for a keyboard, trade film for memory cards - none of it reshapes anything when old methods stay untouched underneath. By 2026, the core issue won't be missing gadgets or weak signals. It will be the thin thread of imagination guiding how tech lives within stories people tell each other.

What makes India's education struggle different lies in how varied its colleges really are. Not moving forward often grips national universities, stuck more on following rules than trying new ideas. Down at state-run ones, survival itself has become the main challenge - rotting buildings and old money systems keep fresh teaching plans out of reach. Even schools that act like private firms, though rich, miss real student life, caring more about looking good than helping learners grow strong skills. A closer look at media education today shows it stuck in place. Not moving forward happens because systems fail in three ways. One problem sits deep inside how institutions operate. Another grows from outdated methods clinging on too long. The third comes when real world changes race ahead while classrooms stand still. Most class time feels quiet, one-sided. Instead of building something real, learners sit through lectures that just talk at them. Creating is rare. They hear about media in theory but do not make it themselves. A hands-on space where they could test ideas stays unused. Talking back to media - questioning it - is left out too. Outdated lessons sit heavy in classrooms across India, stuck rewinding old media ways instead of moving forward. What once worked - print, TV logic - drags behind like dust. Meanwhile, skills people actually need today slip through the cracks. Think spotting online traces, making sense of numbers by showing them clearly, understanding how algorithms shape what we see. These stay missing, left out, while lectures recycle yesterday's rules. Without clear direction, some higher education institutions treat Media Studies like an afterthought - something tagged on instead of seen as vital. When truth feels slippery, this subject quietly holds up the foundations of democracy, yet it's overlooked. Rarely framed as essential, it gets side-lined despite its role in helping people navigate today's information chaos.

II. Comparative Analysis of Institutional Dynamics

The crisis in media education is not uniform; it manifests differently depending on the nature of the institution. Below is a realistic breakdown of the systemic failures across the five major categories of media education providers in India.

1. Central Universities: The Burden of Bureaucracy

Central Universities remain the "gold standard" for research, yet they are the slowest to adapt to technological shifts.

- **The "Stuck in Mud" Syndrome:** Administrative red tape makes updating a syllabus an agonizingly slow process. By the time a module on "AI-Generated News" is approved, the industry has already moved on to the next iteration of the technology.
- **The Infrastructure Paradox:** They often have the largest budgets but the most outdated equipment due to complex procurement procedures.
- **Faculty Stagnation:** Permanent tenure often leads to academic complacency, where faculty members have little incentive to learn new-age tools like *Stratus* or automated cloud-integrated workflows.

2. State Universities: The Crisis of Regional Isolation

State universities cater to the largest volume of students but suffer from the most severe resource crunch.

- **Political & Linguistic Baggage:** Media departments in state universities are often used as political tools, focusing more on local PR than global media standards.
- **Outdated Pedagogy:** The focus remains heavily on print journalism and traditional radio, ignoring the fact that 2026 media is primarily mobile-first and algorithm-driven.
- **The "Quantity over Quality" Trap:** These institutions prioritize high enrolment numbers to justify government funding, leading to a diluted educational experience.

3. Deemed Universities: The Branding Facade

Deemed universities are often the most "visible" but the most "superficial" in their approach to media studies.

- **Academic Branding:** For these institutions, the Media School is a "showpiece." They invest heavily in glass-walled studios and celebrity guest appearances to attract admissions, but the actual daily training is hollow.
- **The Semester Target Culture:** As noted in the abstract, activities like "excursions" and "workshops" are conducted as checkboxes to fulfil semester targets for accreditation (like NAAC) rather than for actual skill-building.

4. Private Universities: The Commercial Treadmill

Private players are agile but are driven almost exclusively by the bottom line.

- **Placement over Proficiency:** The focus is on "packaging" students for entry-level jobs rather than building deep intellectual or ethical foundations.
- **The Leadership Vacuum:** To save costs, many private universities appoint leaders from "allied fields" (English, Hindi, Sociology, etc.) who lack the technical vision required to build a Media 5.0 department. These leaders often fear hiring core media academician who might "outshine" them.

5. Media Channel-Owned Institutes: The Elite Profit Centres

Major news networks running their own academies have become a double-edged sword.

- **The Financial Barrier:** These institutes offer the best industry proximity, but they are treated as **profit-making instruments.** A student from an "ordinary financial background" is effectively locked out of this elite ecosystem.
- **The "Newsroom-to-Classroom" Conflict:** The training is often narrow and specific to the parent channel's style guide, creating "workers" rather than "thinkers." They lack the multidisciplinary depth required for doctoral-level media studies.

III. The Leadership Crisis: An Identity Vacuum

A recurring theme in 2026 is the lack of "Core Domain" leadership. When a Media School is led by someone from a non-journalistic background, several failures occur:

1. **Visionary Blindness:** They cannot anticipate technical shifts (like the move to "Stratus-based" remote production).
2. **Insecurity-Driven Management:** To protect their tenure, they avoid radical changes and suppress younger, tech-savvy faculty.
3. **Pedagogical Mismatch:** They treat Media as a "theoretical art" rather than a "technical craft," leading to graduates who can write essays on media theory but cannot edit a 4K sequence or verify a deepfake.

IV. Analysis and Interpretations

One decade after Jio sparked India's digital wave, learning methods still lack unity. Not about swapping tools in lecture halls, true transformation lies in reshaping thought flow. Still, obstacles emerge because higher education here isn't uniform. Life for someone studying at a national campus in Delhi differs sharply from another chasing degrees in Pune's private institutes or sitting through lectures in a government building tucked in rural Bihar.

Twice the trouble shows up here: broken systems, unclear goals. Even though newsrooms now chase algorithm-driven stories along with digital fact-checking methods, college programs linger on outdated printing-press ideas from the last century. One foot forward, two steps back into old debates about paper-based training that nobody uses anymore.

Phase	**Technology**	**Academic Focus**
Media 1.0	Print & Telegraph	Literacy and basic reporting.
Media 2.0	Radio & Broadcast TV	Mass communication and "One-to-Many" models.
Media 3.0	Internet & social media	Interactivity, Blogs, and User-Generated Content.
Media 4.0	Big Data & AI	Algorithms, SEO, and Automated Content.
Media 5.0	Human-Centric AI & Metaverse	Cognitive Ethics, Immersion, and Co-creation.

Not every top campus runs smoothly these days. Though they get money from New Delhi, things still stall. What looks like a funding issue? Usually isn't. Behind quiet corridors, decisions rot mid-air. Staff move forms in circles. Big names don't fix slow blood flow. Power sticks at the top, never trickling down. Fresh ideas enter - then vanish. Meetings repeat without outcomes. The problem isn't students or budgets. It's motion that stopped years ago. A system built to last now barely limps. Prestige remains, even when function does not.

Some central universities leave permanent teaching jobs empty because legal tangles slow everything down. Instead, they bring in guest teachers - skilled individuals who show up regularly but do not shape future plans. These temporary roles fill gaps. Long-term goals drift without steady hands guiding change. A single course update at a central university might crawl through committees - first the Board of Studies, then the Academic Council, followed by the Executive Council. When that proposal finally clears all levels, what was cutting edge now lags behind actual tools used in newsrooms. Decisions move slowly while software does not wait. Most colleges chase high scores by focusing hard on academic papers and Ph.D.-driven output. That push helps their ranking status, yet side-lines actual making things happen in real settings. Instead of wiring cameras or testing signals, learners sit through theories about how messages move between people. Picking apart old studies fills hours that could teach them to pull data from websites or run video feeds without glitches.

Though state universities teach most people in India, they get the least attention when it comes to media coverage on education. What stands out is how overlooked these institutions remain despite their massive role. Out in the open, forgotten gear collects dust under flickering lights. Old cameras sit idle, their parts rusting from disuse and time. Picture this - a classroom without internet while the world streams live. Some schools still run-on cracked programs, patched together with luck and hope. Mobile reporting matters now more than ever, yet access stays locked behind broken systems. Behind every blank screen is a student waiting for tools they never get. Most state colleges still treat local languages like afterthoughts. Though quality reporting in native tongues is what audiences really want by 2026, many schools only teach basic translation skills. Because funding falls short, they skip training in modern digital formats

tailored to regional users. Without practice in authentic storytelling online, graduates miss real chances in fast-growing local media spaces.
When politics seep into state schools, choices about who gets hired shift - quietly. Classroom talk on tough reporting edges toward caution, pulled by unseen strings. What grows instead is a habit of playing it safe, not digging deep. The result? A version of journalism that avoids sparks, misses heat. Students end up trained for comfort, not truth.
Out here in real newsrooms, practice shapes truth more than theory ever could. Not close enough to daily journalism, many programs drift off track without noticing. By 2026, those who teach media must have lived it, not just studied it. Yet the system still measures worth by how long someone's taught, rather than what they've done. Publishing papers matters more than chasing breaking stories under deadline pressure. Fifteen years behind a screen at a major outlet? Doesn't count if there's no doctorate. Meanwhile, some classrooms are run by voices that never heard an editorial meeting buzz. Training future reporters becomes guesswork when instructors skip the field entirely. Holding degrees high, the profession quietly weakens from within.
Though earlier pages detailed red tape in state education bodies, here the spotlight shifts to root issues hiding in independent academic zones. Free from heavy oversight, yet struggling all the same, private and deemed universities by 2026 grapple with deeper flaws. These shortcomings block their ability to serve what today's media learners truly need. Instead of flexibility being an advantage, it exposes gaps in purpose and delivery. Not every school labelled a university acts the same way across India. Some carry their own rules like private institutions, yet stick close to old-style central systems just to seem more serious academically Here's what really happens. Stuck on uniformity, that's the core issue. Some deemed universities try to appear rigorous by mirroring foreign syllabi word for word. Yet they skip adapting those lessons for actual conditions in India. Global standards fill the lectures while local realities get ignored. For instance, ethics around worldwide media dominate class time instead of how truth spreads through forwarded messages in villages Without clear direction, institutions get stuck in a cycle. Retired professors, used to old-school methods, fill key roles. Digital tools? They see them as noise, not necessity. When another school launches an AI course, then - only then - do they follow. Leadership waits. Progress stalls. Action comes too late, always trailing behind. Shiny buildings light up the campus paths at private colleges these days. Yet behind glass walls, something quietly breaks down. Flashy gear fills sound labs while famous voices drop by on weekends. Still, the structure underneath wobbles without notice. These schools stand out loud in 2026. But what hums below the surface tells another story. Schools too often see learners as buyers instead of lead characters in their journey. Instead of deep involvement, most offerings become flashy shows - big stages, famous guests, passive watching. Real chances to try small things quietly? Almost gone. No room left for personal podcasts that flop at first. Few spots

allow digging into ideas slowly, messing up, trying again. The weight of performing never fades. Learning by doing slips away

Aiming just at job placement can limit what education does. Yet that narrow goal misses where things head by 2026 - the rise of self-made creators. Instead of preparing learners to thrive on their own, many private colleges push them toward old paths. Big media firms? They're getting smaller. But schools act like they're still growing. Independence in media matters now more than ever - yet few courses teach it. Even though they could revise course plans instantly, plenty of private colleges still drag behind. Faculty exhaustion sneaks in when instructors drown in paperwork meant for brochures and ads. Stuck handling those duties, they miss fresh updates - like how algorithms evolved by 2026. So, while documents claim everything's current, real lessons feel stuck years back. That year, screens danced with curated moves. Meanwhile, desks stayed still, facing silent chalkboards. Performance ruled one world. The other held its breath, waiting. One thrived on show. The other leaned on echo

Truth is, nobody's pulling all-nighters building projects nonstop. Most days involve sitting through talks on how work gets made - roughly five hours of that. What people imagine rarely matches what actually happens inside those rooms. Here's what happens. Expensive gear sits idle because schools worry about upkeep. Cameras gather dust inside storage rooms instead. The reason. Leaders think breakage equals high costs later on. Yet practice matters when mastering tools. Without hands-on time, skills stall before they start. Locked doors block real learning moments.

Out here, the real problem behind failing curriculums ties back to how slow the UGC-NET syllabus moves. National tests for teaching jobs? They still run-on ideas from decades ago. So fresh educators wind up stuck memorizing old material - just to stay qualified. Teaching repeats what's already faded. A loop forms without anyone noticing. Here is what happens next. Two thousand twenty-six learners must study how minds react to screens, turn numbers into pictures, one-way machines make choices wrong or right. Yet across India, nearly half the classroom hours go toward old newspapers, dusty timelines. Those past matters, true. It just fails them now when fake videos spread fast. What worked before breaks under new weight. Most media teams in India are run like offices, not creative hubs. A boss moves papers while ideas gather dust. Power sits with schedulers instead of storytellers. Decisions come from spreadsheets, rarely from insight. The air feels safe - yet nothing dares to rise. Truth is, many top officials care more about bricks than brains. Instead of investing fifty lakh rupees in a world-class Digital Editor-in-Residence, they'd happily spend five crores on shiny new structures. Leadership gaps show when decisions favour concrete over capability. When those in charge don't grasp that journalism now lives online, institutions stay trapped offline. A campus without digital vision walks slowly - even if its buildings look impressive.

University Category	Real Cause of Failure	Primary "Lack"
Central	Academic Bureaucracy	Vision & Speed
State	Funding & Infrastructure	Modern Curriculum
Deemed	Identity Crisis/Mimicry	Contextual Curriculum
Private	Commercialization/Student as Customer	Student-Centricity

A shift begins not in machines, but in minds. Picture an Indian student once focused on theory now choosing practical tools online instead. Campuses still honour old systems like museums guard artifacts. When examining public, regional, approved, and independent institutions, attention turns naturally to gaps between what fails and what matters. Three spaces show where effort breaks down just as needs rise clearly into view. By 2026, running their own media operations matters more than anything else to students everywhere in India - big cities, small towns alike. What drives them isn't fame or followers, but control over how stories are told. Instead of waiting for permission, they'd rather build platforms themselves. This shift didn't come overnight; it grew quietly through access to tools once out of reach. Not every effort succeeds, yet trying is now seen as normal. Independence shapes what they value in education today. Here lies the problem. Colleges keep pouring energy into placement offices aimed at fading media roles. These departments chase old-school journalism positions that barely exist anymore. The truth hits hard when graduates face a job market running out of space. Shrinking newsrooms mean fewer openings each year. Institutions act like nothing has changed though. Their methods feel stuck in another decade. What worked before now falls flat. Reality shifts fast while university plans lag behind. Opportunities fade. Yet the system pushes forward as if decline never started. What's missing for learners? Right now, someone studying might be asking themselves - how do I grow a small but dedicated following? Figuring out the rules around data privacy laws like DPDP often comes next. After that, questions pop up about making money from a focused newsletter or podcast, slowly building it step by step. Out of step, central universities sneer at influencer culture instead of unpacking its ethics in class. A teaching moment slips by while tradition looks away. What if private universities saw it differently? Instead of pushing ads, they might uncover real stories. Their view sticks to promotion, though. Hidden angles get ignored that way. Journalism waits behind the curtain, unseen. A shift in mindset could change everything. But right now, priorities point elsewhere. A shift is happening. Learners skip college programs, turning instead to short web-based training that lasts just twelve weeks. This happens since schools won't treat creator work as real journalism. Old institutions hesitate, so students move elsewhere. When deepfakes flood the 2026 Indian elections, truth gets tangled. What shows up instead of trust? A hunger for proof. Not hope - evidence that sticks. Behind every claim, people now ask: can it be traced? Verified? Matched to reality? The loudest need isn't faster news - it's sharper detection. Machines may fool eyes, but they also help unmask lies. Tools once used to deceive begin aiding clarity. Accuracy gains weight when belief thins. So, science shifts - from creating images to dissecting them. Each pixel scrutinized. Every second of audio questioned. This moment doesn't call for louder voices. It pulls toward methodical checking. Quiet labs gain importance. Researchers step into spotlight not by breakthroughs - but by holding ground.

These days, school syllabi stick to old topics like radio history - courses drag on about it. Instead of updating lessons, colleges waste months teaching reporting basics. Machines handle those tasks fast now, yet classrooms stay stuck. Old methods fill semesters while tech moves ahead. Lessons repeat what tools already manage quicker. Right now, classrooms miss something obvious. Pupils keep asking for lessons in OSINT skills - like pinning down where a clip was filmed, checking if a photo's stamp is real, yet also shielding sources through blockchain tools. Picture this - most teachers at State and Deemed Universities never fully learned the tech tools they're meant to teach. Without any rule forcing them to update their knowledge, lessons drag on like relics from another decade. By now, classrooms feel stuck in the early 2010s, while outside, digital manipulation has grown sharper, faster, harder to spot. Students sit unprepared, facing high-tech deception with outdated training.

A dream takes shape where machines understand people. Not just tools, but helpers shaped by care. This need grows quietly, yet insists on being heard. Where circuits meet kindness, something real begins. A dream without direction shows up as shiny gear instead of skilled hands. Picture this: ten lakh rupees spent on a drone that flies high, yet zero thought given to bringing in someone who could question where it points. Machines arrive with fanfare; wisdom slips through the cracks. What hums and glows gets funded? What pauses and asks? Ignored. Leadership pats itself on the back for spending big - on metal, not minds.

Private universities chase technology so hard they forget heart. What feels like progress often misses meaning. Their blueprint skips people. A gadget-filled campus does not fix purpose gaps. Soulless plans lead nowhere warm. Machines cannot teach belonging. Vision without warmth stays empty. Tech dreams alone feed no spirit. A different kind of thinking shapes state and central universities - one built on theory before practice, short on real-world use. What really drives it? Usually NIRF Rankings or NAAC Accreditations - official yardsticks favouring counts like seminars hosted rather than student voices shared

Looking sideways helps explain the stalled "Paradigm Shift." Four kinds of institutions shape India's higher education system. Not one escapes its own deep-rooted barrier. A different obstacle lives inside each type. These blocks stop fresh teaching methods from taking hold. They also block any real focus on students. Change stays distant because of this. Frozen in old routines, Central Universities still hold high status across India's education landscape. By 2026, though, many drag behind when it comes to change. Here's what really happens. Changing a syllabus means passing it through several groups one after another - like the Board of Studies, then the Academic Council, followed by the Executive Council. While those meetings run their course, tech keeps moving. So, when a new plan finally arrives, packed with topics like AI Ethics or understanding algorithms, companies have already shifted twice since the request began. That delay isn't accidental. It grows from how things are structured. Decisions pile up slowly because each step waits for the last. What feels like caution ends up looking like being left behind. Not on purpose - just by design. Few chances for students to do hands-on work. Since colleges chase high scores in NIRF by focusing on old-style research, classes start to feel more like quiet reading rooms than busy media hubs. Most days, theory from the 1960s fills eight out of ten hours. Real making? That gets just two. Most leaders picture journalism as artful writing, yet overlook its need for tech skills. That mindset ignores what audiences really want - stories built on solid data. A wide gap opens when perception skips reality.

Most Indian learners attend government schools, especially outside big urban centres. Yet these places barely reflect what lies ahead by 2026. What's really going on? A lack of basic resources. Even though people need tools for 4K video work and drone reporting, government offices often deal with spotty electricity alongside ancient computers - older than exhibits in a tech museum. These gaps aren't small - they're massive. Equipment meant for today sits unused because power fails without warning. Old machines creak along while new tasks pile up. The mismatch grows wider each day. Needs change fast. Support does not keep pace. Some teams adapt anyway. Others stall before they start. Outdated lessons fill today's classrooms. That old state syllabus? It hasn't changed in ten years, still setting the pace. Teaching now falls to instructors untrained in modern tools. Imagine explaining digital journalism without ever logging into a CMS. Many faculties lack that basic experience. This gap shapes what students actually learn. Reality hits hard when tech moves faster than teacher training

Picture this instead. Degrees sit centre stage, nothing else matters. Passing tests becomes the only win that counts. Real world survival? That gets left behind. Newsrooms need sharp thinkers, not just paper holders. Rural youth land caught in between - literate but stuck. Skills never show up, yet they're what matter most. Middle of the road, deemed universities usually have deeper pockets than state institutions - yet fall short on reputation compared to central ones.

What really drives it? Copycat systems. Chasing approval, some Deemed universities imitate top institutions, locking into strict formats. Instead of showcasing work over time, they stick to traditional exams. Rigid tests take centre stage, leaving behind project-based evaluations. Most events come from the top, not from students. A big-name journalist might speak at an official talk, yet nobody sets up small spaces for learners to try making their own audio stories day after day. Hands-on chances slip away, replaced by one-way shows that feel distant. Real skill grows in doing, not just watching someone famous pass through. Without a clear path, they drift.

Caught in the middle, one moment leaning toward hands-on training, then tipping into academic study - never fully either. Identity blurs when direction wavers.

Inside private campuses by 2026, shiny spaces glow - think Apple Labs under glass ceilings, VR studios humming with motionless bodies strapped into headsets, lounge chairs cooled by silent vents. Yet beneath that surface gleam lies a quiet hollowness where deep thinking should thrive. Though tools dazzle, minds often drift without anchor. Flashy gear fills rooms while questions go unasked. Comfort crowds out curiosity. These places shine bright, true - but light does not always mean insight It starts with money. A learner seen as a buyer makes schools shy away from pushing back - less push means less drive to dig deep, ask tough questions, think hard. Suddenly it is about brochures, buildings, brand names instead of sharp minds. Growth of thought takes a back seat when image moves front Shiny tech fills the syllabus - AI here, VR there - but most classrooms stop at showy demos. What hides beneath? A thin layer of practice missing real depth. Seasoned reporters rarely step in, so gadgets sit unused for hard truths. Flash replaces fact hunting when mentors stay absent. Projects sparkle without substance because guidance never arrives. Here's a different take entirely on what matters less than we admit. Big firms shape the spotlight, aiming it at themselves through press releases and ad campaigns. Meanwhile, real hunger exists out there - people wanting truthful stories built from scratch by free thinkers. What gets funded rarely matches what gets searched. Attention flows where money points it, not where curiosity leads. New voices struggle while old channels echo louder. The map doesn't show the territory anymore.

Institutional Category	Core Challenge (The "Real Cause")	The "Actual Demand" Ignored
Central Universities	Bureaucratic inertia and academic elitism.	Speed, Agility, and Digital Presence.
State Universities	Chronic underfunding and outdated faculty.	Modern Infrastructure and Vernacular Tech.
Deemed Universities	Identity crisis; trying to please everyone.	Niche specialization and local context.
Private Universities	Commercialization; high fees vs. low intellectual rigor.	Deep Ethics and Independent Entrepreneurship.

V. Conclusion: The Path to 2027 and Beyond

The findings suggest that the Indian media education sector is at a breaking point. The "branding" exercises must stop. For real progress:

- **Faculty-Industry Mobility:** Faculty must have mandatory "industry stints" every two years.

- **Democratizing Tech-Training:** High-end media training must be subsidized to ensure students from all financial backgrounds can access Industry 5.0 tools.
- **Core Leadership Mandate:** Accreditation bodies should mandate that Media Schools must be headed by experts with at least 15 years of core Journalism/Mass Comm experience.

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CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN WOMEN-OWNED START-UPS

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Abstract

Women-owned start-ups are recognized as a vital component of contemporary entrepreneurship, and their contribution to innovation, employment generation, and economic growth is significant. Yet, despite their growing presence in start-ups, there are a number of structural and socio-economic challenges that hinder the progress of women entrepreneurs. With the advent of digital technologies, government policies, education in entrepreneurship, and awareness of gender equality, there are many opportunities that are opening up for women entrepreneurs. In this chapter, we discuss the key challenges that are being faced by women-owned start-ups and also discuss the opportunities that are creating a pathway for their growth and sustenance. We also present a number of examples of successful women entrepreneurs in India and how innovation and strategic leadership are creating pathways to overcome the challenges faced by them.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurship; Women-Owned Start-ups; Entrepreneurial Challenges; Opportunities; Digital Entrepreneurship.

1. Introduction

The role of entrepreneurship has increasingly become a vital force for economic advancement, innovation, and job creation globally. In the past few years, women entrepreneurs have risen to become key players in start-up ecosystems. Start-ups led by women are businesses that are initiated, operated, and directed by women, frequently concentrating on innovative products, services, or solutions. These enterprises not only provide economic empowerment for women but also foster social development by generating job opportunities and advancing inclusive growth.

Women entrepreneurs still face a number of challenges despite increasing participation in start-up businesses. On the other hand, there are a number of opportunities that have been created by technology, government initiatives, and awareness of gender equality for women-owned businesses. This chapter will identify some of the challenges faced by women-owned start-up businesses and opportunities for their sustainability.

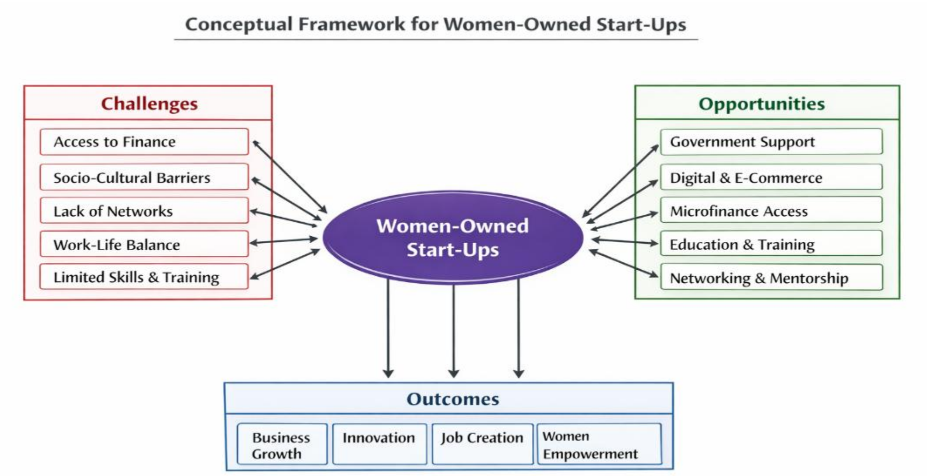
2. Concept of Women-Owned Start-Ups

Women-owned start-ups mean start-ups where women have a majority share in ownership and actively contribute to management and decision-making. Women-owned start-ups work in various industries like technology, retail, education, healthcare, agriculture, and digital technologies.

Women entrepreneurs start new business ventures for various reasons like financial freedom, using their skills, innovation, and contributing to community development. Women's participation is seen as crucial for attaining sustainable economic growth.

3. Conceptual Model Explanation

In this model, the focus is placed squarely on women-owned startups. It illustrates how challenges such as financing, social and cultural barriers, networking, and work-life balance can hinder the growth of women-owned businesses. At the same time, it also illustrates how opportunities can provide women entrepreneurs with the means to overcome challenges. When all these opportunities come together, it provides startups with the best chance to succeed. In some instances, the ripples of challenges and opportunities can have a spillover effect into areas such as business growth, innovation, employment, and women's empowerment.



4. Importance of Women-Owned Start-Ups

Women-led startups play a crucial role in the development of the economy as well as the upliftment of society as a whole. They contribute to the diversification of the economy, innovation, and job creation, and also increase the stature of women in society. The more women who are involved in entrepreneurial activities, the better the environment.

4.1 Economic Contribution

Women-owned businesses play a vital role in the country's economy. They propel economic growth by creating products and services. They also propel innovation in the country through new ideas and products. This helps businesses in different sectors, like technology, retail, farming, and services, to remain competitive while improving their products. By providing employment to people and giving them valuable products, women-owned businesses make the country a better place and provide a brighter future.

4.2 Social Empowerment

Women are empowered by entrepreneurship, which enhances their financial independence and decision-making capacity. When women own and operate businesses, they are in a position to control resources and make decisions for themselves. This helps them to improve their social status, build their self-confidence, and participate in social and domestic decisions. Women entrepreneurs act as role models for motivating other women to seize entrepreneurial opportunities.

4.3 Job Creation

Women entrepreneurs also have a major role to play in generating jobs in society. The businesses started by women entrepreneurs create job opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers, especially for women who are unable to get jobs in the labor market. This helps in uplifting the living standards of women by training and providing jobs to other women.

4.4 Innovation and Diversity

Women entrepreneurs add their unique perspective and creative ideas to the start-up environment. Women entrepreneurs tend to foster collaborative work styles and customer-oriented approaches. Women start-ups tend to introduce creative products and services to the market, which cater to the specific needs of the community or the market. Diverse leadership in start-ups contributes positively to problem-solving, innovation, and organizational performance.

5. Challenges Faced by Women-Owned Start-Ups

Women who choose to be entrepreneurs face various challenges when it comes to starting and operating their start-ups. Such obstacles may be related to finance, society, and support from institutions. It is critical to solve these problems to improve women's participation and success in the entrepreneurial world.

5.1 Limited Access to Finance

One of the challenges that women entrepreneurs face is limited access to financial resources. Women entrepreneurs face a challenge in accessing bank loans, venture capital, and investments. This is attributed to a lack of collateral and a lack of credit history for women entrepreneurs. This forces them to use their savings to fund their businesses, which may limit the expansion of their businesses.

5.2 Socio-Cultural Barriers

Society and culture, including traditional gender roles, have a significant influence on women in business. For instance, in most societies, the assumption is that women should focus on family and household responsibilities, and this may not allow them to participate in business activities, thus becoming a challenge to those who wish to pursue a career in business.

5.3 Lack of Entrepreneurial Networks

Networking is an essential factor for the success of startups, as it opens doors for entrepreneurs to access resources, mentors, and business opportunities. However, women entrepreneurs tend to miss out on opportunities to engage in professional networks, business networks, and events. This affects their ability to build crucial relationships and acquire vital business insights.

5.4 Work-Life Balance

Women entrepreneurs often face challenges in maintaining a balance between their business and domestic responsibilities. Running a start-up is a demanding task that requires a lot of time and commitment. This can sometimes prove to be a challenge for women entrepreneurs, particularly in terms of maintaining a balance between their professional and domestic responsibilities.

5.5 Limited Access to Technology and Digital Skills

In today's business environment, technology is an essential part of marketing and communication. Women entrepreneurs might lack access to digital tools, e-commerce sites, and modern technology. The digital divide can limit their ability to compete in today's technological market.

5.6 Market Access and Competition

For women-owned start-ups, it may be challenging to access competitive markets and establish a solid consumer base. Limited marketing capabilities and lack of connections with suppliers and distributors may hinder women entrepreneurs' expansion of their start-ups and participation in competitive markets.

5.7 Lack of Business Training

Most women entrepreneurs begin businesses that are based on their skills and/or hobbies but may not necessarily have professional training in areas such as business management, marketing strategies, financial planning, and strategic decision-making. Such a lack of professional knowledge may lead to problems in business management and sustainability.

6. Opportunities for Women-Owned Start-Ups

Although there are various challenges, there are also various opportunities which can facilitate the development and growth of women-owned start-ups. For example, technological changes, government initiatives, and changing social attitudes are helping to provide an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs.

6.1 Government Support and Policies

There are many governments in the world that are supporting women's entrepreneurship with different policies and initiatives. Financial backing, start-up funding schemes, women entrepreneurs' development, and incubation centres are some of the initiatives that can be considered as providing the best support to women entrepreneurs to successfully execute their ideas in the best possible way.

6.2 Digital Platforms and E-Commerce

The digital technology and online platforms have created new avenues for women entrepreneurs. Women can now reach a wider market through online shopping platforms, social media, and digital marketing tools. The digital revolution has removed the hurdles that women encounter when they start a business.

6.3 Access to Microfinance and Self-Help Groups

Microfinance institutions and self-help groups play a vital role in supporting women entrepreneurs, especially in developing regions. They assist women in obtaining small loans and financial training, thereby creating a base for budding entrepreneurs. This is promoting entrepreneurship in various parts of the world.

6.4 Growing Demand for Women-Led Businesses

Consumers are showing increased interest in patronizing businesses owned and operated by women and socially conscious businesses. Such awareness provides a new opportunity for women entrepreneurs to build brands that are socially conscious.

6.5 Entrepreneurial Education and Training

Educational institutions and training centres offer valuable learning opportunities for women entrepreneurs through various entrepreneurship development programs. These help in the development of key skills like business planning, leadership skills, financial management, and innovation, which are crucial for establishing successful start-ups.

6.6 Networking and Mentorship Programs

Networking and mentorship programs offer guidance and assistance to women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs can establish connections with experienced entrepreneurs and business leaders through professional networking and mentorship programs. Such interactions can help them gain information and confidence to increase their business prospects.

7. Challenges vs Opportunities vs Policy Support for Women Start-Ups in India

S. No	Major Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs	Emerging Opportunities	Government Policy Support / Initiatives
1.	Limited access to finance and venture capital	Growth of microfinance institutions and digital lending platforms	Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) providing collateral-free loans for small businesses
2.	Gender bias and socio-cultural barriers	Increasing awareness about gender equality and women empowerment	Stand-Up India Scheme supporting women entrepreneurs with bank loans
3.	Lack of business training and managerial skills	Expansion of entrepreneurship development programs and incubators	Skill India Mission and entrepreneurship training programs
4.	Limited professional networks and mentorship	Growth of women entrepreneur networks and startup communities	Startup India Initiative providing incubation, mentorship, and financial support

5.	Work–life balance and family responsibilities	Flexible work models and digital entrepreneurship opportunities	Mahila E-Haat platform promoting women-led businesses
6.	Limited market access and visibility	Rapid growth of e-commerce and social media marketing	Digital India Initiative enabling digital business opportunities
7.	Limited access to technology and innovation resources	Increasing availability of online learning and digital tools	Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) supporting innovation and startups

8. Strategies to Strengthen Women-Owned Start-Ups

Some of the strategies that can be followed to promote the growth of start-ups owned by women are as follows:

- Increasing access to funding and capital.
- Improving education and training for women entrepreneurs.
- Encouraging mentorship and networking.
- Supporting work-life balance through flexible working arrangements.
- Improving digital literacy and technology adoption.
- Enhancing government policies and institutional support.

9. Role of Technology in Empowering Women Entrepreneurs

Technology is an important factor in the empowerment of women who are running their own businesses. It helps them to market their products online, reach global markets, and manage their businesses in a more efficient manner. Social media platforms, mobile applications, and online platforms have reduced the barriers for women startups.

10. Future Prospects of Women-Owned Start-Ups

The prospects for women-owned startups look bright, driven by increasing awareness, enabling policies, and technological progress. The female entrepreneurial segment is expected to play an important role in economic development as digital startups, innovation systems, and inclusive business take hold.

However, gender-related obstacles remain, and overcoming these obstacles, as well as promoting financial inclusion and an enabling environment for women to take the entrepreneurial leap, is crucial.

11. Case Studies of Successful Women-Owned Start-Ups

Case Study 1: Nykaa – Mumbai

Founder: Falguni Nayar

Location: Mumbai, India

Industry: Beauty & E-commerce

Background

Nykaa was founded in 2012, and the brain behind this venture was Falguni Nayar, who had previously worked as an investment banker for several years and realized the gap that existed in the Indian beauty and cosmetics market. The company was established with the aim of providing real beauty products and advice.

Business Model

Nykaa operates an e-commerce marketplace that features a wide range of products related to beauty, skincare, and personal care from local as well as international brands. The e-commerce platform not only assists in the sale of products but also provides content related to beauty tutorials and reviews.

Growth and Support

Nykaa has grown significantly by providing online shopping services along with physical stores across India. With good support from investors, Nykaa has emerged as one of the most successful startups in India. Nykaa went public with its Initial Public Offering (IPO) in 2021. Nykaa is now one of the leading beauty retailers in India.

Key Lessons

- Identifying market gaps and consumer needs
- Strong digital marketing and brand positioning
- Successful integration of online and offline retail

Case Study 2: POPxo – New Delhi

Founder: Priyanka Gill

Location: New Delhi, India

Industry: Digital Media & Content Platform

Background

POPxo was founded in 2014 by Priyanka Gill, who wanted to create an online community for women. It is focused on topics such as fashion, beauty, relationships, fitness, and career, targeted at young women.

Business Model

POPxo is an online digital media company that specializes in creating online content, including articles, videos, and social media. It also expanded its strategies to include influencer marketing and its own line of beauty products.

Growth and Support

The platform attracted a young audience and raised funds from various venture capital firms. POPxo later merged with the Good Glamm Group, increasing its content, influencer base, and e-commerce presence.

Key Lessons

- Leveraging digital media to build a strong community

- Integrating content creation with e-commerce
- Using social media and influencer marketing for business growth

Case Study 3: Mannvasanai – Chennai

Founder: E. Menaka

Location: Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Industry: Organic agriculture and food products

Background

Mannvasanai is an agricultural startup that was founded by E. Menaka, who gave up her IT job to promote traditional rice varieties and millets. The idea for the startup came out of her love for sustainable agriculture and a spark from agricultural activists.

Business Model

The startup works with farmers who cultivate traditional varieties of rice and millet using organic farming methods. Mannvasanai supplies these products to retail stores and packaged foods like batter made of traditional grains. The startup also promotes healthy and sustainable eating habits.

Growth and Support

The project saw a few bumps in the beginning, struggling with market reach and funding. However, things changed when the Tamil Nadu government intervened with its startup initiative, providing the necessary funding that allowed the business to expand and set up multiple outlets in Chennai.

Key Lessons

- Entrepreneurship based on sustainability and agriculture
- Reviving traditional food systems
- Importance of government support for start-ups

Case Study 4: Kara Craft – Chennai

Founder: Viji Venkatesh

Location: Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Industry: Handicrafts / Social Enterprise

Background

Kara Craft started off as a mission to empower women in disadvantaged communities by using their craft as a tool for independence. It is about generating jobs and enhancing financial self-sufficiency for women.

Business Model

Kara Craft trains women artisans to produce environmentally friendly handmade crafts such as bags, accessories, and home decor items. These products are marketed through exhibitions, corporate partnerships, and online platforms.

Growth and Support

Kara Craft has managed to expand its outreach by partnering with NGOs, companies, and social enterprises. The project has managed to increase production levels and engage more women artisans through training and community engagement.

Key Lessons

- Women empowerment through skill development
- Promotion of eco-friendly and sustainable products
- Social entrepreneurship and community support

Conclusion

Women-owned start-ups contribute to economic growth and transformation. Although women face challenges in their start-ups, including funding, socio-cultural, and networking challenges, technology and entrepreneurship opportunities provide women with numerous opportunities.

Women's empowerment in entrepreneurship is essential in building a sustainable economy. When challenges are reduced and opportunities are provided to women-owned start-ups, they have a higher chance of succeeding, thus contributing to economic growth globally.

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A STUDY ON PERCEPTION TOWARDS E-LEARNING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Introduction

E-learning is a structured course or learning experience delivered electronically; it can also include performance support content. learning has numerous advantages over traditional learning methods. Some of these include the possibility for students to make use of self-paced learning and to choose their own learning environments. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are gaining increasing importance in every sector and becoming progressively more widespread throughout the education sector. Consequently, e-learning has emerged as a very important tool to assist and facilitate teaching and learning processes. It provides the tools for learners to be in contact with peers and teachers inside and outside the classroom. Besides, it also empowers the learners to manage their own learning and in the most appropriate way for each learner. E-learning is the fastest growing and most promising in the educational industry. ICTs can empower teachers and learners, making significant contributions to learning outcomes and achievements. Students no longer need to spend long periods traveling to a location to attend a course; they can now have access to learning when they want it- at home, at work, in their local library. The learning no longer needs to be a passive experience, with the learners all sitting in front of the teacher and "learning by telling". e-learning makes learning an active and interesting experience. Hence, e-learning is no longer simply associated with distance or remote learning but forms part of a conscious choice of the best and most appropriate ways of promoting effective learning.

Statement of the Problem

Students miss out on the benefits of face-to-face interaction and the knowledge sharing that can arise from this. Students find that the system is not sufficiently supported, and have difficulty using it. Computer systems can be prone to technical difficulties. Failure of server, client or connection can mean the students are unable to study. Students are not motivated to study alone. Students are 'tempted' away from studying when they connect to the Internet. It is too easy to surf instead of study. Less technology-savvy students may not perform as well as they would do in a traditional class. There are potential health risks associated with excessive computer usage.

Scope of the Study

This research study helps us to know students' perception towards e-learning. And e-learning provides easy access to learning anyplace, anytime, making it more convenient to learners. Social learning is a happening trend which creates a sense of competition and co-operation which will lock the learner's attention towards the course. No two learners are the same. Each one has his or her own way of understanding the content to learn. With e-learning, learners are now able to learn in their own style, at their own pace. E-learning can fit different learning styles as it allows learners to do the following: reading, learning through videos, listening to podcasts, research on the internet. The findings indicate that a large majority of students (91%) have positive perceptions about e-learning. Further students' academic performance, computer/ laptop ownership, computer proficiency and frequency of computer use were found to have positive and significant correlation with student's perception towards e-learning.

Objective of the Study

- The primary or the main objective of the study is to know about students' perception towards E-learning.
- To study a student's attitude; to investigate differences in attitude towards the use of e-learning between different age groups of students.
- To analyze the relation between those attitudes and some specific student related background factors such as gender, age, attitudes to new technologies, and learning style.
- To explore the most important advantages and disadvantages that the students experienced in connection with e-learning.

Area of Study

The researcher has taken Coimbatore city, the largest industrial center. Coimbatore also known as Manchester of South India, is a home to a large number of textile mills, textile machinery manufacturers, hosiery units & engineering industries. Coimbatore (population 1.25million) is the second biggest city of the southern state of Tamilnadu, India and identified as one of the fast-developing metros of India.

Research Methodology of Research

A Research design is the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to the research purpose with economy in procedure. The descriptive research is chosen for this study. The main objective of using descriptive research is chosen for this study. Descriptive research is chosen for this study. The main objective of using descriptive research is chosen for this study.

Research Design: The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature. The descriptive research is used for this study. The main objective of using descriptive research is to describe the state of affairs as it exists at present. It mainly involves surveys and fact finding enquiries of different kinds.

Sources of Data: Primary data has been used for the purpose of study on students' perception towards e-learning.

Primary Data: The primary data are those, which are collected fresh and for the first time happen to be original in character. It has been collected through a questionnaire and personal overview.

Sample Design: Sample design is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. The sample design for this study is the school students.

Sample Size: The sample size for this study includes 110 respondents.

Type of Study: Descriptive research is defined as a research method that describes the characteristics of the population or phenomenon that is being studied. In other words, descriptive research primarily focuses on describing the nature of a demographic segment, without focusing on "why" a certain phenomenon occurs.

Method: This study has based on the convenience sampling method.

Tools For Data Collection

Primary Data

Raw data, also known as primary data, is data (e.g., numbers, instrument readings figures, etc.) collected from a source. The data which are collected from the field under the control and supervision of an investigator. Primary data means original data that has been collected specially for the purpose in mind This type of data is generally fresh and collected for the first time which is useful for current studies as well as for future studies.

Need for the Study

The importance of E-Learning education is that it is quick and does not require much cost. The long training period, infrastructure, stationery, travel expenses, etc. is reduced. Effectiveness of the transferred or imparted knowledge and learning is high and powerful. It makes information easy to grasp and absorb.

E- Learning is emerging as a prominent way to carry out the teaching learning process. In countries like India, where the population is large and the educational resources are limited to cope up with the increasing needs of providing education, e-learning can play a critical role to overcome this problem. The present study is based on a survey method. E-learning has been introduced as a tool in the learning process in the majority of the institutions. The term e-learning is defined as any learning that involves using the internet. E-learning has grown in significance as an educational tool just like technology has developed and progressed over the years. And when it comes to online learning in education, the model has been pretty straight forward up until the early 2000s education was in a classroom of students with a teacher who led the process. Now, an affordable e-learning tool for education can be facilitated from virtually anywhere. Hence, this study creates awareness about e-learning in today's world and student's attitude towards e-learning.

Limitations of the Study

Like any research, with its vast area, there is bound to be some limitation. These limitations could be due to the tools employed, or geographical or financial reasons.

Following are the limitations of the present study.

- Due to lack of immediate feedback, teachers were unable to assess students' understanding during online lecturing.
- Biased response of respondents.

Review of the Literature

The purpose of a student perception survey is to provide teachers with meaningful feedback about how their practice impacts student learning and to incorporate student voice and experience into efforts to improve learning. Student surveys provide a unique tool that can give districts, schools, and teachers formative, actionable feedback, whereas administrators can only be in classrooms during a limited number of hours each year, students spend hundreds of hours with teachers and are constantly experiencing teacher practice. Furthermore, emerging research indicates that combining student feedback with observations of classroom practice and student academic growth results is a more valid and reliable predictor of a teachers future effectiveness and provides more meaningful feedback than any one or two of those measures alone. The term student perception can be defined as "Students thoughts and beliefs about technology used in course".

Claire de la Varre, Julie Keane and Matthew J. Irvin (2011) This study examines on site facilitator practices and activities that support rural high school students taking online courses. A qualitative analysis of end- of- course interview data from instructors and facilitators was undertaken.

D.W. Sanders & A. I. Morrison- Shelter observed attitude of undergraduate students towards the web-enabled learning components in a biology course. The outcomes exhibited a constructive influence on critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills and student learning.

Finch, D., & Jacobs, K. (2012). Online education: Best practices to promote learning. Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics 56th Annual Meeting.

Naila *et al.* A questionnaire was distributed to all students to measure their attitudes towards e-learning. The result confirmed the readiness of students to adopt e-learning and recognized its use in education. Though, technical support and stress of using technology were to be noted to be discouraging factors to adopt e-learning.

K. L. Smart and J. J. Cappel focused on students' perceptions of integrating online components in two undergraduate business courses. After applying t-test and chi-square tests the authors concluded that participants in an elective course rated the online modules significantly better than those in a required course.

Taj, Haseen (2002), 'Role of technology in distance education at university level in India', Proceedings of National Conference on Integrating Technology into Teaching and Learning, Society for Educational Technology, Research and Development (SETRAD), pp 212–216.

Y. Levy, investigates a different aspect of e-learning for checking its effectiveness by considering reviews from the students. The research work takes into account the view of drop out students and compares them to the successful student. There is found to be a striking difference in their views as drop out finds e-learning as ineffective and useless. The study therefore establishes the fact that the intention, performance and individual approach make e-learning practices suitable for the students. However, the study does not comment on what additional factors are involved for students to drop out from the e-learning courses.

Claire de la Varre, Julie Keane and Matthew J. Irvin (2011) This study examines on site facilitator practices and activities that support rural high school students taking online courses. A qualitative analysis of end- of- course interview data from instructors and facilitators was undertaken.

Ravi K. Mahajan (2009) The paper shares the changing cantors in the studies on performance of distance learners and highlights the omission of psychological variables in the process. Finally, the paper puts forward some suggestions for ensuring a better 'completion rate' for distance learners.

Patricia Bertea observed that there is a connection between technical capabilities and students' attitude towards e-learning. Attitude is also impacted by time dedicated to computer use, showing computer experience. Attitude differences were found between hired students and the unemployed ones.

Analysis and Interpretation Method of Data Collection

1. Primary method

By the questionnaire method of data collection, the research project has been done. Questionnaire is a popular means of collecting data, but is difficult to design and often requires many rewrites before and acceptable questionnaire is produced.

2. Tools for analysis

The various tools used in the present study as follows: Simple percentage analysis and Chi-square analysis.

3. Percentage analysis

Gender of the respondents

Sl. No	Gender	Percentage	Frequency
1.	Male	49.09	54
2.	Female	50.91	56
	Total	100	110

Interpretation

The gender wise classification of the respondents is presented in the above table. From the table it is understood that 49.09% of the respondents are male and 50.91% of the respondents are female.

Age of the respondents

Sl. No	Age	Percentage	Frequency
1	15-21	83.64	92
2	22-30	16.36	18
3	31-40	00.00	0
4	Above 40	00.00	0
	Total	100	110

From the above table, 83% of the respondents are between 15-21 years, 16.36% of the respondents are between 22-30 years

Method of effective learning

Sl. No	Method of Effective Learning	Percentage	Frequency
1	e-learning	31.8	35
2	classroom	68.2	75
	Total	100	110

Interpretation

From the above table 68.2 % are effective from learning in the classroom and 31.8 % are effective from learning in e-learning.

E-learning is the best education

Sl. No	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	Yes	43.6	48
2	No	54.4	62
	Total	100	110

Interpretation

From the above table, 54.4 % of the respondents are yes and 43.6 % are no.

Best part of e-learning

Sl. No	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	Effectiveness	9.1	10
2	Quick Delivery Of Lesson	15.5	17
3	Effective Time	27.3	30
4	Flexible Schedule	48.2	53
	Total	100	110

Interpretation

48.2 % respondents are flexible with schedule, 27.3% are effective with time, 15.5% quick delivery of lessons and 9.1 respondents say it is effective.

Device you use for distance learning

Sl. No	Devices	Percentage	Frequency
1	Smart Phone	64.5	71
2	Laptop	23.6	26
3	Computer	5.5	7
4	Tablet	6.4	6
	Total	100	110

Interpretation

64.5% respondents prefer smartphone, 23.6% prefer laptop, 6.4% prefer tablet and 5.5% prefer computer.

Good platform for teaching online

Sl. No	Online App	Percentage	Frequency
1	Google classroom	75.5	83
2	Zoom	20	22
3	Teach mint	4.55	5
	Total	100	110

Majority, 75.5 % prefer Google classroom, 20% prefer zoom and 4.55% prefer teach mint

Overall about distance learning

Sl. No	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	Poor	13 6	15
2	Below Average	10.9	12
3	Average	51.8	57
4	Good	20	22
5	Excellent	3.64	4
	Total	100	110

Interpretation

13.6% respondents think it's poor, 10.9% think it is below average, 51.8% feel it's average,20% think it's good,3.64% respondents think it is excellent.

Having device for learning online

Sl. No	Statement	Percentage	Frequency
1	Yes	70.00	77
2	Yes, but it doesn't work well	22.73	25
3	No, I share with Others	7.27	8
	Total	100	110

Interpretation

70% of respondents have the access to a device to learn through online, 22.73% respondents have the device but they face difficulties and 7.27% don't have the access to the device.

Average time you spend on distance learning

Sl. No	Duration	Percentage	Frequency
1	1-3	54.55	60
2	3-5	38.18	42
3	5-7	7.27	8
	Total	**100**	**110**

Interpretation

54.55% respondents spend 1-3 hours in distance learning; 38.18% respondents spend 3-5 hours and 7.27% spend 5-7 hours in E-learning.

School has been offering you resources to learn from home

Sl. No	Resources	Percentage	Frequency
1	Extremely helpful	22.81	24
2	Moderately helpful	60.00	66
3	Not at all helpful	18.18	20
	Total	100	110

Interpretation

60% respondents say schools are moderately helpful, 22.81 say they are extremely helpful and 18.18% Say that they are not at all helpful.

Respondents enjoy learning remotely

Sl. No	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	Yes, absolutely	24.55	27
2	Yes, but I like to change a few things	39.09	43
3	No, there are quite a few challenges	27.27	30
4	No, not at all	9.09	10
	Total	100	110

Interpretation

39.09% respondents enjoy E-learning but they have few changes, 27.27% They say no, they have few challenges, 24.55% say yes and 9.09% respondents say no.

Teachers helpful while learning online

Sl. No	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	Extremely helpful	30.91	34
2	Moderately helpful	65.45	72
3	Not at all helpful	3.64	4
	Total	**100**	**110**

Interpretation

65.45% respondents feel that teachers are moderately helpful, 30.91% respondents feel that they are extremely helpful and 3.64% respondents feel that they are not at all helpful.

Sl. No	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	Calm environment	50.91	56
2	High level of distraction	49.09	54
	Total	**100**	**110**

Interpretation

50.91%, respondents say they have a peaceful environment at home while learning and 49.09 respondents say they have a high level of distraction.

Overall experience learning from home

Sl No	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	Much better	19.09	21
2	Somewhat better	56.36	62
3	About the same	12.73	14
4	Much worse	11.82	13
	Total	100	110

Interpretation

56.36% of the respondents feel it is somewhat better, 19.09% respondents feel it is much better, 12.73% feel it is just about the same and 11.82% respondents feel it is much worse.

High speed internet

Sl No	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	Yes	56.36	62
2	No	43.64	48
	Total	**100**	**110**

Interpretation

56.36% respondents have a high speed of internet and 43.64% don't have high speed internet.

One-one discussion with teacher

SI No	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	Most Of the time	23.64	26
2	Once in a while	69.09	76
3	Never	7.27	8
	Total	100	110

Interpretation

69.09%, majority of the respondents have one-one discussion with teachers once in a while, 23.64% respondents have discussion most of the time and 7.27% respondents never have discussion with teachers.

Family helpful while learning online

SI No	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	More supportive	77.27	85
2	Not much supportive	22.73	25
	Total	**100**	**110**

Interpretation

77.27% respondents say their family is more supportive and 22.73% of respondents say they are not much supportive.

Motives respondents to learn more

SI No	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	E-learning	18.18	20
2	Classroom	81.82	90
	Total	**100**	**110**

Interpretation

81.82% respondents think classroom motives motivate them and 18.18% respondents think E-learning motives them.

Platform meets children unique needs

SI No	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	Yes	38.18	42
2	No	61.82	68
	Total	**100**	**110**

Interpretation

61.82% of respondents think that children don't meet an unique platform and 38.18% of respondents think they meet an unique platform.

Quality of education best for students

SI Nn	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	e-learning	30.91	34
2	Traditional education	69.09	76
	Total	**100**	**110**

Interpretation

69.09% of the respondents think traditional education is the best quality of education for students and 30.91% respondents think E-learning is the best education.

Findings and Suggestions

From the percentage analysis the results revealed are shown below.

- It is inferred that the majority (50.91%) of the respondents are female.
- Majority, 83.6 % of the respondents belong to 15-21 years.
- Majority, 68.2% of the respondents, are prepared to learn in the classroom.
- Majority of the respondents are saying that e-learning is the best education.
- 64.5% respondents prefer smartphones, 23.6% prefer laptops, 6.4% prefer tablets and 5.5% prefer computers.
- Majority, 75.5% prefer Google classroom.
- 51.8% respondents think it is average.
- 70% of respondents have access to the device for e-learning.
- 54.5% respondents spend 1-3 hours in distance learning.
- 60 % of respondents say schools are moderately helpful to learn from home.
- 39.1% of respondents enjoy online learning but they would like to change a few things.
- 65.5% respondents say teachers are helpful while studying online.
- 54.5% respondents feel distance learning is slightly stressful.
- 50.09% of respondents say that they have a calm environment at home while learning.
- 56.4 % respondents feel learning from home is somewhat better.
- Majority, 56.4% of respondents have high speed internet.
- Majority of respondents 69.1% will have one – one discussion with teachers once in a while.
- Majority 77.3% of respondents say that their family is more supportive.
- Majority of 81.81% agree that classroom learning motives more.
- 61.8% of respondents think that children do not have a unique platform.
- 69.1% think traditional education is the best quality of education for students.

Conclusion

The strategy of implementing e-learning may play a crucial role for student's perception of the new technology. It becomes quite obvious that students are deeply aware of the changes brought over by digital technologies, by their impact on the learning process. Also it is clear that students are well equipped in using technology in formal environments and are already using these technologies in order to support their learning process. Furthermore, students seem to understand that a more coherent approach based on specific development might prove even more effective.

Suggestion

- E-learning experience can be accompanied by strategies to improve the access to the internet, computer and improve the broadband width.

- This study also showed that e-courses need to be systematically and regularly updated in terms of organization, appearance and content.
- Assessment and evaluation procedures should also be developed to accommodate that online environment.
- Learning style of the students can be improved through e-learning.
- The emergence of new technologies changes students' attitude.

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INDIAN TOY INDUSTRY: TRADITION, TRANSFORMATION AND TRADE

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Abstract

India is well known for its rich culture, tradition and legacy. Each state of India has its unique toy art which highlight its diversity and cultural heritage. However, the toy industry despite having cultural and economic significance remained largely underdeveloped on account of huge influx of imported toys mainly from China.

The study aims to examine the pattern and composition of import and export of toys and trading partners of India. The study revealed that India has gradually transitioned from import dependency to export oriented. The major policy interventions like Make in India, Startup India, Atma Nirbhar Bharat, heavy import tariffs, quality certification and Vocal for local initiatives supported the significant transformation.

The study concludes that revival of the toy industry will not only boost domestic manufacturer but will have a significant multiplier effect in the economy. Toys are not just to entertain but are the custodian of our cultural legacy. The industry provides employment to local artisans, promotes tourism and preserve cultural history. All these factors can significantly contribute to the growth and development to make India a strong global toy manufacturing hub.

Keywords: Toys, Import, Exports, Cultural Revival.

1. Introduction

The act of playing with toys help a child to learn important life skill lessons that can have a significant impact to shape one's personality and promote holistic development. The play element teaches a child to learn the art of problem solving, critical thinking, stimulates creativity and innovation. It helps to develop gross motor development skills and the play activity also helps to instil a lot family and social values.

India is known for its rich culture history and tradition of toy making. Each region of India is endowed with cultural history and has a unique toy art. These traditional toy arts reflect the diverse culture, unique history, craftsmanship and folklore of each regional state. The culture and value system are deeply rooted in our lives and has passed from generations to generations through the power of storytelling. Indian toys help the child to learn about folklores, traditions and also helps to strengthen the cultural connection.

Despite having strong positive factors like rich and diverse cultural history, large consumer base of 1.4 billion population, majority of young consumers and rising households income, the toys industry remained largely underdeveloped for several decades. The Indian toy industry remained heavily dominated by imported toys mainly from China until 2015.

Today, the Indian toy industry is at the cusp of significant transformation due to a lot of policy interventions. The large domestic market not only supports expansion but also acts as a strong base for international presence. In the recent years, Indian toy manufacturing industry has shown a remarkable growth, driven by several policy initiatives like *Make in India, Atmanirbhar Bharat*. These policy initiatives focused on enhancing toy manufacturing, ensuring quality standards and reducing import dependency.

The global toy market size is valued at USD 305 Billion (2022) whereas Indian toy market is at around USD1.5 billion which indicates India share in global market to be 0.5%. Aftermath the COVID-19 pandemic, India began to diversify their supply chains by adopting strategies to mitigate operational risks and reduce overdependency on Chinese manufacturing. The Government of India also made a very strong appeal to people of India for "*Vocal for Local*" and to promote domestic manufacturing. This structural shift gives India an unique set of opportunities to emerge as a competitive hub for toy manufacturing in the years ahead. This move not only will support local artisans to produce indigenous toys, it will encourage economic growth and also promote Indian culture and heritage.

The present study attempts to examine the trend and dynamics of imports and export of toys focusing on patterns, key trading partners, and policy implications that influence the sector's global competitiveness.

2. Importance of Toys in Human Life

i. **Deepens the Cultural Connection:** India's indigenous toys reflect culture, traditions and regional heritage. Toys such as Rajasthani puppets and Channapatna wooden crafts serve not only as playthings but also are a carrier of cultural legacy. Using these toys, the stories, folklores, and traditions have passed from one generation to the next, allowing children to connect deeply with their cultural roots and understand their historical identity.

ii. **Social and Emotional Development:** Group games, role play teaches a child to learn interpersonal and social skills. For example, the Bhatukali toys of Maharashtra teaches a child to learn home management skills, distribution of responsibility through the element of play. Toys also help a child to express love, affection and happiness. It promotes skill of cooperation and understanding.

iii. **Cognitive Skills:** The educational toys, puzzles, construction oriented toys stimulates the mental abilities of a child. It helps child to critically think, fine tune logical reasoning abilities, stimulates curiosity and sparkles imaginative skills. It strengthens the understanding abilities on cause and effect, rules and structures of the games and promotes decision making.

iv. **Fosters Creativity and Imagination:** Toys such as dolls, animal toys, mini cars, action figures encourage creativity and imagination. Through play, the child explores new ideas, build stories and uses toys as medium of self-expression and creative discovery.

v. **Economic Importance:** The toy industry supports employment, promotes craftsmanship and contributes to the country's economic and cultural exports. The Indian indigenous toy industry is dominated by unorganised sector mainly the local artisans who contribute their bit to strengthen the toy industry.

vi. **Therapeutic Role:** In therapy and special education, toys are considered as a powerful tool for improving attention, hand-eye coordination, develops gross motor and fine motor skills. It also fosters emotional balance among children with special needs.

vii. **Holistic Development:** The act of playing with toys is not just fun and entertainment but it promotes holistic development of the child and it enables them to explore more about the world around them.

3. History of Toy Making

India has a rich history of toy making which dates back to over 5,000 years ago. The excavation of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro revealed mini-carts, dancing dolls etc. These early creations depict the artistic skills and imaginative powers of our ancestors.

Over the centuries, toys have not just been a medium of entertainment for children, but also an important carrier of our cultural identity. The stories and folklore which teaches qualities of values, culture, tradition and morality have passed down from generations to generations through the power of storytelling.

Prominent games like *Astapada* (Chess), *Chaturanga,* Snake and Ladders (*Moksh Patan*), *Kho-Kho* and *Kabbadi* have originated from ancient India. Many of the toys and games are also connected to Indian festivals and celebrations. For example, the kite flying activity celebrated during festival of Sankranti. Similarly, the display of beautiful dolls during Navratri and Dussehra celebrations.

Indian indigenous toys help to promote cultural connection with children. It is sustainable and promotes effective learning experience.

4. Indian States and Toy Art

Each Indian state is endowed with rich culture and a unique art of toy-making.

This table presents the regions, their respective states, and the key products associated with each area.

Region	State	Products
Northern Region	Jammu & Kashmir	Walnut woods carvings, Paper Machie
Northern Region	Himachal Pradesh	Toy Extension Centre promoting traditional toys
Northern Region	Uttarakhand	Damru
Northern Region	Punjab	Folk toys, Handwai, Chankhana, Lattu, Ghaggu
Northern Region	Haryana	Babushka toys, lacquer dolls, string puppets, wooden toys
Northern Region	Chandigarh	Sunmica Boards, Wooden Showcase, God statues, décor
Northern Region	Delhi	Engaged in Sale of handicraft
Northern Region	Rajasthan	Cloth dolls and toys, wooden products, puppets
Northern Region	Uttar Pradesh	Lacquered toys, miniature utensils, wood craft
Wester & Central Region	Gujarat	Clay and Teracotta Toys, Puppets, stuffed toys
Wester & Central Region	Daman & Diu	Mat Weaving, Tortoise shell toys and Crafts
Wester & Central Region	Maharashtra	Bahatukli (household items) wooden toys
Wester & Central Region	Goa	Woodcraft like cradles, baby crafts, toys etc.
Wester & Central Region	Madhya Pradesh	Hastashilpa (Dolls), Betel Nut's Toys
Wester & Central Region	Chhattisgarh	Toy items with clay, stone, bamboo and metals
South Region	Andhra Pradesh	Kondapalli toys, Etikoppala Toys
South Region	Telangana	Nirmal Toys
South Region	Karnataka	Channapatna Toys
South Region	Kerala	Toys of Coir, Woodcraft, lacquer, coconut shell
South Region	Tamil Nadu	Thanjavur Dancing Dolls
Eastern Region	Bihar	Doll & Toys, Kanyaputri Dolls, Sikki work, Bamboo work
Eastern Region	Jharkhand	wooden Toys, folk tradition animals.
Eastern Region	Odisha	carving statutes, idols and toys
Eastern Region	West Bengal	Wooden dolls and toys
Eastern Region	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Handicraft emporiums and Gift shops for tourists

(Source: Toy Story Promotion of Indigenous toys of India, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India)

5. Decline of Indigenous Toys Market

With the rapid industrialization and globalization, the Indian indigenous toys suffered a massive setback. Between the year 2000 to 2015, India emerged as the largest importer of foreign toys mainly dominated by the Chinese.

The consumers preferred the affordable toys. The imported toys were mainly plastic, battery operated or electronic items. Besides the imported toys did not resonate with the Indian culture and values. The lack of government support and policy initiatives also adversely impacted the local artisans and ultimately leading many to shut their business operations due to decreased demand. All these elements contributed to downfall of the indigenous toys industry.

6. The Game Changer

To reduce import dependency and promote export competitiveness, the Government of India adopted multiple policy initiatives. The "*Make in India*" and "*Startup India*" were the flagship initiatives in this direction to provide a boost to the domestic manufacturing in India.

The Indian toys market remained underdeveloped despite having strong economic and cultural significance. Recognizing the potential of the Indian toy market, in August 2020 the Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi made a strong appeal to the people of India to support local toy makers of India and promote "Vocal for Local". The handmade toys of India reflect the rich culture and tradition of India and is used not just a décor item but also can be used as a souvenir from tourism perspective.

The Government of India launched a series of initiatives like the BIS certification, import tariffs, India Toys Fair, Toy clusters, Toycathon to promote innovation, startups and build a roboust ecosystem for the toy industry.

All these factors contributed as a game changer for the Indian toy industry enabling a shift towards sustainable toys and leading to cultural revival.

7. Research Methodology

- The study adopts descriptive and analytical research design. It examines the trends and composition of exports and imports of toy sector of India.
- Sources of Data: The study is based on secondary data, collected from the following sources Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India and Digital Sansad and Lok Sabha reports.
- Period of Study: The study covers a period of eight years from 2017–18 to 2024–25.
- Tools and Techniques of Analysis: The study uses trend analysis and comparative study of export and import of HS Code 9503, 9504 and 9505.

8. Scope of the Study

The study includes the following:

- Analysis of export and import trends of toys under HS Codes 9503, 9504, and 9505. The classification is based on Harmonised System (HS) of Chapter 95 which pertains to toys, games, sports requisite, parts and accessories of Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
  - HS Code 9503: general toys/puzzles/models
  - HS Code 9504: video games/table games
  - HS code 9505: festive items

- Examination of India's major trading partners in the toy sector
- Evaluation of India's trade balance in toys
- Identification of leading toy-producing states in India
- Assessment of the impact of government initiatives such as Make in India, Atmanirbhar Bharat, Vocal for Local, BIS certification, and toy clusters

7. **Research Questions**

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

i. What major trends and trade patterns can be observed in India's toy exports and imports between 2017 and 2025?
ii. In what ways has the composition of India's toy exports and imports changed over the period 2017–2025?
iii. Which countries have emerged as the principal sources of toy imports into India?
iv. Which international markets constitute the key destinations for India's toy exports?
v. How has the trade balance of the Indian toy industry evolved during the selected study period?
vi. Which Indian states play a leading role in toy production and contribute significantly to the industry?
vii. To what extent have government policies and regulatory measures influenced the reduction of toy imports and the promotion of exports in India?

8. Data Analysis and Discussion

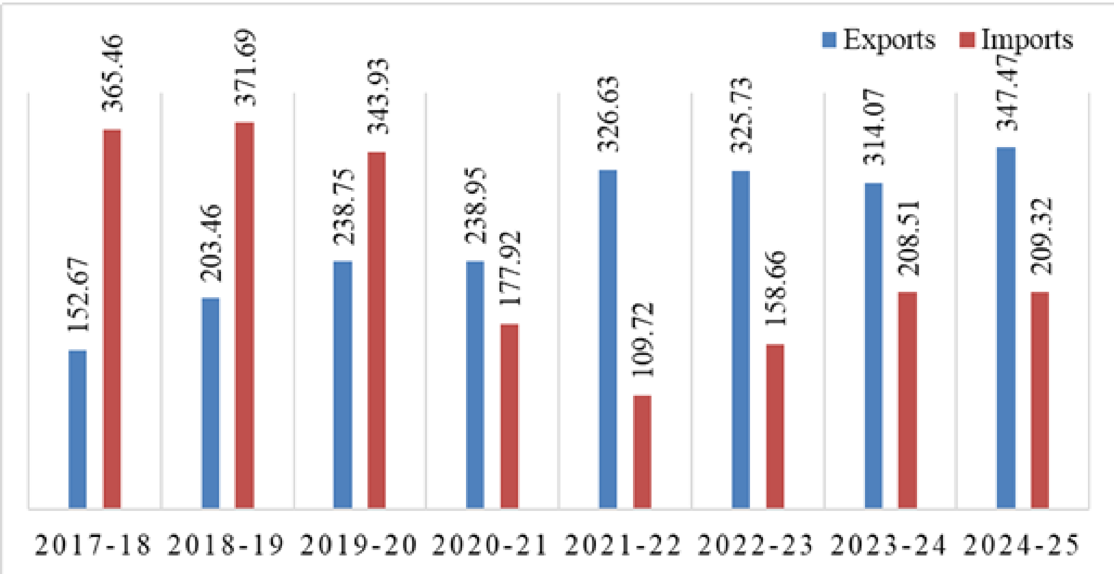

Figure 1: Trend in Exports and Imports of toys

(Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry)

The figure 1 shows that from 2017-18 to 2024-25 the exports increased steeply by 127% and the imports declined by 42.72%. This trend indicates the gradual transition of Indian toy sector.

Table 1: Export- Import of HS Code 9503, 9504 and 9505 (Value in USD in millions)

Years	HS Code 9503 Export	HS Code 9503 Import	HS Code 9504 Export	HS Code 9504 Import	HS Code 9505 Export	HS Code 9505 Import
2017-18	77.3	281.85	15.68	61.03	59.69	22.58
2018-19	109.28	304.08	19.82	53.03	74.36	14.58
2019-20	129.6	279.25	27.42	48.38	81.73	16.3
2020-21	141.21	129.63	25.84	38.12	71.9	10.17
2021-22	177.04	35.88	32.27	54.95	117.32	18.89
2022-23	153.89	62.37	34.44	75.79	137.4	20.5
2023-24	152.34	64.92	33.36	124.18	128.37	19.41
2024-25	169.46	73.97	37.52	116.74	140.49	18.61

(Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry)

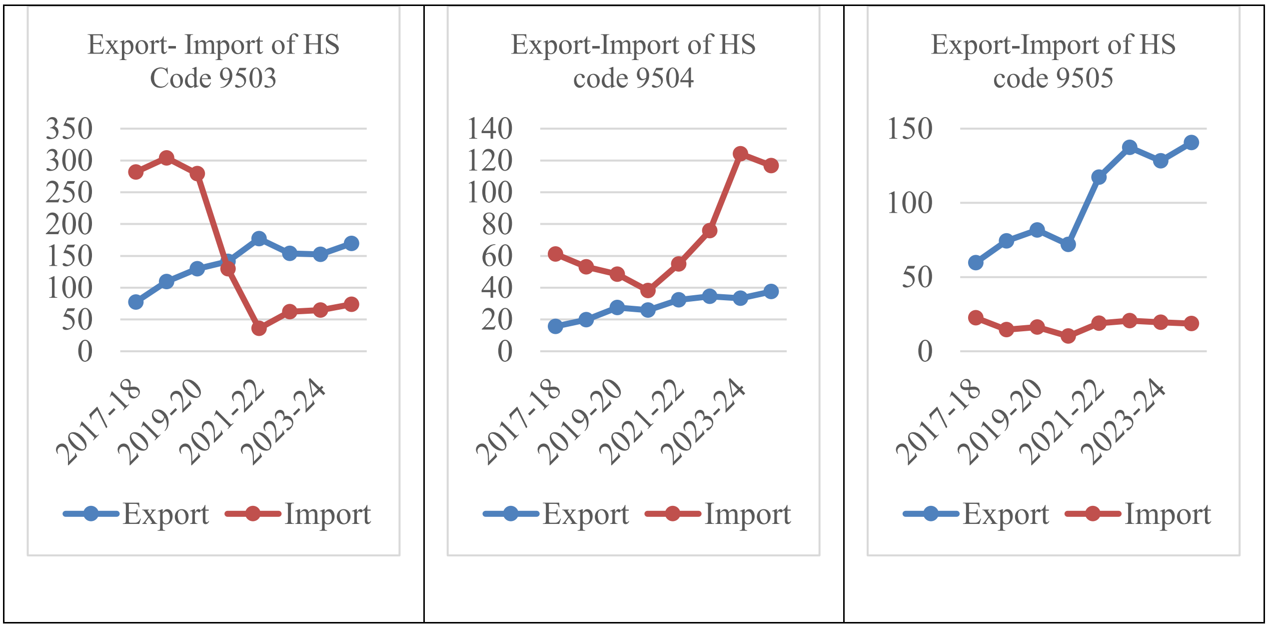

Figure 2: Export- Import of HS Code 9503, 9504 and 9505

(Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry)

Figure 2 reflects the export and imports of HS 9503, 9504 and 9505. It is observed that in the category of HS 9503 and 9505 that the exports trend has surpassed the imports of toys. This trend reflects the transition of India from import dependency to export surplus nation in toy sector.

However, with respect to HS 9504 the imports are significantly higher than the exports, although the export rise is visible. The 9504 category belongs to video games, consoles and Machines, Articles etc. China still maintains stronghold in technology sector and India lacks suitable manufacturing capabilities.

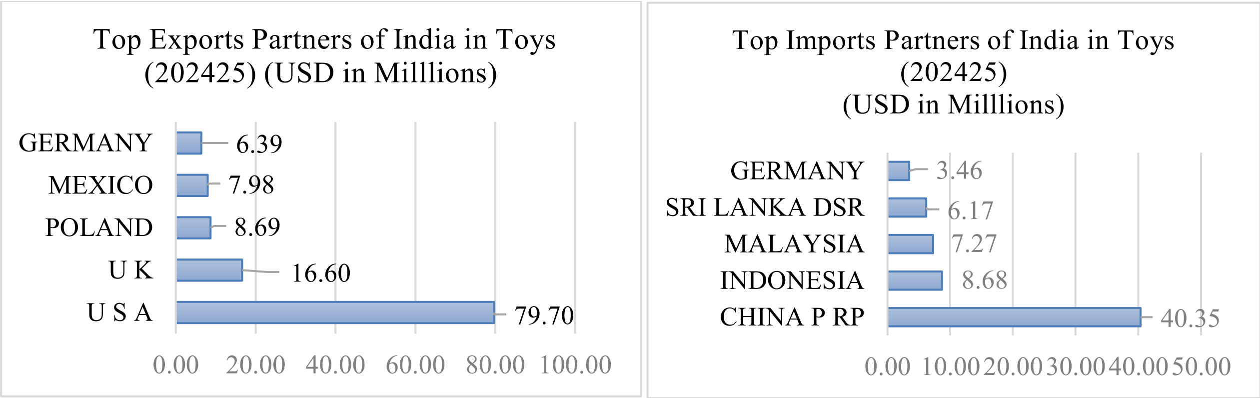

Figure 3: Top Trading Partners of India in Toy Sector

(Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry)

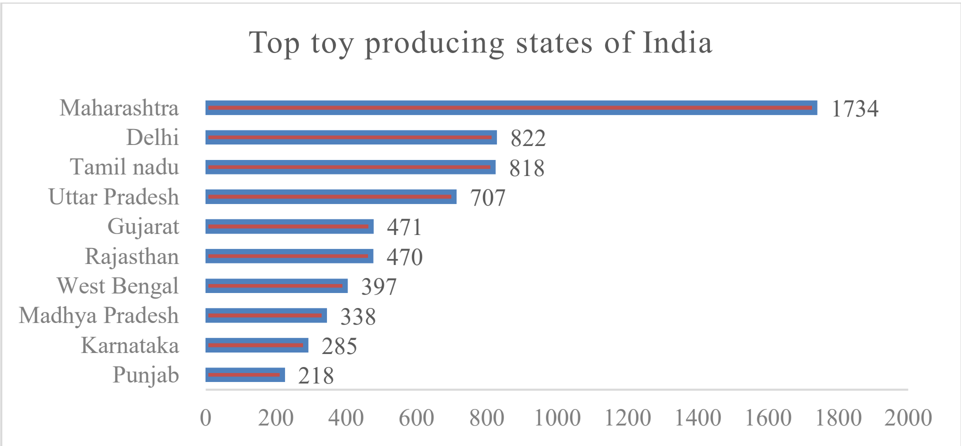

Figure 4: Top Toys producing states in India

(Source: Digital Sansad, Lok Sabha)

9. Policy Intervention

To encourage and support the toy industry of India the following key policy measures were introduced:

i. **Rise in Import Duties:** The Customs Duty imposed on toys was increased from 20% to 60% and subsequently raised to 70% in March 2023. This move is expected to encourage domestic manufacturing of toys and to reduce import dependency of foreign toys.

ii. **Stringent Quality Control for Toys:** To ensure safety of toys, government mandates ISI marks on toys for children under 14 years of age. Further to maintain quality standards of toys it is mandated for manufacturers, importers and distributes to have a license under BIS. This will ensure that safety and quality in toys production which is essential to build consumer trust and improve export competitiveness.

iii. **Creation of Toy Clusters:** Indian toy industry mainly operated in unorganized sector with more than 4,000 micro, small and medium enterprises. To boost indigenous toy production, regional toy clusters are established. The scheme like SFURTI (Scheme for the Regeneration of Traditional Industries) by the Ministry of MSME is introduced to support domestic toy industry.

iv. **Promotional Initiatives:** Events like the Indian Toy Fair and Toycathan are encouraged to promote innovation, startup culture and to provide opportunities to various stakeholders to conceptualize and develop the toy industry.

v. **Policy Initiatives:** The promote domestic manufacturing and support the employment, the “Make of India”, “Atman Nirbhar Bharat” and “vocal for local” are some of the initiatives in this direction.

vi. **School Curriculum:** under National Education Policy (2020), the toys are recognized as powerful tool for experiential and activity- based learning. Use of toys in learning helps to connect culture and traditional knowledge with education and helps in holistic development.

10. Opportunities of Toys Industry

For a very long time the Indian toy market was heavily dependent on imported toys which were mainly plastic based, and mass-produced. They were affordable however the toys did not connect well with Indian culture and value system. Recently with the several policy initiatives and intervention the toy industry is at the cusp of significant transformation.

i. **Rising Demand for Indigenous and Cultural Toys:** Indian parents today prefer indigenous and cultural toys rather than imported toys as they are made of ecofriendly material, safe and resonate with our culture and value system.

ii. **Strong push for “Make in India”:** Government has heavily focused on promotion “Make in India” and to make India a Global Toy Manufacturing hub. Import tariffs, Toy clusters and BIS certification are some steps in this direction to encourage domestic production.

iii. **Export Potential:** India’s toy export has grown significantly due to improvement of quality standards. Rising demand for traditional toys and the potential of e-commerce has further pushed the industry by leaps and bounds. People prefer handmade, curated and regional toys as it reflect the history and cultural legacy of the region. It can also be used as an item of home décor.

iv. **Digital and Smart Tools:** India is one of the largest consumers of digital media. Today’s toy market is not just limited to indigenous crafted toys, but it includes digital, and STEM based toys. The country has a strong IT talent and a manufacturing base which is essential to uplift the toy industry.

v. **Digital Boom:** With the rise in internet connectivity and digital upgradation the online gaming sector has shown a massive rise. The rise in Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comic Sector is rapidly changing the way people consume entertainment.

Conclusion

Indian toy makers are not just producers of playthings to entertain children, but they are custodian of our rich culture, tradition and heritage. It is very important that we preserve this age-old art from the verge of extinction. The indigenous toys inculcate many life skills and teach a child social and cultural value. The Indian folklore and the value system have been passed from generations through the power of storytelling and with the usage of toys.

With increasing government support, Indian toy manufacturers are now in a position to revive and showcase India's cultural legacy. Policy interventions have significantly contributed to this revival, leading to a decline in toy imports by 52% and a remarkable increase in exports by 239% during the period from FY 2014–15 to FY 2022–23.

By supporting these domestic toy manufacturers, we not only enrich children's lives, but we also support our artisans to preserve their legacy for generations to come. The revival of traditional art is not just to restore the past but to invest in vibrant future.

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IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON HARASSMENT: A STUDY OF CYBERBULLYING, ONLINE ABUSE, AND GENDER DYNAMICS

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Abstract

Gender-based sexual harassment (GBSH) remains a critical issue in workplaces across the globe, exacerbated by the rapid rise of social media platforms. The advent of digital communication has transformed the dynamics of professional environments, where boundaries between personal and professional lives often blur. This paper explores the impact of social media on GBSH in the workplace, investigating how digital platforms contribute to the perpetuation of harassment, and the mechanisms through which victims and perpetrators interact online. Social media provides new opportunities for harassment, such as through direct messaging, inappropriate comments, and public shaming, making it harder for victims to escape or report abuse. However, social media also serves as a double-edged sword by offering a space for solidarity, support, and advocacy, as seen in movements like #MeToo. The study examines the role of social media in either reinforcing or challenging traditional power dynamics in the workplace, focusing on the role of platforms in enabling or obstructing victim reporting and organizational accountability. Furthermore, it investigates the effectiveness of corporate policies and social media platforms in preventing and addressing GBSH. The findings suggest that while social media has amplified the visibility of gender-based harassment, it has also empowered employees to share their experiences and demand systemic change. However, challenges remain in terms of legal protections, policy enforcement, and the lack of adequate support systems for victims. This paper concludes with recommendations for improving workplace culture, promoting digital literacy, and strengthening both organizational policies and legal frameworks to confront GBSH in the age of social media.

Keywords: Gender-Based Sexual Harassment, Social Media, Workplace Culture, Digital Communication, #Metoo Movement.

Introduction

Social media platforms have revolutionized global communication, enabling individuals to interact, share information, and build communities across geographical boundaries. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), and Instagram have become integral to daily life. However, alongside these benefits, social media has created new avenues for harassment and abuse (1).

Online harassment encompasses a wide range of harmful behaviors, including cyberbullying, stalking, hate speech, and non-consensual sharing of intimate content. Unlike traditional forms of harassment, online abuse is amplified by the speed, reach, and anonymity of digital platforms. As a result, victims often face severe psychological distress, reputational damage, and social isolation.

This chapter examines the different forms of online harassment, their amplification through social media, gender dynamics, and strategies for prevention. It integrates empirical data and survey findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Forms of Online Harassment

Cyberbullying is one of the most prevalent forms of online harassment, particularly among youth. It involves repeated aggressive behavior conducted through digital platforms, such as sending threatening messages or spreading rumors. According to a study by the Cyberbullying Research Center, approximately 37% of youths aged 12 to 17 have experienced cyberbullying at some point (2). This highlights the widespread nature of the problem and its impact on younger populations.

Online harassment extends beyond bullying and includes behaviors such as stalking, threats, and persistent unwanted communication. Individuals may be targeted through repeated messages, exposure of personal information, or coordinated attacks. Such harassment often leads to emotional distress and fear for personal safety (3).

Revenge pornography, or non-consensual sharing of intimate images, has emerged as a serious issue in the digital age. Data from the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative indicates that approximately one in eight individuals in the United States have been victims of such abuse (4). This form of harassment disproportionately affects women and is often linked to intimate partner violence.

Online hate speech is another significant concern. It involves the use of derogatory language targeting individuals based on race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. Reports from the Anti-Defamation League indicate a steady rise in online hate speech incidents, reflecting broader societal tensions (5).

Swatting represents one of the most dangerous forms of online harassment. It involves making false emergency reports to law enforcement, leading to armed police responses at the victim’s location. Such incidents have resulted in serious injuries and even fatalities, underscoring the severe consequences of digital abuse (6).

Amplification of Harassment Through Social Media

Social media platforms play a critical role in amplifying harassment. One of the key factors is the ability to reach a wide audience instantly. Content shared online can go viral within minutes, exposing victims to large-scale public humiliation and abuse. According to Pew Research Center, approximately 67% of adults used social media as of 2019, illustrating the vast reach of these platforms (7).

Anonymity is another significant factor contributing to online harassment. Many platforms allow users to create anonymous or pseudonymous accounts, reducing accountability and encouraging abusive behavior. Research indicates that perceived anonymity increases the likelihood of cyberbullying and aggressive communication (8).

Algorithmic amplification further exacerbates the problem. Social media algorithms prioritize engaging content, which often includes controversial or provocative material. This creates echo chambers where harmful content is reinforced and normalized. Group dynamics within these spaces can lead to coordinated harassment campaigns, often referred to as "online mobs."

The permanence of digital content also contributes to the severity of harassment. Unlike offline interactions, online content can be stored, shared, and revisited indefinitely, prolonging the impact on victims. This persistence can lead to long-term psychological effects, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (3).

Types of Technology-Based Harassment

Technology-based harassment manifests in various forms, each with distinct characteristics. Unwelcome advances and comments involve sending unsolicited messages, often of a sexual or offensive nature. These behaviors can create hostile online environments and contribute to emotional distress.

Image-based abuse, commonly known as revenge porn, involves sharing intimate images without consent. This form of harassment has severe consequences, including reputational damage, social stigma, and psychological trauma.

Relational pursuit and stalking involve continuous monitoring of an individual's online activities. Perpetrators may track victims' locations, interactions, and personal information, leading to a loss of privacy and security.

Explicit threats and abusive communications involve direct messages intended to intimidate or harm victims. These threats can escalate into real-world violence, highlighting the need for effective intervention strategies (6).

Gender Dynamics in Online Harassment

Gender plays a significant role in the experience of online harassment. Research indicates that women are more likely to be victims of severe forms of harassment, including sexual abuse, stalking, and threats. A study by Pew Research Center found that 33% of women under the age of 35 have experienced sexual harassment online, compared to 11% of men (7).

Women of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable due to intersecting forms of discrimination. These groups often face targeted hate speech and coordinated harassment campaigns, reflecting broader societal inequalities (5).

In terms of behavior, studies suggest that girls are more likely to engage in relational aggression, such as spreading rumors, while boys are more likely to engage in direct threats and offensive communication. These differences are influenced by cultural norms and gender expectations (8).

In workplace contexts, particularly in male-dominated industries such as technology, gender dynamics further influence harassment patterns. Women in these environments often face discrimination, exclusion, and harassment, exacerbated by power imbalances and lack of representation. This creates barriers to reporting and addressing harassment effectively (9).

Psychological and Social Impact

The impact of online harassment extends beyond immediate emotional distress. Victims often experience long-term psychological effects, including anxiety, depression, and reduced self-esteem. In severe cases, harassment can lead to suicidal ideation and self-harm (3).

Socially, victims may withdraw from online and offline interactions, leading to isolation and reduced participation in public discourse. This has broader implications for democratic engagement and freedom of expression.

Online harassment also affects communities by fostering environments of fear and hostility. This can discourage individuals from expressing their opinions, particularly those from marginalized groups, thereby limiting diversity and inclusivity in digital spaces.

Strategies for Prevention and Mitigation

Addressing online harassment requires a multi-faceted approach involving legal, technological, and social interventions. Employers and technology providers play a crucial role in creating safe online environments. Social media platforms must implement robust content moderation systems and enforce community guidelines effectively (10).

Policy interventions are also essential. Governments must enact and enforce laws that address cybercrime, including harassment, stalking, and non-consensual image sharing. Legal frameworks should balance the need for accountability with the protection of freedom of expression.

Support systems for victims are equally important. Counseling services, legal assistance, and online reporting mechanisms can help victims cope with the impact of harassment and seek justice.

Education and awareness programs can also play a significant role in preventing harassment. By promoting digital literacy and responsible online behavior, individuals can contribute to creating safer online communities.

Conclusion

The rise of social media has significantly transformed the nature and scope of harassment, creating new challenges for individuals, organizations, and society. While digital platforms offer numerous benefits, they also facilitate harmful behaviors that can have severe consequences for victims.

Empirical data and research highlight the widespread prevalence of online harassment and its disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that combines legal measures, technological solutions, and social awareness.

Future research should focus on developing more effective strategies for detecting and preventing harassment, as well as understanding the long-term impact of digital abuse. By fostering collaboration among stakeholders, it is possible to create safer and more inclusive online environments.

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संस्थागत सुधारो में अप्रत्यक्ष करो के रूप में परिवर्तन का अध्ययन

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सारांश

संस्थागत सुधार राज्य संस्थानों की समीक्षा और पुनर्गठन की एक ऐसी प्रकिया है, जिसमे वे मानव अधिकारों का सम्मान करें, और कानूनों के शासन को संरक्षित करते हुए अपने घटकों के प्रति जबाबदेह हो| हमारे देश में अप्रत्यक्ष कर प्रणाली प्राचीन समय से लागु है, जिसमे पूर्व में विक्रय कर अधिनियम 1956 के प्रावधान अनुसार कर लगाया जाता था| उस प्रणाली में सुधार करते हुए वैट प्रणाली 2000 में लागु की गई| जिसमें राज्यों द्वारा अलग-अलग दर से वस्तु पर कर लगाया जाता था, साथ ही राज्यों द्वारा अनेक प्रकार के कर जिसमें प्रवेशशुल्क, मनोरंजनकर, केंद्रीयविक्रयकर, आमोद एवं प्रमोद कर विज्ञापन कर तथा विलासिताकर,आदि लगाया जाता था| इसके अतिरिक्त केंद्र सरकार द्वारा केंद्रीय उत्पादन शुल्क एवं सेवा कर वसूल किया था| जिससे दोहरा करारोपण भी हो जाता था| एक ही प्रकार की वस्तु पर अलग-अलग राज्यों में कर की दर अलग-अलग होने से वस्तु के मूल्य में बहुत अंतर पाया जाता था, साथ ही ऐसी कंपनियां जिनका अनेक राज्यों में अपना व्यवसाय होता था, उन्हें हिसाबात रखने में भी बहुत कठिनाई होती थी| इस प्रकार पुरानी अप्रत्यक्ष कर प्रणाली के दोषों को दूर करते हुए एवं समस्त करों को समाप्त करते हुए कर प्रणाली में सुधार करते हुए संपूर्ण देश में एक देश, एक कर एवं एक बाजार की अवधारणा को ध्यान रखते हुए 1जुलाई 2017 से नई कर प्रणाली जी.एस.टी को लागू किया गया| इस पेपर में अप्रत्यक्ष कर की पूर्व कर प्रणाली एवं वर्तमान में लागू नई कर प्रणाली का तुलनात्मक अध्ययन किया गया है |साथ ही नई कर प्रणाली से किस प्रकार राजस्व वृद्धि हुई है| इसका भी अध्ययन शामिल है|

कीवर्ड: संस्थागत सुधार, अप्रत्यक्ष कर, जी. एस. टी

प्रस्तावना

वस्तु एवं सेवा कर (जीएसटी) सबसे अधिक योगदान देने वाले अप्रत्यक्ष कराधान सुधारों में से एक है। वित्त पोषण का एकमात्र साधन सार्वजनिक वस्तुओं पर कर है क्योंकि बाजार में उनकी उचित कीमत नहीं हो सकती है। वे केवल सरकारों द्वारा प्रदान किए जा सकते हैं, जीएसटी की अवधारणा जो कि सामान और सेवाएं है, एक कनाडाई मूल्य वर्धित कर है जो अधिकांश घरेलू खपत पर लगाया जाता है। कर सरकार को राजस्व प्रदान करने के लिए लगाया जाता है। जीएसटी उपभोक्ताओं के द्वारा सहायता है, लेकिन यह वस्तुओं और सेवाओं को बेचने वाले व्यवसायों द्वारा लगाया जाता है और सरकार को प्रेषित किया जाता है।1जुलाई 2017 को देश में जीएसटी लागू कर दिया ।यह "एक देश एक कर" के सिद्धांत पर आधारित है| जीएसटी एक गंतव्य आधारित कर है| जिसमें निर्माण से लेकर वस्तु के उपभोक्ता सभी स्तरों पर लगाया जाता है,और इसका भार अंतिम उपभोक्ता पर पड़ता है| माल एवं सेवा कर में सबसे मुख्य आगत कर छूट का प्रावधान है,जिसे GST की रीड कहा जाता है| दोहरी जीएसटी, कंपोजीशन की सुविधा. रिवर्स चार्ज तंत्र अन्य विशेषता है। जीएसटी जम्मू कश्मीर सहित पूरे भारत में लागू है। वर्तमान में जीएसटी की दरें 5% 12% 18% एवं 28% हैं। भारत में मूल रूप से जीएसटी के दो रूप हैं| केंद्रीय माल और सेवा

कर (सीजीएसटी) और राज्य माल और सेवा कर (एसजीएसटी) अंतरराज्यीय लेनदेन के मामले में, एकीकृत वस्तु एवं सेवा कर (आईजीएसटी) लगाया जाता है। ने इस नए कर व्यवस्था को तीन श्रेणियों में विभाजित करके, इसे लागू करने का एक नियम तैयार किया है।

जी एस टी में 3 प्रकार के टैक्स हैं

सीजीएसटी: जहां केंद्र सरकार द्वारा राजस्व एकत्र किया जाएगा

एसजीएसटी: राज्य में बिक्री के लिए राज्य सरकारों द्वारा राजस्व एकत्र किया जाएगा

आईजीएसटी: जहां अंतरराज्यीय बिक्री के लिए केंद्र सरकार द्वारा राजस्व एकत्र किया जाएगा

साहित्य की समीक्षा

डॉ. रूपा खन्ना "भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था पर जीएसटी प्रभाव का विश्लेषण कार्यान्वयन इसके 5 वर्षों के बाद" '(2022) मल्होत्रा द्वारा बताया गया, कि कराधान देश की रीढ़ है| एवं कराधान के बिना सरकारी तंत्र काम नहीं कर सकता है| पेपर में उन्होंने जीएसटी लागू होने के पश्चात का के 4 वर्षों में हुए परिवर्तनों पर प्रकाश डाला है| तथा यह निष्कर्ष बताया है, कि जीएसटी पश्चात अप्रत्यक्ष करों में अत्यधिक वृद्धि हुई है| साथ ही जीडीपी में वृद्धि हुई है|

मिस प्रिया "जीएसटी के तहत इनपुट टैक्स क्रेडिट (आईटीसी) पर एक अध्ययन" (2022) द्वारा अपने इस पेपर में इनपुट टैक्स क्रेडिट के बारे में बताया है, कि यह संरचना का आधार है| उत्पादों एवं की सेवा एवं बिक्री के लिए अप्रत्यक्ष कर देयता को समायोजित करने के लिए उपयोग किया जाता है|

गौतम रामकुमार, एस चित्रा" भारत के आर्थिक विकास में वस्तु एवं सेवा कर की भूमिका" यह पूछताछ इस बात पर विचार करने की कोशिश करती है, कि क्या माल और प्रशासन शुल्क और वित्तीय विकास के बीच कोई संबंध

आर. मोहन कुमार भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था पर वस्तु एवं सेवा कर का प्रभाव 2019 माल और सेवा कर एक व्यापक, बहुस्तरीय, गंतव्य-आधारित कर हो सकता है यह पेपर माल और सेवा कर (जीएसटी) की धारणा और विचारों और इसकी शुरूआत के विवेकपूर्ण अध्ययन के लिए है। अध्ययन का अतिरिक्त उद्देश्य भारत में इसके किनारों और भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था पर प्रभाव को समझना है।

उद्देश्य

- संस्थागत सुधारो में अप्रत्यक्ष करो के रूप में नई जीएसटी व्यवस्था और पुरानी अप्रत्यक्ष कर व्यवस्था का तुलनात्मक विशलेषण
- नई जीएसटी व्यवस्था और पुरानी अप्रत्यक्ष व्यवस्था के कर संग्रह का विश्लेषण।
- जीएसटी के कार्यान्वयन के बाद मैक्रोकॉस्मिक विश्लेषण।

अनुसंधान क्रियाविधि

यह वर्णनात्मक एवं अन्वेषणात्मक अध्ययन है। अध्ययन में द्वितीयक स्रोतों से आंकड़ो का संग्रहण कर समाधान प्रस्तुत किया गया है। उपरोक्त शोध संस्थागत सुधारो में अप्रत्यक्ष करो के रूप में परिवर्तन का अध्ययन में द्वितीयक आंकड़ो के रूप में शोधपत्र पत्रिकाएँ, न्यूज़रिपोर्ट,जीएसटीविभाग की वेबसाइट,जीएसटी विभाग का वार्षिक प्रतिवेदन, मध्यप्रदेश साइबर ट्रेजरी से प्राप्त आंकड़ो का प्रयोग कर रहे हैं|

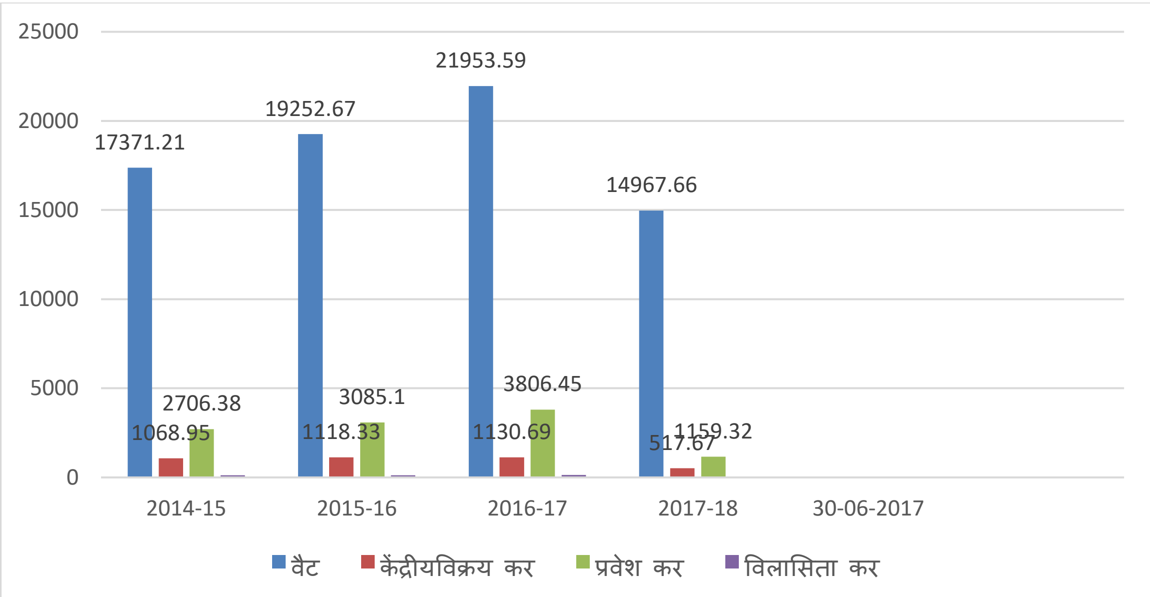
आंकड़ो का वर्गीकरण एवं विश्लेषण

तालिका क्रमांक 1

मध्य प्रदेश राज्य में पुरानी अप्रत्यक्ष कर प्रणाली के आंकड़ो का वर्गीकरण राजस्व संग्रह (करोड़ में)

वर्ष	वैट	केंद्रीयविक्रय कर	प्रवेश कर	विलासिता कर	कुल राशी
2014-15	17371.21	1068.95	2706.38	112.35	21258.89
2015-16	19252.67	1118.33	3085.1	121.35	23577.45
2016-17	21953.59	1130.69	3806.45	134.05	27024.78
2017-18	14967.66	517.67	1159.32	46.41	16756.74

उपरोक्त सारणी में वर्ष 2014-15 से 30 जून 2017 तक पुरानी अप्रत्यक्ष कर प्रणाली से प्राप्त कर संग्रह की राशियाँ प्रदर्शित है जिसमे विभिन प्रकार के अप्रत्यक्ष करों से प्राप्त राशियों में निरंतर वृद्धि हुई है। एवं कुल राशि में भी वृद्धि प्रदर्शित हो रही है।

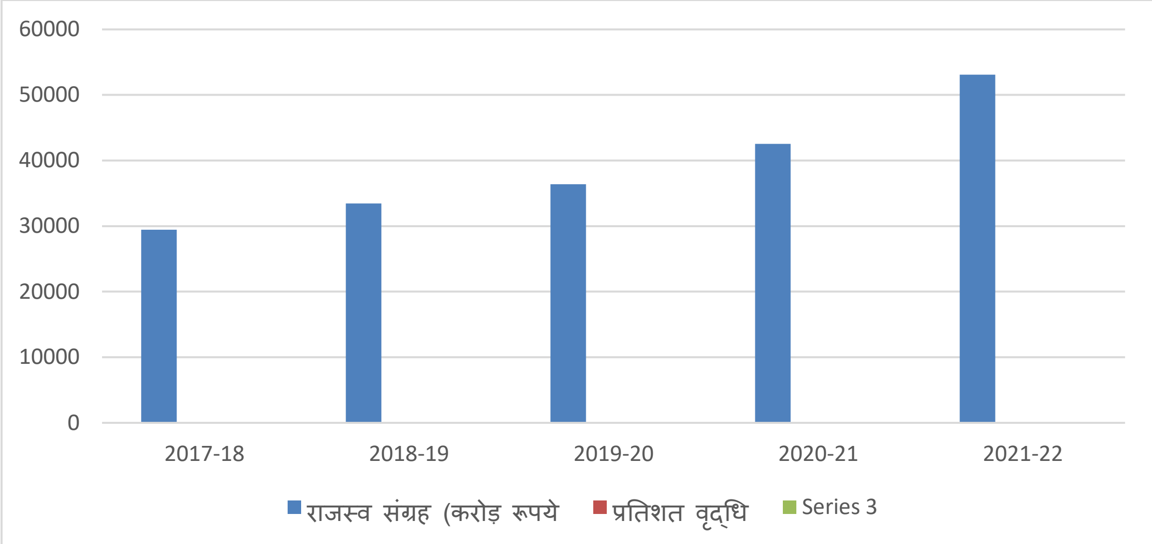


आलेख 1: मध्य प्रदेश राज्य में पुरानी अप्रत्यक्ष कर प्रणाली के आंकड़ो का वर्गीकरण राजस्व संग्रह

तालिका क्रमांक 2: मध्य प्रदेश राज्य में नई अप्रत्यक्ष कर प्रणाली जीएसटी लागु होने के बाद के आंकड़ो का वर्गीकरण राजस्व संग्रह (करोड़ रूपये)

वर्ष	**राजस्व संग्रह (करोड़ रूपये**	**प्रतिशत वृद्धि**
2017-18	29426.74	
2018-19	33476.22	13.76
2019-20	36391.53	8.70
2020-21	42558.91	14.49
2021-22	53113.33	24.79

उपरोक्त सारणी में वर्ष 2017-18 से 2021-22 तक राजस्व संग्रह के आंकड़े प्रदर्शित किये गए है। जीएसटी विभाग का वार्षिक प्रतिवेदन से प्राप्त आकड़ो को देखने पर पता चलता है, कि वर्ष 2019-20 में, महामारी के दौरान जीएसटी संग्रह में गिरावट आई थी। लेकिन उसके बाद राजस्व संग्रह में निरंतर वृद्धि हो रही है।



आलेख 2: मध्य प्रदेश राज्य में नई अप्रत्यक्ष कर प्रणाली जीएसटी लागु होने के बाद के आंकड़ो का वर्गीकरण

राजस्व संग्रह

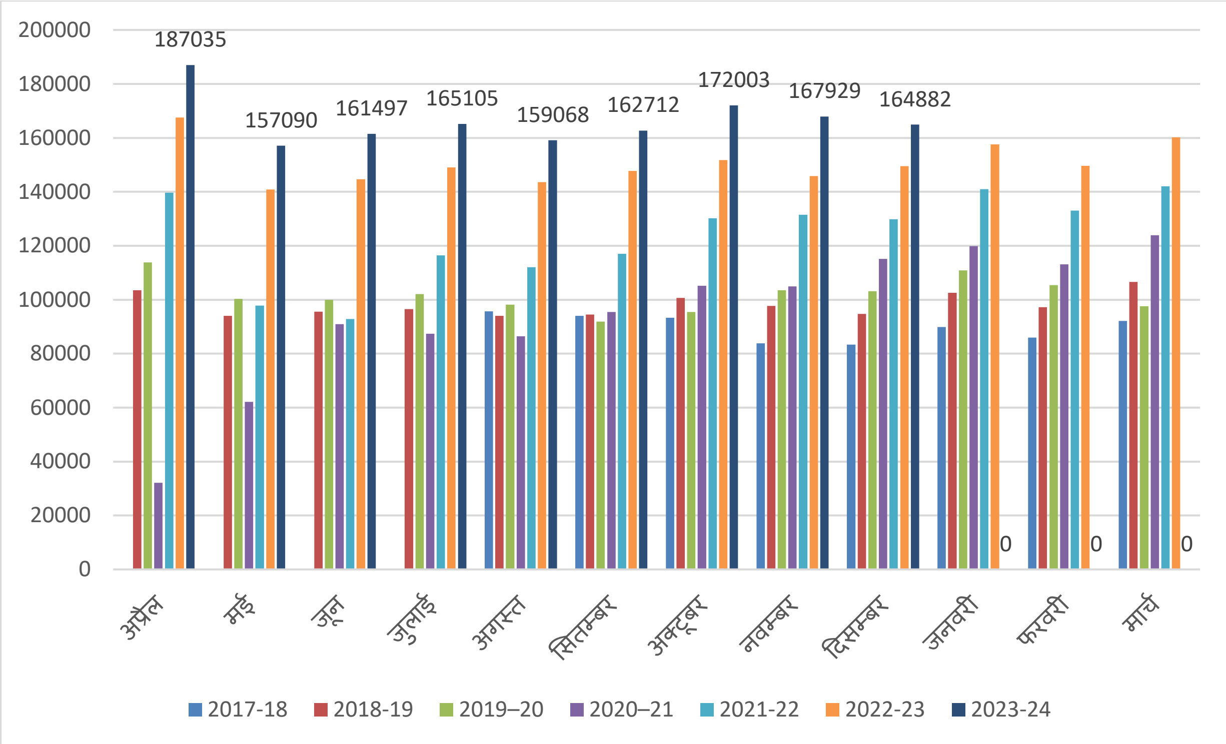
नई अप्रत्यक्ष कर प्रणाली जीएसटी लागु होने के बाद देश में राजस्व संग्रहण संबंधी आंकड़ों का वर्गीकरण एवं विश्लेषण (करोड़ रूपये)

वर्ष 2017-18 से 2022-23 तक मासिक राजस्व संग्रह(करोड़ में)

माह	2017-18	2018-19	2019–20	2020–21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
अप्रैल		103459	113865	32172	139708	167540	187035
मई		94016	100289	62151	97821	140885	157090
जून		95610	99939	90917	92800	144616	161497
जुलाई		96483	102083	87422	116393	148995	165105
अगस्त	95633	93960	98202	86449	112020	143612	159068
सितम्बर	94064	94442	91916	95480	117010	147686	162712
अक्टूबर	93333	100710	95379	105155	130127	151718	172003
नवम्बर	83780	97637	103491	104963	131526	145867	167929
दिसम्बर	83314	94726	103184	115174	129780	149507	164882
जनवरी	89825	102503	110818	119875	140986	157554	--
फरवरी	85962	97247	105361	113143	133026	149577	--
मार्च	92167	106577	97590	123902	142095	160122	--
कुल राजस्व	**719078**	**1177370**	**1222117**	**1136803**	**1483292**	**1807679**	**1497321**

सारणी में वर्ष 2017-18 से 2022-23 तक मासिक राजस्व संग्रह के आंकड़े प्रदर्शित किये गए है। आंकड़ो से ज्ञात होता है, कि वर्ष 2020-21 में, महामारी के दौरान जीएसटी संग्रह में गिरावट आई थी। लेकिन उसके बाद हमेशा के लिए उच्चतम जीएसटी संग्रहित हुआ है वर्ष 2023-24 (9 माह) रु1497321 का संग्रह वर्ष 2019-20 के वर्ष भर के संग्रह से 2.75 लाख

करोड़ रूपये अधिक है। माह अप्रेल 2020 में जहाँ कुल राजस्व रु 32172 करोड़ था। वह अप्रेल 2023 में कुल राजस्व रु 187035 करोड़ का संग्रह हुआ है। महामारी के दौरान अप्रेल 2020 जीएसटी संग्रह में गिरावट आई थी। अप्रेल 2020 के बाद वाले महीनो में कर के संग्रह में निरंतर बढोतरी हुई है । अप्रैल 2023 के महीने में एकत्रित सकल जीएसटी राजस्व 187035 करोड़ के रिकॉर्ड पर है



आलेख 3: नई अप्रत्यक्ष कर प्रणाली जीएसटी लागु होने के बाद देश में राजस्व संग्रहण संबंधी आंकड़ों का वर्गीकरण

निष्कर्ष

वस्तु एवं सेवा कर 1991 के बाद भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था में एक बड़ी क्रांति है। सरकार ने जीएसटी के सुचारू कार्यान्वयन के लिए व्यापक कुछ कदम उठाए है। जीएसटी से कामकाज में पारदर्शिता आई कर का भुगतान, इनपुट क्रेडिट का दावा, उपभोक्ता को लाभ देना आदि। जीएसटी नेटवर्क ऐसा ऑनलाइन प्लेटफ़ॉर्म है,जो पूरी मशीनरी को सुचारू रूप से संचालित करता है। जीएसटी परिषद ने समय-समय पर और अधिक के लिए संशोधन भी प्रकाशित किये। वे वस्तुएँ जिनसे उपभोक्ताओं को लाभ हुआ। बी 2 बी मामले में अनुपालन बोझ भी कम हो गया है। हालाँकि कुल मिलाकर जीएसटी संग्रह में वित्तीय वर्ष 2019-20 से वृद्धि हुई है। करों के संग्रह, राज्य और केंद्र के बीच बंटवारे आदि के मामले में, जीएसटी का अर्थव्यवस्था पर प्रभाव पूरी तरह से देखने को मिलता है। इसके लागू होने के बाद एकीकृत कर प्रणाली भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था का एक महत्वपूर्ण पहलू बन गई। अनेक उत्पाद नई जीएसटी व्यवस्था में कुछ उत्पाद सस्ते होने के साथ-साथ महंगे भी हो गए हैं। लेकिन कुल मिलाकर अप्रत्यक्ष कर वित्तीय वर्ष 2020-2021 के दौरान महामारी के बावजूद संग्रह में वृद्धि हुई। अर्थव्यवस्था दुनिया की सबसे गतिशील अर्थव्यवस्था है। नये जीएसटी परिशोधन के बाद कुल मिलाकर बदलाव की उम्मीद है। जीडीपी अनुपात, राजकोषीय विकास, बुनियादी ढांचे, व्यापार प्रक्रिया के संदर्भ में आर्थिक परिदृश्य में सुधार हो रहा है।

जीएसटी लागू होने के बाद राज्यों की क्षमता, लॉजिस्टिक आदि पर समग्र रूप से सकारात्मक प्रभाव पड़ा है। जीएसटी से राजस्व दक्षता में सुधार हुआ। कर का कुल व्यय संग्रह कम हो गया। जीएसटी के अंतर्गत करों की संख्या शामिल होने के कारण जीएसटी का कार्यान्वयनअनुपालन बोझ, भुगतान, आईटीसी की वापसी आदि के मामले में व्यवसायिक प्रक्रिया अधिक आसान बन जाती है। जीएसटी मेक इन इंडिया में भी सहायक है।

संदर्भ सूची

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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) have emerged as a critical global priority, grounded in neuroscientific evidence that the first eight years of life represent a unique window for brain development and lifelong learning. This chapter examines the theoretical perspectives that underpin contemporary early childhood practices worldwide, with particular attention to their application in diverse cultural contexts. Beginning with an overview of the global significance of early childhood, the chapter analyses the current status of ECCE in India as a case study. The core of the chapter explores six foundational theories maturational, psychodynamic, behavioural, cognitive-developmental, multiple intelligences, and sociocultural each illustrated with practical classroom examples. The chapter concludes by arguing that effective early childhood programmes require thoughtful integration of diverse theoretical perspectives adapted to local cultural realities.

Keywords: Early Childhood Care and Education, Developmental Theories, Curriculum Development, Sociocultural Context, Global Perspectives, Indian ECCE.

Introduction: The Global Imperative for Early Childhood Care and Education

The first 2 to 8 years of a child's life are globally acknowledged to be the most critical years for lifelong development. Recent research in neuroscience has provided convincing evidence for the existence of 'critical periods' specific windows during which the brain's synaptic connections are formed most efficiently. During these early years, the brain produces more than one million neural connections per second, a rate never repeated in the human lifespan (Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2023).

Research has demonstrated that if these early years are not supported by a stimulating and enriching environment, the chances of the child's brain developing to its full potential are considerably, and often irreversibly, reduced. The case of Romanian orphans adopted into Western families during the 1990s provides heartbreaking confirmation: children who spent their earliest years in severely deprived institutional settings showed persistent developmental delays and reduced brain activity despite subsequent enriched environments (Nelson *et al.,* 2007).

This early stage is equally important as a foundation for the inculcation of social values and personal habits that last a lifetime. What follows is the crucial importance of investing in these early years not only the right of every child but also a determinant of the quality of human capital available to any nation.

Real Life Example: The Perry Preschool Project

The High Scope Perry Preschool Project followed 123 African American children from low-income families from 1962 to the present day. Those who received high-quality preschool programming had higher earnings at age 40, were more likely to hold a job, had committed fewer crimes, and were more likely to have graduated from high school. Every dollar invested returned approximately $7–$16 to society (Schweinhart *et al.,* 2005).

Current Status of Early Childhood Education in India: A Case Study

Constitutional and Policy Framework

The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, made free and compulsory education a fundamental right for children aged 6 –14 years. However, it effectively released the State from its obligation to provide care and education for children below 6 years, creating what advocates term a "constitutional gap."

The National Education Policy 2020 has significantly elevated the status of ECCE, recognising the "Foundational Stage" (ages 3–8) as crucial and calling for universal access to quality early childhood education by 2030.

Programmatic Interventions

The primary public sector programme is the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** , launched in 1975. ICDS offers six services: supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health check-ups, referral services, nutrition and health education for women, and non-formal preschool education. Despite its reach over 1.4 million centres serving approximately 80 million children significant quality concerns persist.

Quantitative Assessment

The public sector covers only 22 per cent of children in the age group 0–6 years. The private sector is estimated to be possibly as large as the public sector, serving another 20–25 per cent of children. The small NGO sector offers innovative models but reaches less than 5 per cent of children.

The Role of Theory in Early Childhood Practice

Curriculum and programme development are influenced by social, economic, and political forces. However, more direct influences are developmental and learning theories. The developmental theory from which a curriculum originates may be explicit or implicit. A quality curriculum should describe the linkage between practices and theory, showing the relationship between what a teacher does and why.

Why Theory Matters for Practice

Consider this scenario: Two four-year-olds fight over a tricycle. One pushes the other. How the teacher responds depends on their theoretical orientation:

- A **maturational** teacher might think, "They're not ready to share; I'll redirect them."
- A **behaviorist** teacher might say, "When you push, you lose the tricycle."
- A **psychodynamic** teacher might focus on the crying child's feelings.
- A **Piagetian** teacher might help children negotiate a solution.
- A **Vygotskian** teacher might scaffold turn-taking with a timer.

Understanding theory helps teachers make intentional, rather than reactive, choices.

Foundational Theories of Development and Learning

Maturational Theory

Key Figures: G. Stanley Hall, Robert Havighurst, Arnold Gesell

Core Ideas:

- Development is determined primarily by genetic endowment
- Children develop according to internal maturational schedules
- "Readiness" is essential children should not be pushed before biologically prepared

Practical Application: Mixed-age grouping respects individual timetables; waiting for signs of readiness before introducing formal skills.

Real Life Example: Waiting for Readiness

In a Gesell-inspired classroom, five-year-old Marcus struggles with pencil grip. His teacher assures parents: "Marcus simply needs more time. His fine motor system will mature at its own pace." She provides large crayons and clay to develop hand strength through play. By age six, Marcus writes comfortably not from drilling, but because his neuromotor system matured.

Psychodynamic Theory

Key Figures: Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson

Core Ideas:

- Subconscious forces (id, ego, superego) influence behaviour
- Emotional well-being and relationships are fundamental
- Erikson's psychosocial stages: Trust vs. Mistrust (0–1), Autonomy vs. Shame (2–3), Initiative vs. Guilt (3–6)

Practical Application: Primary caregiving systems, continuity of care, creating safe spaces for emotional expression.

Real Life Example: The Child Who Bites

Two-year-old Meera bites other children after her baby brother's birth. Rather than punishing, psychodynamic teachers ensure Meera gets extra lap time, acknowledge her feelings ("It's hard when the baby gets so much attention"), and teach feeling words. The biting diminishes as her emotional needs are addressed.

Behavioural Theory

Key Figures: John Watson, B.F. Skinner, Albert Bandura

Core Ideas:

- Behaviour is shaped by environmental consequences
- Classical conditioning: associations between stimuli
- Operant conditioning: reinforcement and punishment
- Social learning: observation, imitation, modelling

Practical Application: Positive reinforcement, clear expectations, consistent consequences, adult modelling.

Real Life Example: The Power of Modelling

A Delhi preschool teacher notices children throwing rubbish on the floor. She models picking up rubbish, offers specific praise when children use the bin, and calmly guides those who forget. Within two weeks, most children consistently use the bin.

Cognitive-Developmental Theory

Key Figure: Jean Piaget

Core Ideas:

- Children construct knowledge through active exploration
- Assimilation: fitting new information into existing mental schemes
- Accommodation: changing mental schemes to fit new information
- Stages: Sensorimotor (0–2), Preoperational (2–7), Concrete Operational (7–11)

Practical Application: Hands-on materials, discovery learning, learning centres, teachers as facilitators.

Real Life Example: The Water Table

Four-year-old Anjali pours water from cup to container for 20 minutes, watching it overflows. Her teacher observes but does not intervene. Anjali is constructing her own understanding of volume through hands-on experimentation foundation for later operational thinking.

Multiple Intelligences Theory

Key Figure: Howard Gardner

Core Ideas:

- Intelligence is not unitary but comprises multiple capacities
- Eight intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic
- Children differ in strength of intelligences; culture influences expression

Practical Application: Diverse learning opportunities, broad assessment, identifying varied strengths.

Real Life Example: Ravi's Intelligence

Five-year-old Ravi struggles with letters but excels in climbing (bodily-kinaesthetic), clapping complex rhythms (musical), and comforting upset peers (interpersonal). His teacher builds on strengths introducing letter recognition through movement and songs and Ravi's confidence grows.

Sociocultural Theory

Key Figure: Lev Vygotsky

Core Ideas:

- Development is influenced by society and culture
- Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): tasks child can do with assistance
- Scaffolding: temporary support gradually withdrawn
- Play creates its own ZPD and is a major source of development
- Language is primary tool for thinking

Practical Application: Social interaction, intentional teaching, peer collaboration, extended dramatic play.

Real Life Example: Scaffolding in the Block Area

Three-year-old Aarav's tower keeps falling. His teacher assesses he can stack blocks but hasn't discovered stable base principles. She suggests within his ZPD: "I wonder what would happen if you used bigger blocks at the bottom." Aarav applies this hint, successfully builds, and later teaches the principle to a younger child.

Real Life Example: Play as Development

In a Mumbai preschool, children transform the playhouse into a "railway station." They create complex rules, use language to negotiate, think abstractly (block as ticket), and regulate behaviour according to social rules—all operating at the upper edge of their ZPD.

Integrating Theoretical Perspectives

Most early childhood programmes draw on multiple perspectives:

Theory	**Key Contribution**
Maturational	Respect individual timelines; avoid inappropriate pressure
Psychodynamic	Emotional well-being; importance of relationships
Behavioural	Practical tools for shaping behaviour
Cognitive-developmental	Children construct knowledge through active exploration
Multiple intelligences	Honour diverse strengths; expand view of ability
Sociocultural	Social interaction, culture, and play are central

The challenge is not choosing one "correct" theory but understanding contributions of each and applying thoughtfully based on context and individual children.

Cultural Considerations: Adapting Western Theories for Indian Contexts

Indian children develop within joint families, multilingual environments, and diverse traditions that differ from Western contexts where most theories were developed.

Key Considerations

Individualism vs. Collectivism: Western theories emphasise autonomy; Indian contexts may value interdependence and family loyalty equally or more.

Multilingual Development: Indian children typically develop in multilingual environments, yet most theories assume monolingual development.

Play and Learning: Traditional Indian approaches often emphasise memorisation and respect for the teacher. Western play-based approaches must be adapted, not transplanted.

Real Life Example: Adapting Vygotsky in Rural Rajasthan

A rural Rajasthan preschool serving pastoralist communities initially struggled with imported play-based curriculum. Children were confused; parents questioned why teachers weren't "teaching." Coordinators adapted:

- Dramatic play themes drew on local experiences—herding goats, preparing traditional foods
- Teachers took more directive roles initially, respecting cultural expectations
- Grandparents shared traditional songs and stories
- Children's home language (Wagdi) was valued alongside Hindi

The adapted approach succeeded with increased engagement and parent satisfaction.

Implications for Teacher Preparation

The quality of early childhood programmes depends fundamentally on teacher quality. Critical issues include:

- Low status and pay for ECCE teachers
- Poor state of training programmes
- Lack of uniform certification
- Vast backlog of untrained teachers

What Teachers Need:

- Theoretical knowledge and its implications
- Observation skills
- Cultural competence
- Reflective practice
- Family collaboration
- Play pedagogy

Real Life Example: Transforming Practice

An anganwadi worker in Karnataka used worksheets daily; children were passive. After training in Vygotskian concepts, she began observing children's ZPD, introduced dramatic play, and modelled play initially. Within months, attendance improved, children were actively engaged, and parents noticed positive changes.

Conclusion

First, the early years are globally recognised as critical for lifelong development. Neuroscientific evidence is compelling: early experiences shape brain architecture. Investing in these years is both moral imperative and economic necessity.

Second, despite this recognition, quality ECCE remains inaccessible to most children, particularly in developing countries like India. The public sector reaches only a fraction; the private sector is largely unregulated.

Third, developmental theories provide essential frameworks for understanding children and designing effective programmes. No single theory suffices; thoughtful integration of multiple perspectives, adapted to local cultural contexts, is necessary.

Fourth, teacher quality is the single most important factor in programme quality. Investment in teacher preparation, compensation, and ongoing professional development is essential.

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A STUDY ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN DIGITAL MARKETING

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Abstract

In today's developing countries, globalization and technological changes has given a different phase to the economy, whereby the society are collectively facing the concern of the competition in various sectors, which also includes the marketing system. In the global economy, technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) play a vital role due to which the importance of AI has a continual growth universally. It is generally said that Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are being used in marketing to make automated judgements based on data gathering, data analysis, and further observations of audience or economic trends that may have an impact on marketing activities. AI is a branch of computer science that trains computers to understand and mimic human behaviour and communication. A new intelligent computer that thinks, reacts, and completes tasks in a similar manner to people has been developed using AI and the data provided. Artificial intelligence (AI) is capable of doing highly technical and specialised tasks like robotics, audio and image recognition, natural language processing, problem solving, etc. AI is altering how businesses and customers communicate with one another. The type of business and the website's functionality have a big impact on how this technology is used. By carefully analyzing customer data and understanding what consumers really want, marketers may enhance ROI without spending money on futile initiatives. Additionally, they won't have to waste time watching boring advertisements that annoy customers. In a number of ways, AI will customize marketing to better meet client needs, many businesses currently use AI to customize their websites, emails, social media postings, videos, and other resources. One of the key goals of AI is to automate jobs that historically required human intelligence. Marketers may now give customers greater attention and quickly respond to their requirements. However, the usage and impact of AI on the marketers and the consumers have its own pros & cons, in other words AI faces opportunities & challenges globally. This research paper is a study on Artificial Intelligence AI in marketing which helps to figure out and highlight the impact, its opportunities and challenges in comparison to advance technology in the current scenario of marketing. The researcher has used qualitative method of research through secondary data available from various sources.

Keywords: AI Artificial Intelligence, Roles, Challenges.

Introduction

AI stands for Artificial Intelligence; it is a group of technologies that can carry out activities that require human intelligence. These technologies can learn, act, and perform like humans when used in conventional business procedures. It imitates human intellect in machines, which helps us conduct business faster and more affordably. The evolution or the appearance of AI has several implications marketing, where it has examined the ways in which technological improvements affect how well organizations can manage consumer needs and deliver goods. In the long run, artificial intelligence (AI) will be a crucial component of every business organization on the planet. Significant changes in the AI landscape are reflected in the latest automation trends led by AI. It is obvious in the way that ideas, interests, and investments have changed in the area of business adoption of AI. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in the field of marketing, reshaping the way businesses connect with their audiences, make data-driven decisions, and optimize their marketing strategies. In today's digitally driven world, AI has become a powerful tool that empowers marketers to enhance efficiency, personalize campaigns, and deliver more impactful results. This introduction provides an overview of AI in marketing, its key components, and its profound impact on both marketers and consumers. Marketing has evolved significantly over the years, transitioning from traditional methods to digital channels. This evolution has been accelerated by AI, which has ushered in a new era of precision, personalization, and automation. Gone are the days of one-size-fits-all advertising; AI enables marketers to craft tailored messages and experiences for each individual consumer. AI refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines, allowing them to perform tasks that typically require human cognition, such as learning from data, making predictions, and adapting to changing circumstances. In marketing, AI is harnessed through various technologies and techniques, including machine learning, natural language processing, computer vision, and data analytics. Artificial intelligence (AI) plays a key role in personalized marketing by helping businesses understand customer behavior and deliver tailored experiences. A personalized marketing is a strategy that customizes messages and offerings to individual customers based on their likings and needs. In today's digital landscape, where customers are bombarded with an enormous amount of content and advertisements, personalization has become crucial for businesses seeking to stand out and build strong customer relationships (Abildtrup, 2024). Artificial Intelligence (AI) plays a transformative role in this space by enabling brands to deliver highly relevant, personalized experiences at scale. AI-powered technologies, such as machine learning, data analytics, big data, and natural language processing, allow marketers to analyze vast amounts of customer data and gain deeper insights into consumer behavior. These insights help in segmenting audiences more effectively and predicting future preferences or purchasing behaviors. As a result, AI helps businesses make smarter decisions, optimize their marketing strategies, and provide personalized recommendations, offers, and content to users

Literature Review

The below review of literature has been covered few of the following aspects of ICTs in education and teaching – learning assessment for learners and educators 1. Consumption, consumer studies, and consumer research are fundamental parts of contemporary society and of interest not only to marketers, but also to policy makers and other research disciplines (MacInnis *et al.,* 2020). There is a variety of interactions that consumers currently have with AI. Marketing researchers recognize that AI offers important potential benefits for consumers and their lives (Pitardi *et al.,* 2021). However, there are also inherent tensions the increased use of AI can have on consumers, which include privacy concerns, dehumanization, and even addiction (Lobschat *et al.,* 2021; Puntoni *et al.,* 2021). 2. Unlike human intelligence, artificial intelligence (AI) is the intelligence demonstrated by the machines. A system of intelligent agent machines that perceives the environment to successfully achieve its goal represent the artificial intelligence. According to Russel and Norvig (2016), artificial intelligence describes machines (computers) that simulate cognitive and affective functions of human mind. The development of Artificial intelligence is phenomenal and experts have worked tirelessly to advance AI concepts over the few decades. The work led to some major innovations like big data analytics and machine learning applications in myriad sectors and context. A strategic framework for artificial intelligence (AI) in marketing encompasses multiple dimensions, integrating various AI capabilities to enhance marketing effectiveness. Huang and Rust propose a three-stage framework that categorizes AI into mechanical, thinking, and feeling types, facilitating tasks from data collection to customer engagement (Huang & Rust, 2021). Complementing this emphasize a four-pillar approach focusing on data processing, customer insights, personalized strategies, and performance improvement, highlighting the importance of organizational readiness and resource allocation for successful AI integration (Jalaja *et al.,* 2024). Neves et al. further illustrate how AI can enhance agile marketing by promoting flexibility and rapid adaptation to market changes. (Neves *et al.,* 2024) Additionally, The Holistic AI-Enhanced Marketing Framework Theory advocates for ethical considerations and human creativity in AI applications, ensuring user trust and engagement (Rachid 2024) Lastly, Anjorin et al. stress the necessity of aligning AI initiatives with business objectives to drive sustainable growth and innovation (Kikelomo Fadilat Anjorin *et al.,* 2024). Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive roadmap for leveraging AI in marketing. According to previous research "When technology works on a personal level, it creates an endearing bond with the users, when marketers tap into such a bond, the potential for customer value creation is enormous" (Kumar *et al.,* 2019). Advanced and innovative AI-powered marketing solutions can rapidly adapt to the changing needs of businesses and come up with communications and solution packages that are critical and lucrative to relevant stakeholders (Epstein, 2018). The CEO of the Marketing Artificial Intelligence Institute proposed a new framework (Roetzer, 2017) for the marketing mix, comprising Planning, Production, Personalization, Promotion, and Performance (the 5Ps).

Objectives of the Study

- To study and understand the role of AI in Digital Marketing

Scope of Study

The Researcher focuses majorly on technology-supported marketing environments, they can engage marketers and consumers in AI learning process and can have a positive impact on their out comes in making marketing strategies because that is the underlying driver of this study. The discussions focus on AI's impact on marketing. Further, this section addresses the research objective, "to understand the role and opportunities of AI. In this research paper the researcher had a qualitative way of study about it.

Methodology

Sources of data collection Secondary data: It majorly consists the information collected from various sources like books, websites, journals etc.

Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Marketing Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed the field of marketing in various ways, helping businesses make data-driven decisions, enhance customer experiences, and improve overall efficiency. Many variables use AI in marketing as possible. AI gives personalized touch where in it analyzes customer data to create highly personalized marketing campaigns. It can segment audiences based on demographics, behavior, and preferences, allowing marketers to deliver tailored content, product recommendations, and offers. AI algorithms can forecast future trends in marketing and customer behavior based on historical data. This aids companies in making wise choices regarding product development, inventory control, and marketing tactics. It also assists by providing AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants for instant customer support, answer frequently asked questions, and guide users through the sales funnel 24/7. It can generate content such as product descriptions, blog posts, and social media updates. AI-generated content can be a useful supplement for marketers. It optimizes email marketing by analyzing open rates, clickthrough rates, and engagement data to send emails at the best times and with the most relevant content. This helps marketers to analyze and optimize their websites for search engines to identify keywords, suggest improvements, and monitor rankings. AI analyzes large datasets to uncover valuable customer insights which can identify emerging trends, sentiment analysis, and feedback analysis from social media, reviews, and surveys. CRMs with AI enhancements can offer insights into client behavior and facilitate communication, ensuring that interactions are timely and pertinent. These systems can track the marketing tactics of rival companies, enabling organizations to stay up to date on market trends and modify their own strategy as necessary. Based on demand, rival pricing, and other market parameters, AI can alter prices in real-time to maximize revenue and profit margins. By spotting fraudulent actions like click fraud in online advertising, AI can help organizations cut costs and keep customers confident in their marketing initiatives. AI is still developing, and marketing will certainly see more uses in the future. By using data-driven decision-making and providing their customers with more individualized and effective experiences, marketers who adopt AI technologies can acquire a competitive edge.

Impact of Artificial Intelligence in Digital Marketing

1. Personalized Marketing: AI enables businesses to analyses vast amounts of customer data to create highly personalized marketing campaigns. By leveraging machine learning algorithms, businesses can segment their audience more effectively, deliver personalized content, and tailor marketing messages to individual preferences and behaviors.
2. Predictive Analytics: AI-driven predictive analytics tools help businesses forecast future trends, customer behavior, and marketing outcomes with greater accuracy. By analysing historical data and identifying patterns, AI algorithms can predict which marketing strategies are likely to yield the best results, enabling businesses to allocate resources more effectively and optimize their marketing efforts.
3. Chatbots and Virtual Assistants: AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants are transforming customer service and engagement in digital marketing. These intelligent bots can interact with customers in real time, answer questions, provide personalized recommendations, and assist with purchases, enhancing the overall customer experience and driving sales.
4. Search Engine Optimization (SEO): AI is playing an increasingly important role in Search Engine Optimization, helping businesses improve their search engine rankings and visibility. AI algorithms analyse search trends, optimize website content, and identify opportunities for keyword targeting and link building, driving organic traffic and conversions.
5. Advertising Optimization: AI-powered advertising platforms, such as Google Ads and Facebook Ads, use machine learning algorithms to optimize real-time ad campaigns. These platforms can automatically adjust bidding strategies, target audience segments, and ad creatives based on performance data, maximizing return on ad spend (ROAS) and driving conversions.
6. Marketing Automation: AI enables the automation of repetitive marketing tasks, such as email marketing, social media posting, and campaign management. By automating these processes, businesses can save time and resources while also delivering more timely and relevant marketing messages to their audience.

The Benefits of AI in Digital Marketing

AI offers numerous benefits in digital marketing:

1. Automated Campaign Management: AI-powered tools can automate various aspects of campaign management, including ad placements, scheduling, and optimization. This saves time and resources while improving campaign performance.
2. Content Generation: AI can generate content, such as product descriptions, blog posts, and social media marketing, based on predefined parameters. This streamlines content creation processes and ensures consistent quality.
3. Customer Service: AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can provide 24/7 customer support, answering queries, resolving issues, and even guiding users through the sales process. This improves customer satisfaction and reduces response times.
4. Optimized Ad Targeting: AI algorithms analyse user data to identify the most relevant audience segments for advertising campaigns. This ensures that ads are shown to people likely to be interested in the products or services offered.
5. Dynamic Pricing: AI can analyse market conditions, competitor pricing, and customer behaviour to dynamically adjust prices in real-time. This helps maximize revenue and maintain competitiveness.

Conclusion

Overall, AI empowers marketers to streamline processes, enhance targeting accuracy, and deliver more personalized and effective campaigns, ultimately driving better results and ROI in digital marketing efforts. The scope of AI in digital marketing is vast and continues to grow as businesses increasingly adopt AI-powered technologies to drive growth, improve efficiency, and enhance the customer experience. As AI continues to evolve, it will play an increasingly central role in shaping the future of digital marketing strategies and practices

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THE EFFECT OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The accelerating wave of digital transformation (DT) has fundamentally reshaped how organizations create value, compete and sustain performance in the modern economy. Emerging digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, cloud computing and the Internet of Things are not merely operational tools; they are strategic enablers that redefine business models and organizational trajectories. This review synthesizes a broad spectrum of empirical evidence to examine how DT influences business model innovation and organizational performance across industries and contexts. Findings from recent studies reveal that DT fosters new value creation logics, enhances operational efficiency, and stimulates organizational agility, yet its benefits are unevenly distributed and often contingent on leadership capabilities, digital culture, and strategic alignment. The review highlights that while many firms achieve measurable gains in productivity and innovation through DT initiatives, others struggle with legacy systems, resistance to change, and capability gaps that hinder transformation outcomes. By bridging insights from management, information systems, and innovation literature, this review offers a comprehensive understanding of DT's transformative power and provides strategic directions for organizations striving to thrive in an increasingly digital and competitive landscape.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Digital Transformation, Innovation, Organizational Performance.

Objective for the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of digital transformation on organizational performance

Methodology

This study adopted a secondary data. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Introduction

Nowadays, digital technologies are developing very rapidly. Digital technologies such as big data, analytics, social media, cloud, intelligent systems, and mobile platforms reshape business models and reinvest business operations, and they also affect the behavior of employees and customers in every industry. Thus, they put pressure on firms to undertake digital transformation initiatives. Digital transformation has now become a necessity for every firm to survive, develop, and be sustainable. Therefore, it is crucial to know what factors affect success in digital transformation and also its impact on performance outcomes. Digital transformation provides huge potential benefits to firms. It offers advantages that enable firms to reduce costs, increase efficiency, encourage innovation, and increase profitability and sustainability. However, since it requires a significant amount of cost, firms are not sure of its business value, and existing studies are inadequate in this regard. On the other hand, although digital transformation is crucial for sustainability, it is important to show that it is effective in making profits and increasing efficiency, as they are the primary aims of firms. Proving to firms that digital transformation contributes to their purpose of existence will encourage them to invest in digital transformation, and, thus, they can make improvements in their practices of sustainability. More empirical findings are, therefore, needed to understand its impact on firm performance. On the other hand, the survival of a firm is affected by the state of the environment Environmental uncertainty arises from the complexity and dynamism of the environment Thus, it impacts the outcomes of firm operations. Since one of the most important reasons why firms move towards digital transformation is to survive, be sustainable, and increase their performance by making the right moves in uncertain environmental conditions, environmental uncertainty is expected to strengthen the digital transformation–firm performance relationship

A paradigm shift in economic and social dimensions has been brought about in recent years by the rapid digital revolution that has been occurring (Brocke *et al.,* 2016; Wilms *et al.,* 2017). With an emphasis on business models and their immediate effects on society, scholarly study has zoomed out at the macro level of digital change (Brocke *et al.,* 2016). However, the micro level of digital transformation, particularly in small and medium-sized businesses, has received less research attention (Bouncken *et al.,* 2019; Li *et al.,* 2018; Yasin *et al.,* 2022; Tripadi, 2019; Matt *et al.,* 2015). According to recent analyses of the literature, digitalization is a complex phenomenon that affects many distinct levels, including digital entrepreneurship, digital strategies, digital processes, and digital education (Kraus *et al.,* 2018).

Literature Review

Digital technologies are one kind of organizational strategy which formulated and executed by leveraging digital resources to create differential value. This definition reflects digital business strategy is from the pervasive usage and adoption of new digital technology, such as cloud computing, big data, etc.; digital business strategy is a business-level or firm-level strategy, not a functional-level IT strategy; the aim of digital technology is to appropriate value for firms through digital technologies. In the following paragraphs, we discuss these three aspects more in details. First, digital technologies shape the new business infrastructure and influence the new organizational logic and patterns of coordination within and across firms. As industries or firms become more digitalized and rely on information, communication, and connectivity functionality, both CEOs and CIOs also begin to rethink the roles of IT strategy. For example, Google and Microsoft, they continue to adjust and fine-tune their corporate scope to take advantage of the rapidly developments in hardware, software, and Internet connectivity. Also, Nike‟s digitized product development is supported by Apple‟s iOS and iPods. These firms have begun to develop the digital strategy by digital resources. Second, digital business strategy transcends traditional functional areas (such as procurement and logistics) and various IT-enabled business process (such as e-selling and e-purchasing). With the aid of inter-firm IT capabilities, business- or firm-level strategy can improve the functional-level efficiency and effectiveness (e.g., marketing, customer service, and procurement). Digital business strategy is a good starting point for analyzing how IS assets, IS capabilities, and socio-organizational capabilities jointly contribute towards achieving competitive value. Third, digital business strategy also induces novel forms of value creation and appropriation for firms. The value comes from multisided business models, coordinated business models in networks, and control of digital industry architecture. For example, in the mobile ecosystems, the value capture involves complex coordination and collaboration between app developers, the mobile OS (Apple, Android, Windows, or Blackberry), hardware manufacturers, telecom operators, and service providers such as Facebook, YouTube, etc. Another example, Apple becomes one of the leaders in the mobile industry as it earns profits not only through its iPhone and Mac OSX, but also receives a share of the follow-on revenue from the telecom carriers (e.g., AT&T, Sprint, Verizon).

Digitalization and Organizational Performance

Digitalization For the past 20 years, the significance of digital transformation has grown. Technologies have made it possible for businesses to improve stakeholder involvement in addition to productivity. The production process has undergone innovation as a result of the digital transformation in the workplace. Intelligent products are being introduced by this revolution, which is a magnificent phenomenon (Martinez-Caro *et al.,* 2020). Due to digital transformation, customers now have access to the best services (Agrawal & Narain, 2018). Büyüközkan and Göçer (2018) define digitalization as the use of digital technology and the transition of traditional businesses to digital businesses, which results in the creation of new sources of income. In both economic and cultural respects, digitalization is a technical force that strengthens globalization (Isaksson *et al.,* 2016) and can be composed of three crucial stages: digitalization strategy, digital organization and culture, and digital operations. Setting up digital goals, developing a digital strategy, and putting it into practice are the main objectives of the digitalization strategy (Lee *et al.,* 2022). This digitization, which is based on a quick and widespread adoption of technology and even more so in contact with one another, has a great deal of potential to fundamentally alter how people conduct business and perform their jobs. The technological underpinnings of digitalization can be divided into the following fields of technology: a) technologies related to the collection, processing, and analysis of digital data, like big data approaches; b) technologies for networking systems (like cloud computing) and for virtualization, like augmented and virtual reality (AR / VR); c) technologies for automation, like robotics approaches (Gilchrist, 2016). A wide-ranging, dynamic, and complex change is being driven by a number of factors, including digitalization and networking. Everything will be interconnected, the evolution curve will be much steeper, and technology will collaborate with people to affect performance and business processes in the day-to-day operations of the company (Schmidt *et al.,* 2015). A number of prominent digital business technologies, according to Schmidt *et al.* (2015), have a substantial influence on several sectors. Technology enablers include internet of things (IoT), augmented reality (AR), cyber-physical system (CPS), cloud manufacturing and smart factory (robotics, 3D printing, sensors) (Alzoubi *et al.,* 2021; Ghazal *et al.,* 2021; Pereira & Romero, 2017; Schmidt *et al.,* 2015; Turki *et al.,* 2021). These technologies can promote collaboration across the entire organization and supports ongoing agility, visibility, and controllability (Ben-Daya *et al.,* 2019), providing a quickly and easily access configurable manufacturing resources across a network (Gomes *et al.,* 2018), and an intelligent environment to achieve flexible and adaptive processes (Pereira & Romero, 2017).

Organization Performance

The performance of the company determines whether it succeeds or fails (Rehman *et al.,* 2019). According to Richad et al. (2009), the firm's performance tells us how well it is accomplishing its goals. Regarding the goals, each business or organization wants to make the most profit possible and endure for a long time in the market. The performance of the company is impacted by a variety of variables, including internal and external cultural issues, rewards, financial matters, the development of novel business models, administrative issues, leadership abilities, teamwork, environmental uncertainty, and planning (Rehman *et al.,* 2019). A company's performance is crucial for survival in a competitive market (Cania, 2014). Both qualitative and quantitative metrics can be used to assess a firm's performance, achieved through departmental and employee efforts. As businesses and organizations become more competitive, their performance is essential for achieving objectives and targets for small, medium-sized, and large companies in both emerging and developed countries (Zehir *et al.,* 2016). According to Pires and

Aravechia (2001), an organizational performance evaluation system must be results-driven and should be guided by stakeholders' interests. Performance organization is viewed from the perspective of team management as an assessment activity that enables companies to judge and compare goals, patterns, previous decisions, and other processes and results. As a result, the creation of value is the fundamental component of organizational performance. The assets will continue to be available to the organization so long as the value created by the contributed assets is equal to or greater than the value anticipated. Historically, the majority of researchers have used both financial and non-financial factors to evaluate an organization's performance, incorporating ROI, market share, profit margin on sales, ROI growth, sales growth, market share growth, and overall competitive position (Stock *et al.,* 2000), however performance evaluation is still a difficult topic for many organizations (Abu-Jarad *et al.,* 2010; Lee *et al.,* 2022). Since the late 1980s, the majority of researchers and consulting firms have stressed the need of including and utilizing non-financial variables in the process of analyzing organizational performance (Lee *et al.,* 2022). As a consequence, this research takes into account both financial and non-financial components of organizational performance. Financial performance may be defined as the financial outcomes of management decisions and how those decisions are implemented by organization members. Owner managers would also get non-monetary returns in the form of lifestyle advantages for their employees and the environment, such as workplace enhancements, work hours, and social interactions (Lebas & Euske, 2007; AlKurdi *et al.,* 2020; AlShebli *et al.,* 2021; Alameeri *et al.,* 2020; AlShehhi *et al.,* 2021; Alsuwaidi *et al.,* 2021). As a result, organizational performance includes three types of firm outcomes: (a) financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment); (b) product market performance (sales, market share); and (c) shareholder return (total shareholder return, economic value added). Richard and colleagues (2009). Performance outputs can be quantified in a variety of ways. Jeong and Hong (2007) evaluated performance using the following metrics: delivery reliability, responsiveness, adaptability, cost, and efficiency. Lee et al. (2007), on the other hand, utilized cost containment and dependability criteria. Sezen (2008) used output, resource performance, and adaptability to determine effectiveness. Vanichchinchai and Igel (2009) chose to evaluate organizational success in terms of cost, flexibility, relationship, and responsiveness.

Challenges, Barriers, and Limitations of Digital Transformation

Although digital transformation (DT) promises considerable gains in value creation and organizational performance, empirical research consistently shows that many firms struggle to realize these benefits because DT is as much an organizational and strategic challenge as it is a technological one. One core issue is strategic misalignment: firms often pursue ad-hoc technology projects without integrating them into a coherent digital strategy or rethinking their value proposition and business model architecture. emphasize that DT requires a multidisciplinary alignment strategy; marketing, IT, operations, and governance must be coordinated, otherwise investments become fragmented and fail to produce systemic performance improvements. In short, technology adoption alone is insufficient; DT must be embedded within organizational strategy and business model renewal.

Organizational culture and people issues form a second major barrier. Resistance to change, siloed structures, and a lack of experimentation mentality impede the organizational shifts DT demands. argue that building the dynamic capabilities necessary for DT—sensing, seizing, and transforming depends heavily on cultural and managerial micro foundations such as experimentation, cross-functional teams, and leadership that rewards learning. Similarly, high light that people (leadership, workforce skills, change management) are the decisive factor in successful DT: organizations that neglect human and managerial dimensions commonly see digital initiatives stall or produce only piecemeal improvements.

Third, technological and legacy-system constraints often limit DT's effectiveness. Firms with a patchwork of legacy IT systems face integration bottlenecks, data silos, and higher cyber security exposure, which complicates attempts to scale digital pilots into enterprise-wide capabilities. Document how digital supply-chain technologies produce benefits only when there is a coherent architecture and governance that avoids fragmentation; otherwise, smart technologies create isolated pockets of improved efficiency without overall supply-chain transformation. A fourth constraint is the uneven distribution of organizational capabilities required to convert digital investments into performance. Empirical studies show that digital capability or orientation improves outcomes primarily via digital innovation and complementary managerial processes Where firms lack these complementary capabilities, data analytics competence, cross-functional coordination, and managerial routines for experimentation, technology investments may yield marginal returns. This explains why the same digital intervention can deliver dramatic performance improvements in digitally mature firms but produce negligible effects in less prepared organizations.

Finally, external and contextual factors—regulation, industry dynamics, and ecosystem readiness- can further limit DT. Highly regulated sectors (e.g., healthcare, finance) face compliance constraints that slow experimentation and adoption, while ecosystem dependencies (partners, suppliers, platforms) can bottleneck transformation trajectories. and both stress that DT is path dependent and contingent: successful transformation is rarely a one-off project but a long-term process requiring continual reconfiguration of resources, relationships, and capabilities.

In sum, the literature indicates that overcoming DT barriers requires a holistic approach: integrate digital strategy with business model innovation, invest in leadership and human capital, modernize and govern technology architecture, and develop dynamic capabilities that enable continuous sensing and reconfiguration. Addressing these strategic, organizational, technological, and contextual constraints is essential if DT is to translate into sustained performance and meaningful business-model renewal.

Findings

Key findings reveal significant improvements in efficiency and productivity through automation and AI integration, alongside enhanced customer experiences through personalized digital interactions. Innovation has been accelerated by technologies like IoT and big data analytics, enabling agile responses to market demands. Despite these advancements, challenges such as legacy system integration and cybersecurity threats persist, requiring proactive leadership and workforce up skilling.

Conclusion

Digital transformation has attracted considerable attention. However, the empirical research on human-related antecedents of digital transformations is still very limited. Moreover, there is a debate about how it affects firm performance, and there is scarce knowledge about the role of environmental uncertainty in this relationship. By addressing these shortcomings in the literature, this research aims to reveal the effects of transformational leadership and employee self-efficacy on digital transformation, as well as the impact of digital transformation on firm performance with the moderating role of environmental uncertainty. Findings demonstrated that both transformational leadership and employee self-efficacy are positively related to digital transformation. Furthermore, it is revealed that digital transformation affects financial and operational performance, and environmental uncertainty strengthens the association between digital transformation and financial performance. These results demonstrated that the human factor has a decisive role in digital transformation. In addition, it is clarified that digital transformation is a way to succeed and be competitive. Therefore, this study contributes to filling the research gaps in digital transformation literature by providing empirical evidence.

In conclusion, this study offers theoretical backing for the hypotheses associated with digital integration, digital supply chain connectivity, big data analytics adoption, and the technology-based product and process innovative activities among American SMEs. As these dimensions of digitalization independently boost innovative potential, their synergistic impact is even more significant. Contingent factors such as sect oral contexts, governmental support programs, and firm attributes help make this innovation dividends context specific. The implications of the study are significant in terms of the theoretical advancements for understanding the effects of digitalization on both the cultivation of knowledge reservoirs and the enhancement of the absorptive capacities that can support SME innovation derivation. However, there is unobserved heterogeneity and cross-sectional data limitations to shy away from causal conclusions. Further research using panel methods, mixed methods, and comparative contexts can help refine the framework and advance knowledge of technology disruption routes across various companies.

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