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INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE

on

Fintech Innovations, Digital Transformation & Social Inclusion

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Editors

Dr. Ravi Kant Modi
Dr. Yogita Chandel
Ms. Simran Sharma
Dr. Mohit Dixit

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

JUNE, 2026

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INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE

ON

FINTECH INNOVATIONS, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION & SOCIAL INCLUSION

(ICFIDS VIRTUAL-2026)

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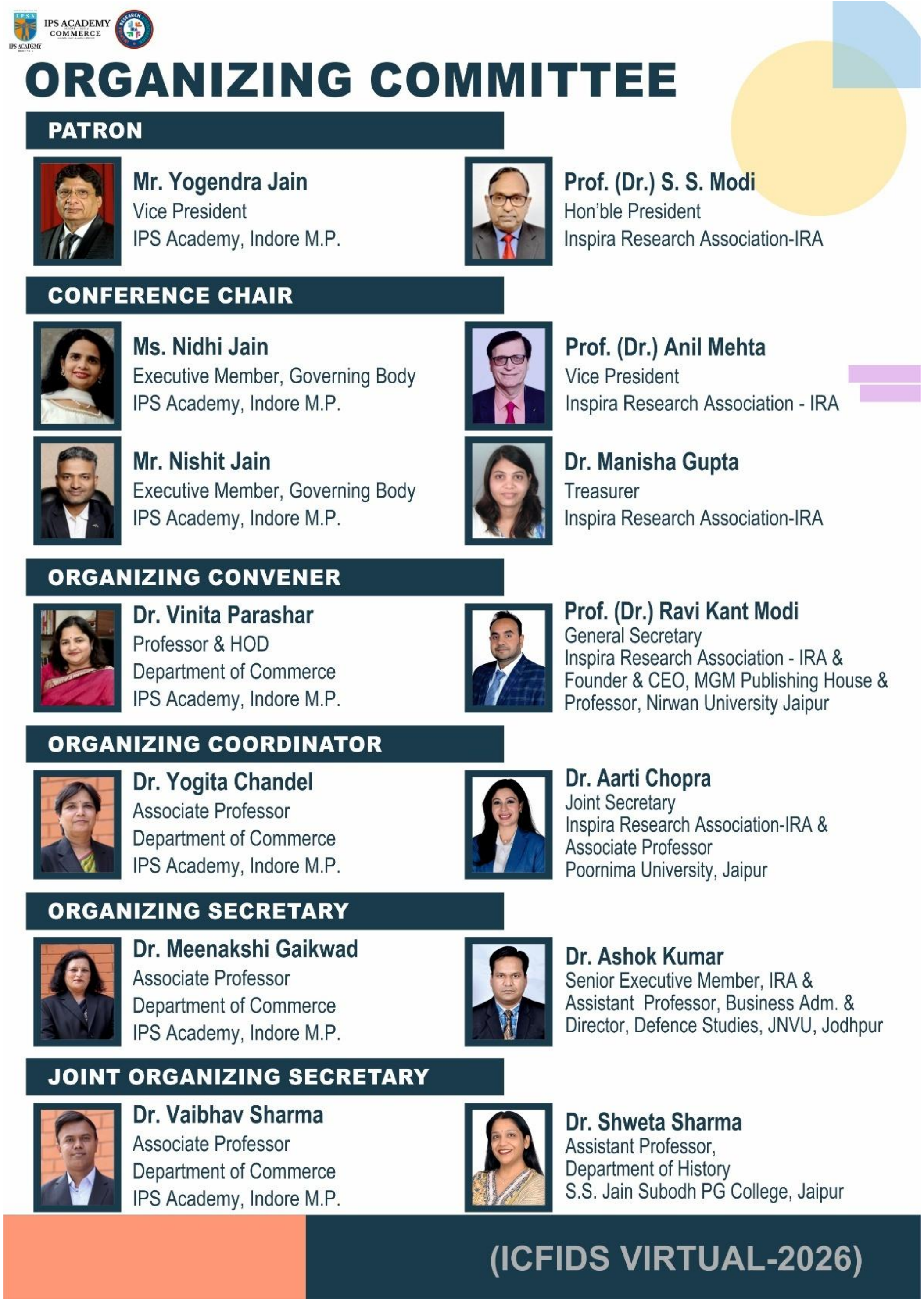
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(ICFIDS VIRTUAL-2026)

Index

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Greeting Messages

Good afternoon to all distinguished participants, respected organisers, and fellow leaders joining us today.

It is a privilege to share my warm greetings with everyone attending the International Multidisciplinary Conference on Fintech Innovations, Digital Transformation & Social Inclusion (ICFIDS VIRTUAL-2026),

This conference is an important space for sharing ideas, learning from one another, and working together towards Fintech Innovations, Digital Transformation & Social Inclusion. By bringing together knowledge from education and technology, I believe we can create real and lasting changes in universities and in everyday life.

I am truly honored to be part of this meaningful event and look forward to the ideas and knowledge exchange that will come from our time together.

Warm regards,

Dr. Janitha Kularajasingam
Guest of Honour, ICFIDS VIRTUAL-2026

It is a privilege to welcome you all to these conference proceedings of the International Multidisciplinary Conference on FinTech Innovations, Digital Transformation and Social Inclusion. Today, the global marketplace is undergoing a profound structural shift. Modern enterprises face a dual challenge: keeping pace with rapid technological shifts while addressing deep-seated societal inequalities. Legacy infrastructure and traditional business models are no longer sufficient to meet the expectations of today's hyper-connected, real-time consumers. In my professional journey in international business and export sales, I have seen firsthand how customer expectations have evolved. Today's consumers expect speed, transparency, convenience, and real-time information. However, businesses do not need technology simply for the sake of technology—they need solutions to real, tangible problems.

This conference theme explores how the intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Financial Technology (FinTech), and broader Digital Transformation strategies offers pragmatic, real-world solutions to modern business bottlenecks. Moving beyond purely theoretical frameworks, this work examines concrete applications—ranging from automated credit risk assessment to resistance-free, cross-border export transactions. True transformation happens when People, Processes, and Technology align. When done right, digital transformation drastically reduces internal transaction costs, making it

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economically viable to pull historically underserved populations into the formal economic loop. Thus, commercial optimization directly drives social inclusion.

As you explore these proceedings, I encourage you to remember that the future will not reward knowledge alone—it will reward adaptability. The future of industry is not Human versus AI, but rather Human plus AI versus Human without AI. "Digital transformation is not about technology; it is about creating value. FinTech is not about payments; it is about financial empowerment. Artificial Intelligence is not about machines; it is about making better decisions."

I congratulate the Organizers, Distinguished Academicians, Researchers, Industry Professionals, Students, and Participants; I wish this conference great success and hope that our shared insights inspire innovation, develop the responsible collaboration, & global impact through use of Digi Transformation.

Anurag Aslia
Export Sales Specialist
Anchor Allied LLC, UAE

Key Papers

THE ARCHITECTURE OF INCLUSION: RETHINKING FINTECH AT THE LAST MILE

A DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PERSPECTIVE FROM INDIA[i]

Dr. Samriti Kapoor

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Abstract

India's fintech ecosystem has undergone a structural transformation, moving from incremental digitisation towards the "Autonomous Finance" era. Anchored in the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), which processed 131 billion transactions worth approximately ₹200 lakh crore in FY 2023-24, and the broader India Stack architecture of biometric identity, payments, document portability, and consent-based data sharing, India is frequently cited by multilateral institutions as a model of digital public infrastructure (DPI) for the developing world. Yet this scale coexists with an "Inclusion Paradox": nearly 190 million Indians remain outside the formal financial system, and the benefits of fintech are unevenly distributed across access, skills, trust, and language. Drawing on the theoretical framing of Arner et al. (2016) on the evolution of financial technology and on Indian regulatory and industry data, this paper develops a three-pillar framework — designing for the margin rather than the mean, regulating for trust rather than risk alone, and educating for digital agency — to guide policy, pedagogy, and practice. The paper concludes that fintech, like any infrastructure, is morally neutral; its capacity to equalise or divide depends on the deliberate choices of researchers, educators, regulators, and practitioners who design and govern it. Implications for B-school curricula, the implementation of NEP 2020, and future interdisciplinary research agendas are also discussed.

Keywords: *Financial Inclusion, Fintech, Digital Public Infrastructure, India Stack, UPI, Digital Divide, NEP 2020.*

Introduction

The relationship between financial technology and financial inclusion has moved, over the past decade, from the margins of development economics to the centre of policy and pedagogical discourse in India. This shift is best illustrated not by aggregate statistics alone but by a single illustrative case. Consider a vegetable

[i] This paper is developed from a keynote address delivered at the Multidisciplinary Conference on Fintech Innovations, Digital Transformation & Social Inclusion, held on 29–30 June 2026.

vendor in a mid-sized Indian town who, three years ago, had never entered a bank branch. Today she carries a low-cost smartphone on which an AI-driven application analyses her daily transaction flow, facilitates a micro-loan for irrigation equipment at a competitive interest rate, and channels a portion of her surplus into a savings instrument. She is neither a technology enthusiast nor a passive beneficiary of welfare; she is a participant in the formal economy on her own terms. This composite vignette, grounded in patterns increasingly documented across India's semi-urban and rural markets, frames the central question this paper addresses: is fintech, on balance, a great equaliser or a great divider of economic opportunity?

For years, business schools taught “finance” and “social development” as though they belonged in different buildings. That divide no longer holds. India has moved past the phase where fintech simply meant digitising an existing bank branch; India is now in the era of autonomous finance, where mobile connectivity, AI, and open APIs let financial systems act on a person's behalf, not just at their request. This fits the third phase of financial technology identified by Arner et al. (2016), and it changes what regulators, educators, and product designers each need to get right.

The present paper is organized as follows: First, it situates India's fintech trajectory within the theoretical literature on the evolution of financial technology. Second, it documents the scale of India's digital public infrastructure (DPI) and the persistent “Inclusion Paradox” that accompanies it, using verifiable regulatory and industry data. Third, it proposes a three-pillar framework — design, regulation, and education — intended as a provocation for interdisciplinary research, curriculum design, and policy dialogue rather than a definitive prescription.

Theoretical Framework: The Evolution of Fintech

Arner et al. (2016) trace finance and technology through three eras: Fintech 1.0, the analogue period before digitisation; Fintech 2.0, the internet-driven digitising of existing financial services from the late twentieth century onward; and Fintech 3.0, catalysed by the 2008 crisis, defined less by what is delivered than by who delivers it — technology-native entrants operating alongside, and often ahead of, traditional institutions. Much of India's fintech story in the first two decades of this century was really about efficiency — faster KYC, mobile banking, lower transaction costs. What is happening now is different in kind: a redesign of the operating model itself. The institutions that win here are not necessarily those with the biggest balance sheets, but those that build the trust architectures covering the systems of identity, consent, and accountability sturdy enough that a previously undocumented citizen can participate in formal finance with confidence.

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The Scale of Transformation: Global and Indian Evidence

The global fintech technologies market, valued at roughly US$110.6 billion in 2020, is projected to reach US$698.5 billion by 2030 — a compound annual growth rate above 20 percent (Allied Market Research, 2024). India's contribution to that curve is driven overwhelmingly by UPI, the real-time payment system built by the National Payments Corporation of India under RBI oversight. In FY 2023-24, UPI processed 131 billion transactions worth close to ₹200 lakh crore — roughly a tenfold rise in volume over four years, and now close to 80 percent of India's total digital payment volume (National Payments Corporation of India, 2024; Reserve Bank of India, 2024). That single year's real-time payment volume exceeded the combined totals of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany, within less than a decade of UPI's 2016 launch.

UPI is one piece of a larger architecture known as India Stack: Aadhaar for biometric identity, UPI for payments, DigiLocker for documents, and the Account Aggregator framework for consent-based data sharing. The World Bank and independent researchers have repeatedly pointed to India Stack as a template other developing economies might adapt, precisely because it is interoperable, inexpensive, and largely open-source (Sahasranamam & Prabhu, 2024; World Bank Group, 2025). Alongside it, the JAM Trinity — Jan Dhan accounts, Aadhaar, and mobile numbers — has carried direct benefit transfers to hundreds of millions of households since 2014, cutting out much of the leakage that once occurred through intermediaries (Government of India, Ministry of Finance, 2024).

The Inclusion Paradox: Mapping the Digital Divide

Despite this infrastructural scale, India's financial inclusion challenge remains unresolved. Approximately 190 million Indian adults are estimated to lack access to a single formal financial service, even as digital payment volumes reach unprecedented levels. Scale and exclusion sit side by side — precisely the paradox this paper brings into light: left alone, fintech can widen inequality before it narrows it. That paradox shows up along four overlapping fault lines, summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Dimensions of the Fintech-Enabled Digital Divide in India

Dimension	Evidence	Source
Access Divide	Rural internet penetration stands near 45 per 100 people, against 111 per 100 in urban India.	TRAI (2025)
Skills Divide	A large share of citizens still lack the basic digital literacy needed to use mobile financial apps independently.	NASSCOM (2023, as cited in Kapoor, 2026)

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Trust Divide	Fear of fraud remains the most common reason non-users give for avoiding digital financial services.	RBI Consumer Survey (2023, as cited in Kapoor, 2026)
Language Divide	India has 22 scheduled languages, yet most fintech apps remain English-first or Hindi-second.	Author's analysis

Source: Compiled by the author

None of these divides works in isolation. Access without skills leaves an app installed but unused; skills without trust leaves it used cautiously, if at all; and infrastructure without local language simply excludes the people it was meant to reach in the first place.

A Three-Pillar Framework: Policy, Pedagogy, and Practice

- **Design for the Margin, Not the Mean**

Most fintech products are still built with an average user in mind — urban, educated, smartphone-native, already credit-documented. India's inclusion challenge lives at the edges of that picture, not its centre. That argues for vernacular-first interfaces, voice-based options for low-literacy users, and design deliberately attentive to who in a household actually controls the phone. Apps built this way stop being mere transaction tools and start acting as financial co-pilots — teaching a little, as they transact.

- **Regulate for Trust, Not Just Risk**

India's fintech regulation is built mainly to contain systemic risk, which is necessary but not sufficient. Trust needs its own regulatory attention — clear data-fiduciary duties, algorithmic accountability, and a right to explanation when an algorithm declines someone's loan. Fraud prevention works better as a shared effort than a competitive secret; institutions gain little by hoarding intelligence that could protect the next user elsewhere.

- **Educate for Digital Agency**

No programmer solves this alone; it needs sociologists, economists, and educators in the room too. NEP 2020 offers a real opening to embed financial technology and digital literacy into curricula as a core competency, not an elective (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2020). For B-schools, that means live projects with fintech organisations working in rural and semi-urban India, and research written to actually reach SEBI, RBI working groups, and parliamentary committees — not just journal archives.

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Discussion and Conclusion

Is Fintech a great equaliser or divider? Neither, entirely. Fintech behaves like a road or an electricity grid — morally neutral, its effects decided by where it is laid and whom it is built to serve. India Stack proves that reaching undocumented populations at low cost is technically possible; the inclusion paradox proves that possibility is not the same as outcome. What decides the outcome is the accumulated choices of the people around the technology — researchers who report evidence honestly, educators who train tomorrow's managers and regulators, policymakers who write the rules, and practitioners who build the products. For Indian B-school curricula, this means treating financial inclusion as a strategic problem in its own right, not a CSR footnote.

UPI and India Stack represent a scale of achievement with few global parallels, already studied elsewhere as a possible template. But scale has not, by itself, closed the access, skills, trust, and language gaps documented here, and the three starting points offered in this paper are meant as a working agenda, open to revision, not a finished blueprint. The last mile is not a problem for engineers to solve on their own; it is shared work between researchers who tell the truth about what the data show, educators who shape tomorrow's managers, regulators who write fair rules, and practitioners who build honest products.

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ANALYZING THE EVOLVING FUNDING STRUCTURE OF START-UPS IN INDIA: THE STUDY BASED ON SECONDARY SOURCES

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Abstract

The Indian startup ecosystem stands as the third largest globally, serving as a vital engine for economic acceleration, technology diffusion, and job creation. This paper explores the multi-tiered funding structures that underpin Indian startups, tracing capital deployment configurations from seed phases to late-stage institutional rounds. Utilizing a secondary source methods research framework, this study analyses how macroeconomic conditions, the elimination of the angel tax, and shifting investor demands for capital efficiency have altered capital allocation. The empirical findings reveal a distinct structural pivot toward unit-economic viability, a rise in corporate venture capital (CVC) and family office participation, and a growing reliance on milestone-based structured instruments like convertible notes. Furthermore, regional democratization is evident as funding spreads beyond major metros into tier-2 and tier-3 urban centers. The paper details structural challenges, including regulatory compliance friction and capital concentration, before offering strategic recommendations for founders and policymakers aiming to optimize capital structures and its journey of utilization phases.

Keywords: Corporate Venture Capital, Macroeconomic, Acceleration, Seed Funding, Start-ups.

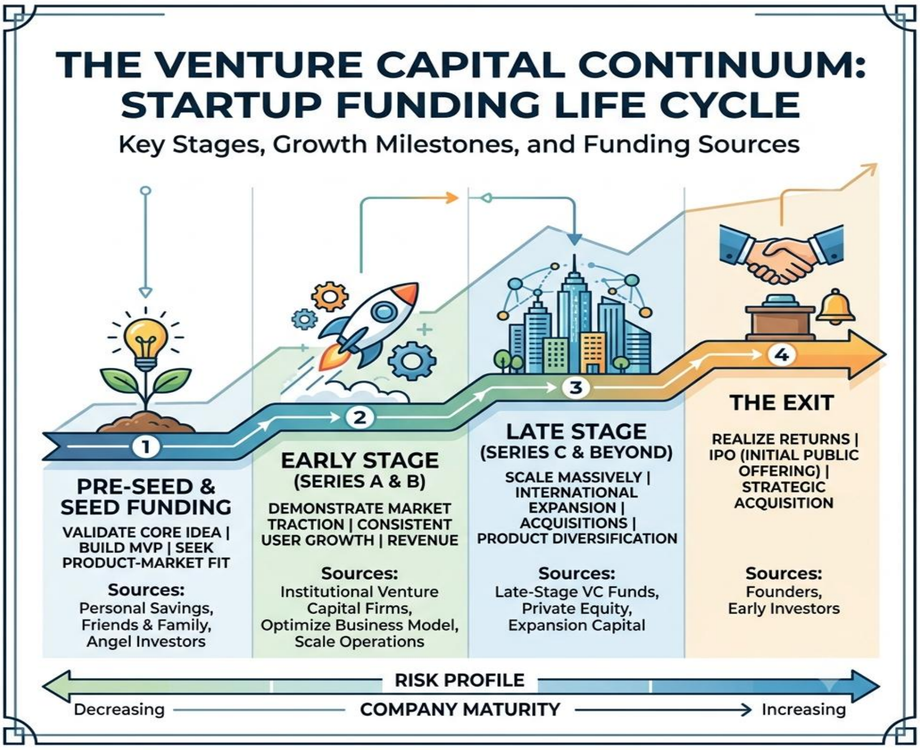
Introduction

The dynamics of corporate finance within early-stage enterprises differ fundamentally from mature corporations. Startups operate under conditions of high information asymmetry, unproven business models, and intangible-heavy asset bases, making traditional debt financing unviable. Consequently, the funding structure of a startup—the deliberate combination of founder equity, angel capital, venture capital (VC), venture debt, and institutional alternative investment funds (AIFs)—

becomes a core determinant of its survival and scale. In India, the structural morphology of startup financing has shifted profoundly[5]. The decade following the launch of the *Startup India* initiative focused on rapid user acquisition and aggressive valuation expansion, funded by abundant global venture capital. However, recent shifts have introduced structured capital discipline. While the ecosystem continues to attract substantial inflows—crossing over 2.23 lakh government-recognized startups—the composition of these funds has transformed [7]. High-conviction mega-rounds dominate late-stage capital, while early-stage ventures encounter deeper diligence processes. Understanding this evolving capital architecture is essential for analyzing the microeconomics of Indian entrepreneurship.

The venture capital continuum represents the life cycle of funding that a startup navigates as it scales from a raw concept to a mature company[4]. This funding journey is typically broken down into distinct stages, each matching a company's growth milestones and risk profile:

- **Pre-Seed & Seed Funding:** The earliest stages where founders validate their core idea, build a Minimum Viable Product (MVP)[2], and seek product-market fit. Funding typically comes from personal savings, friends and family, or angel investors.
- **Early Stage (Series A & B):** Once a startup demonstrates market traction, consistent user growth, or early revenue, institutional venture capital firms step in to help optimize the business model, scale operations, and expand market reach.
- **Late Stage (Series C and beyond):** At this point, the company is highly successful and looking to scale massively—whether through international expansion, acquisitions, or major product diversification[3].
- **The Exit:** The final phase of the traditional continuum, where early investors and founders realize their returns, typically through an Initial Public Offering (IPO) or a strategic acquisition by a larger corporation.



1 Image Source: AI generated image based on input provided by authors.

Review of Literature

The foundational literature on startup capital structure is rooted in the **Pecking Order Theory** (Myers & Majluf, 1984) and the **Agency Theory** (Jensen & Meckling, 1976), both adapted to high-growth, high-risk environments[9].

- **Early-Stage Capital and Information Asymmetry:** Capital constraints at the seed stage are typically mitigated by informal channels—friends, family, and angel networks. Highly asymmetric information prevents formal banking institutions from extending credit (Stiglitz & Weiss, 1981). Angel investors bridge this gap by evaluating the founder's human capital rather than hard financial metrics [1].
- **The Venture Capital Continuum:** As a startup achieves product-market fit (PMF), it transitions to institutional venture capital[14]. VCs act as financial intermediaries that mitigate risk through staged financing, active board oversight, and contractual protections like liquidation preferences and anti-dilution clauses (Sahlman, 1990).

- **The Indian Context and Regulatory Shifts:** Research on the Indian funding ecosystem emphasizes its dependence on foreign direct investment (FDI) and global crossover funds. Landmark changes, such as the complete removal of the "angel tax" (Section 56(2)(viib) of the Income Tax Act), have eliminated major valuation frictions for domestic angel networks. Recent studies highlight a trend toward "reverse flipping"—startups shifting their corporate domiciles back to India from overseas hubs like Delaware or Singapore—driven by domestic public market depth and regulatory alignment[11].

Objectives of the Study

To provide a structured, empirical investigation into these financing architectures, this study establishes four core objectives:

- **To** map the prevailing capital mix across different growth stages (Seed, Series A/B, and Late-stage) within Indian startups.
- **To** examine the impact of recent fiscal and regulatory changes on domestic angel and institutional capital flows.
- **To** identify the key structural challenges founders face when raising and optimizing capital in the current market environment.
- **To**analyze how investor preferences have shifted between growth-at-all-costs models and unit-economic profitability.

Research Methodology as a Secondary Source of Data Collection

This study adopts an empirical, descriptive, and analytical research design based on secondary data sources to evaluate the shifting structural morphology of startup financing in India[13]. Given that the ecosystem contains over 2.23 lakh government-recognized startups, a secondary research approach allows for a comprehensive, macro-level synthesis of capital allocation[10] trends across diverse growth stages.

Data Procurement and Sources

To fulfill the core objectives of mapping capital structures and analyzing shifting investor preferences[6], data was systematically gathered from credible and high-impact secondary repositories, including:

- **Regulatory and Governmental Repositories:** Directives, legislative notes, and structural announcements from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Startup India Initiative) and the Income Tax Act (specifically data tracking the impact of Section 56(2)(viib) regarding the elimination of the angel tax).
- **Industry and Venture Intelligence Reports:** Aggregated market intelligence documents[8], including the *India Tech Annual Funding Analysis* video

database, venture capital ecosystem reviews, and global/domestic transactional track records.

- **Academic and Theoretical Literature:** Seminal corporate finance publications establishing the bedrock for the theoretical frameworks used, specifically Myers & Majluf's (1984) *Pecking Order Theory*, Jensen & Meckling's (1976) *Agency Theory*, and Stiglitz & Weiss's (1981) credit rationing metrics.

Data Inclusion & Stage Mapping

The methodology tracks and categorizes qualitative and quantitative financing metrics across a standardized lifecycle continuum:

- **Seed/Pre-Seed Stage:** Funded predominantly via informal networks (friends, family, early angel syndicates, and incubators) utilizing Equity, Convertible Notes, and SAFE notes.
- **Early Stage (Series A & B):** Funded by institutional Venture Capital (VC) firms stepping in for market traction, utilizing Compulsorily Convertible Preference Shares (CCPS)[12].
- **Late Stage (Series C+):** Funded by Sovereign Wealth Funds, crossover funds, and institutional VCs, focusing on mega-rounds and utilizing CCPS, Venture Debt, or Pre-IPO Equity.

Data Analytics and Findings Based on Secondary Source of Data

The synthesis of macro funding analyses, industry benchmarks, and survey metrics yields critical empirical findings regarding capital concentration, geographic expansion, and structural challenges within the Indian startup landscape[22].

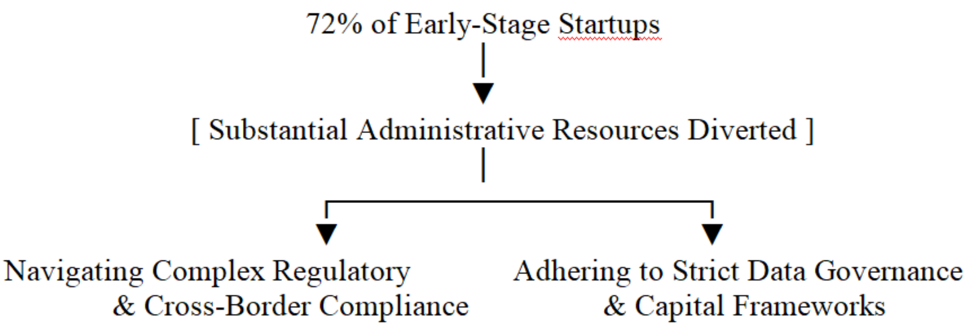
- **Structural Composition of Capital Across Funding Stages**

The secondary data confirms that capital instruments transition predictably from high-flexibility, low-friction vehicles at the early stage to highly structured, protective equity models in late-stage institutional rounds:

Funding Stage	Primary Capital Instruments Used	Dominant Investor Profiles
Seed / Pre-Seed	Equity, Convertible Notes, SAFE Notes	Angels, Incubators, Seed Fund Schemes
Series A & B	Compulsorily Convertible Preference Shares (CCPS)	Institutional Venture Capital (VCs)
Late Stage (C+)	CCPS, Venture Debt, Pre-IPO Equity	Sovereign Funds, Private Equity, Crossover Funds

As a company matures, investor scrutiny increases, causing the due diligence window to expand significantly:

  - **Seed / Pre-Seed:** ▧ ▧ (4–8 weeks)
  - **Series A & B:** ▧ ▧ ▧ ▧ ▧ (12–18 weeks)
  - **Late Stage (C+):** ▧ ▧ ▧ ▧ ▧ ▧ ▧ (16+ weeks)
- **Key Empirical Findings**
  - **Capital Concentration and Sectoral Selectivity:** While absolute funding volumes across the ecosystem remain robust, quantitative modeling highlights a distinct concentration of late-stage capital into high-conviction, specialized technology sectors. Generative AI, Deeptech, and Fintech absorb a disproportionately large share of available institutional capital. Consequently, non-AI founders face prolonged intervals between successive funding rounds and must accept smaller initial valuation steps[15].
  - **The Profitability Mandate & Unit Economics:** The data indicates a stark behavioral pivot away from traditional "growth-at-all-costs" or metric-less user acquisition models[12]. Institutional investors and venture capital firms now actively enforce a capital discipline framework, heavily prioritizing positive contribution margins, clear paths to profitability, and robust unit economics over top-line growth.
  - **Democratization of Entrepreneurship (Regional Expansion):** Geographically, the startup ecosystem is no longer confined to primary tier-1 metropolitan hubs. Approximately 50% of the active startup base in India now originates from Tier-2 and Tier-3 urban centers (such as Jaipur, Indore, and Surat)[16]. This structural decentralization is heavily reinforced by regional angel networks, corporate venture programs, and state-level seed fund initiatives.
- **Primary Structural Bottlenecks**



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- **The Compliance Diversion Effect:** Survey data reveals that approximately 72% of early-stage startups report that substantial administrative resources are actively diverted away from core product R&D[23]. Instead, these teams must expend runway navigating complex, evolving regulatory frameworks, specifically regarding cross-border capital compliance and domestic data governance laws.
- **Valuation Friction & Structured Term Sheets:** A widening gap between founder valuation expectations and realistic investor pricing has generated an influx of heavily structured deals[17]. To bridge this valuation gap, investors are increasingly relying on performance-linked milestones and contractual protections—such as liquidation preferences and anti-dilution clauses—which drastically complicate startup capital structures.
- **The Early-Stage Squeeze:** While early-stage seed capital remains accessible through state seed schemes, angel networks, and government grants, moving upward to a Series A round presents a prolonged hurdle. Investors are conducting much deeper, more rigorous due diligence processes, resulting in a widened funding gap for companies trying to scale up operations[18].

Challenges in the Funding Ecosystem

Despite the maturity of the Indian ecosystem, startups face distinct structural bottlenecks:

- **The Compliance Diversion Effect:** According to survey metrics, approximately 72% of early-stage startups report that substantial administrative resources are diverted away from core product R&D toward navigating complex regulatory frameworks, specifically around data governance and cross-border capital compliance[19].
- **Valuation Friction & Structured Terms:** The gap between founder valuation expectations and investor realism has led to a rise in structured deals. This includes the use of liquidation preferences, anti-dilution protections, and performance-linked milestones, which can complicate capital structures if not carefully managed.
- **The Early-Stage Squeeze:** While seed capital is accessible through government grants and angel syndicates, transitioning to a Series A round presents a significant hurdle. Investors run deeper due diligence, resulting in a prolonged funding gap for early-stage companies trying to scale[20].

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Recommendations

To optimize the startup funding environment, targeted actions are required from both founders and regulatory bodies:

For Founders

- **Design for Capital Efficiency:** Capital structures should be built around a clear path to profitability. Prioritizing strong unit economics reduces reliance on continuous external funding rounds and limits dilution.
- **Diversify the Capital Stack:** Founders should look beyond traditional institutional VCs. Incorporating family offices, corporate venture capital (CVC)[21], and venture debt can provide more patient capital and reduce equity dilution during growth phases.

For Policymakers

- **Harmonize Digital and Financial Regulations:** Regulatory bodies should implement clear, risk-based frameworks for emerging technologies like AI and FinTech. Streamlining compliance reduces operational friction for young enterprises[2].
- **Expand Credit Guarantee Frameworks:** Further expanding initiatives like the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS) will allow banks to safely offer non-dilutive debt options to cash-flow-positive startups.

Conclusion

This research confirms that as a company achieves its respective growth milestones and its risk profile evolves, its underlying capital structure shifts accordingly, marked by an increasing reliance on structured alternative instruments.

The funding journey predictably progresses through distinct phases:

- **Pre-Seed & Seed Phase:** Founders focus on validating their core idea, building a Minimum Viable Product (MVP), and seeking product-market fit. Capital is typically sourced from personal savings, friends and family, angels, syndicates, or incubators utilizing instruments like equity, convertible notes, and SAFE notes under a short 4-to-8-week due diligence window.
- **Early Stage (Series A & B):** Upon demonstrating market traction, consistent user growth, or early revenue, startups partner with institutional venture capitalists and CVCs to optimize business models and scale operations. This stage marks a transition toward Compulsorily Convertible Preference Shares (CCPS) and a more rigorous 12-to-18-week due diligence process.
- **Late Stage (Series C+):** To achieve massive scaling through international expansion, acquisitions, or product diversification, highly successful

companies rely on sovereign funds, private equity, and crossover funds. Funding at this maturity level heavily employs CCPS, venture debt, and pre-IPO equity, requiring an extensive due diligence timeline of 16 or more weeks.

Ultimately, this funding trajectory culminates in the final exit phase, where founders and early investors realize their returns through an Initial Public Offering (IPO) or a strategic acquisition by a larger corporation. Comprehending this systemic evolution of capital instruments, shifting investor classes, and expanding evaluation timelines provides a critical framework for both entrepreneurs and institutional investors navigating the modern startup ecosystem.The funding structure of startups in India has matured from a system focused primarily on rapid scale to one driven by capital discipline and financial viability. While macroeconomic shifts and rigorous due diligence present fundraising hurdles, they are also building a more resilient ecosystem. The removal of structural tax barriers like the angel tax, combined with the rise of regional entrepreneurship in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, points toward sustainable long-term growth. By balancing equity with alternative capital instruments and maintaining a clear focus on unit economics, Indian startups can build resilient capital structures capable of navigating changing market cycles.The venture capital continuum underscores a highly structured and predictable life cycle that startups navigate as they scale from a raw concept to a mature company.

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THE SUBALTERN AND SOCIAL REALITIES IN INDIA

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Abstract

The concept of the subaltern has emerged as a significant area of inquiry in contemporary social and literary studies. Originating from the work of the Subaltern Studies collective, the term refers to those groups and individuals who have historically remained marginalized due to social, economic, political and cultural inequalities. In the Indian context, subaltern communities include Dalits, tribal groups, women, landless labourers, and other disadvantaged sections whose experiences have often been excluded from dominant historical and social narratives. This paper examines the relationship between the subaltern and the social realities of India, highlighting the ways in which structures of caste, class, gender, and power contribute to marginalization. It explores how subaltern voices challenge dominant discourses and seeks recognition, representation, and social justice. Drawing upon the theoretical perspectives of Ranajit Guha and other Subaltern Studies scholars, the paper analyses the historical and contemporary conditions that shape subaltern existence in India. The study also discusses the role of literature and cultural expression in bringing marginalized experiences to the forefront. By examining the intersection of social realities and subaltern identity, the paper demonstrates how literature serves as a medium of resistance and empowerment. The paper argues that understanding subaltern perspectives is essential for developing a more inclusive understanding of Indian society and its complex social dynamics. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to ongoing discussions on inequality, representation, and social transformation in contemporary India.

Keywords: Subaltern, Indian Society, Marginalization, Representation, Social Realities, Resistance, Identity.

Introduction

The term "subaltern" refers to people who have been pushed to the margins of society and denied a voice in the dominant systems of power. The word originally comes from the writings of the Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci, who used it to describe groups that were ruled over and excluded from positions of authority. Over time, the concept has grown to include all those who live on the edges of society- people whose lives, struggles, and stories are often ignored by mainstream history. Understanding the subaltern is important because it allows us to see society from the perspective of those who are usually left out.

In India, the study of the subaltern gained strength through the work of a group of historians known as the Subaltern Studies collective. Founded in the early 1980s under the leadership of Ranajit Guha, this group sought to rewrite Indian history "from below." Instead of focusing only on kings, leaders, and the elite, they paid attention to the experiences of ordinary and oppressed people such as peasants, labourers, and the poor.The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between the subaltern and the social realities of India. It examines how structures like caste, class, gender, and power create marginalization, and how subaltern groups resist these conditions through voice and culture. This study argues that understanding subaltern perspectives is essential for building a more inclusive understanding of Indian society. The paper moves from theory to social realities, then to resistance and literature, before concluding with reflections on social change.

Theoretical Framework

The intellectual roots of subaltern studies can be traced to the writings of Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Marxist thinker. While imprisoned under Mussolini's regime, Gramsci used the word "subaltern" to describe groups of people who were socially, politically, and economically subordinate to the ruling classes. For him, these groups lacked a unified voice and were kept under control through both force and the dominance of ruling-class culture, a process he called hegemony. This idea later inspired scholars studying oppression in other parts of the world.

In the Indian context, the concept took shape through the efforts of Ranajit Guha, who founded the Subaltern Studies collective in the early 1980s. Guha and his colleagues argued that Indian history had been written largely from the viewpoint of the elite- both colonial rulers and the nationalist leadership (Chatterjee,1998). They wanted to recover the lost agency of the common people, especially peasants and labourers, who had often resisted oppression in their own ways. Their work sought to write historyfrom below. (Chaturvedi, 2000).

The collective grew with the contributions of several scholars. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in her well-known essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?", raised a crucial question about whether marginalized groups, particularly women, could ever truly express themselves within systems built by the powerful. Partha Chatterjee and others expanded these debates into questions of nationalism, politics, and identity.In India, the subaltern came to mean those excluded by caste, class, and gender- Dalits, tribals, women, and the poor- whose experiences continue to challenge dominant narratives.

Identifying the Subaltern in India

The subaltern in India is not a single, uniform group but a wide range of communities and individuals who share the common experience of marginalization. Identifying them helps us understand the many layers of inequality that shape Indian society.The most visible among the subaltern are the Dalits, who have suffered for centuries under the caste system. Placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy, they were treated as "untouchables" and denied access to temples, education, and dignified work. Despite legal protections today, caste-based discrimination continues to affect their daily lives.Tribal communities, or Adivasis, form another important group. Living in forests and remote regions, they have often been pushed out of their lands in the name of development and industrialization. Their distinct cultures and ways of life are frequently ignored by mainstream society (Chatterjee,1997).

Women represent a subaltern category that cuts across all communities. Under deep-rooted patriarchal structures, women have faced restrictions in education, property rights, and decision-making. Their voices have often been silenced both within families and in public life.

Landless labourers and the rural poor also belong to the subaltern. Lacking ownership of land and resources, they remain dependent on the powerful and are caught in cycles of poverty and exploitation.In addition, religious and ethnic minorities experience marginalization through discrimination, exclusion, and a sense of being outsiders in their own land.

What makes the subaltern condition more complex is intersectionality- the way these identities overlap. A Dalit woman, for instance, faces oppression based on both caste and gender, while a tribal labourer experiences exclusion through ethnicity, class, and geography at the same time. Recognizing these overlapping identities is essential, for it reveals how deeply and unevenly marginalization operates within the social fabric of India.

Structures of Marginalization

Marginalization in India does not arise by chance, it is produced and sustained by deep-rooted social structures. The most powerful of these is caste, a hierarchical order that has divided society for thousands of years. Under this system, individuals are placed into rigid groups by birth, with the so-called upper castes enjoying privilege and the lower castes facing exclusion. The practice of untouchability, though banned by law, pushed Dalits to the lowest position, denying them dignity, access to public spaces, and equal opportunity. Caste thus remains one of the strongest foundations of inequality in India.

Closely linked to caste is class, which reflects economic inequality. The unequal distribution of wealth, land, and resources keeps large sections of people in poverty. Landless labourers and poor workers often depend on the wealthy for their survival, leaving them open to exploitation and trapped in cycles of debt and hardship.

Gender forms another structure of marginalization. Patriarchy, deeply embedded in Indian society, places women in a subordinate position (Chatterjee,1997). Restrictions on education, property, mobility, and decision-making have long limited their freedom and silenced their voices.Power, particularly political power, completes this web of marginalization. Subaltern groups have historically been excluded from positions of authority and decision-making. Without adequate representation, their needs and concerns are often overlooked in the making of policies and laws.These structures do not operate separately. Instead, they intersect and reinforce one another. A poor Dalit woman, for example, faces oppression through caste, class, and gender all at once. This overlapping of disadvantages deepens marginalization and makes escape from it far more difficult, showing how tightly these systems are woven together in Indian society.

Social Realities of the Subaltern

The lived experiences of the subaltern reveal the harsh social realities that lie behind theoretical discussions of marginalization. To understand these realities, one must look at both the historical conditions and the present-day struggles of marginalized communities in India.

Historically, the subaltern has endured long periods of oppression. Under the caste system, lower castes were forced into degrading occupations and denied basic rights for generations. During colonial rule, peasants and labourers were exploited through heavy taxes and harsh agricultural policies, while tribal communities' lost control over their lands and forests. These historical injustices created deep-rooted patterns of inequality that continue to shape society today.

In the contemporary period, the subaltern faces several pressing challenges. Poverty remains widespread among Dalits, tribals, and landless labourers, limiting their ability to live with dignity. Discrimination persists in subtle and open forms, from social exclusion to denial of jobs. Violence, too, remains a grim reality, with reports of atrocities against Dalits, women, and minorities appearing regularly across the country (Chaturvedi, 2000).Access to education, healthcare, and opportunity is another area where the subaltern remains disadvantaged. Poor schools, lack of resources, and social barriers prevent many from completing their education. Inadequate healthcare and limited job prospects further deepen their hardship, keeping them trapped in cycles of disadvantage.

A particularly significant reality is the exclusion of the subaltern from dominant historical and social narratives (Maggio,2007). Mainstream history has largely ignored their struggles and contributions, treating them as silent and passive. Yet, instances such as the Dalit movements led by B.R. Ambedkar, tribal uprisings against land seizure, and ongoing women's struggles for equality show that the subaltern have always resisted oppression and asserted their presence in society.

Subaltern Voices and Resistance

Although the subaltern has long been silenced and pushed to the margins, they have never been completely passive. Throughout history, they have found ways to raise their voices and resist the systems that oppressed them. This spirit of resistance has played an important role in challenging dominant ideas and demanding change.One of the key ways the subaltern resist is by challenging dominant discourses (Maggio,2007). For a long time, the powerful controlled how society viewed caste, gender, and class, often presenting inequality as natural or unavoidable. Subaltern groups began to question these beliefs, exposing them as unjust and man-made rather than divinely ordained.This questioning gave rise to several social and political movements. The Dalit movements, for instance, fought against untouchability and demanded equal rights and dignity. Tribal communities organized themselves to protect their lands, forests, and cultural identity from exploitation. These movements gave marginalized people a collective strength they had previously lacked (Sivaramakrishnan, 1995).At the heart of these struggles was the demand for recognition, representation, and social justice. The subaltern sought not only material improvement but also respect and a rightful place in society.The contribution of reformers and leaders was crucial in guiding these struggles. Jyotirao Phule worked tirelessly against caste and gender oppression, promoting education for the lower castes and women. B.R. Ambedkar, himself born into a marginalized community, became the most powerful voice for Dalit rights and shaped the Indian Constitution to protect the weak. Their efforts continue to inspire movements for equality today.

Literature and Cultural Expression as Resistance

Literature has emerged as one of the most powerful tools through which the subaltern expresses themselves and resist oppression. By telling their own stories, marginalized communities reclaim their voices and challenge the silence imposed upon them by dominant society.

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Dalit literature stands out as a strong form of empowerment (Maggio,2007). Through autobiographies, poems, and stories, Dalit writers reveal the pain of caste discrimination and the dignity of their struggle. Works such as Omprakash Valmiki's Joothan and Bama's Karukku powerfully capture the lived realities of caste oppression and resistance. Tribal and folk narratives preserve the cultural identity, beliefs, and struggles of Adivasi communities. These oral and written traditions keep alive experiences that mainstream literature often ignores. Women's writing and feminist perspectives have also given voice to gendered oppression (Chaturvedi, 2000). Female authors have explored themes of patriarchy, silence, and the desire for freedom, bringing women's hidden experiences into public discussion. Together, these literary and cultural expressions bring marginalized experiences to the forefront of society. By presenting the world from the viewpoint of the oppressed, literature not only records their suffering but also inspires awareness, empathy, and social change, making it a meaningful medium of resistance and empowerment.

Intersection of Social Realities and Subaltern Identity

The identity of the subaltern is not something natural or fixed; it is shaped by the social realities that surround marginalized communities. Understanding how this identity is formed helps us see the deep connection between social structures and the sense of self among the oppressed.

The construction of subaltern identity takes place within systems of caste, class, gender, and power. From birth, marginalized individuals are made to feel inferior through social rules, customs, and everyday discrimination. Over time, these experiences shape how they see themselves and how society views them. Yet, this identity is also a source of strength, for shared struggles often bring communities together in solidarity and resistance. A crucial issue here is the difference between representation and self-representation. For much of history, the subaltern was spoken about by others-by historians, rulers, and elites- rather than being allowed to speak for themselves. Such representation often distorted their reality or reduced them to silent victims. True empowerment, however, comes when marginalized people represent themselves in their own words and on their own terms.

This brings us to the politics of voice and silence. The powerful have long controlled who is heard and who remains unheard. Silence was imposed upon the subaltern, while their voices were dismissed or ignored (Sivaramakrishnan, 1995). Breaking this silence becomes an act of courage and defiance. Finally, empowerment through self-articulation marks an important step forward. When the subaltern tells their own stories, demand their rights, and assert their dignity, they reshape their identity from one of victimhood to one of agency, strength, and self-respect.

Towards Social Transformation

While the subaltern continues to face many hardships, Indian society has also taken important steps toward addressing inequality and promoting social transformation. These efforts aim to bring marginalized groups into the mainstream and ensure them a life of dignity and equal opportunity.One of the most significant measures has been the introduction of policies and constitutional safeguards. The Indian Constitution, shaped largely by B.R. Ambedkar, abolished untouchability and guaranteed equality before the law. Provisions such as reservation in education, employment, and political bodies were introduced as forms of affirmative action. These policies seek to correct historical injustices by giving disadvantaged communities a fair chance to progress. Although debated, they remain crucial tools for empowering the subaltern.

The role of education and awareness is equally vital in this process of transformation. Education enables marginalized individuals to understand their rights, question oppression, and improve their social and economic conditions. Awareness campaigns and social reform movements have also helped change attitudes, slowly breaking down age-old prejudices related to caste, class, and gender. An educated and aware society is better equipped to challenge inequality and embrace inclusiveness. Closely linked to this is the goal of inclusive development and social justice. True progress cannot be achieved if large sections of society are left behind. Inclusive development means ensuring that the benefits of growth reach the poor, the marginalized, and the excluded. Social justice demands not only economic upliftment but also respect, dignity, and equal participation in public life.

Yet, ongoing debates on inequality and representation remind us that the journey is far from complete. Questions about the effectiveness of reservation, the persistence of caste discrimination, and the underrepresentation of women and minorities continue to spark discussion. These debates reflect a living democracy striving to balance fairness with progress, and they highlight the need for continued effort toward genuine equality.

Conclusion

This paper has explored how caste, class, gender, and power create marginalization in India, and how the subaltern resists these conditions through movements, leadership, and literature. Understanding subaltern perspectives is significant because it allows us to view society from the viewpoint of those usually left unheard, revealing the true depth of inequality. By giving voice to the marginalized, such study contributes meaningfully to ongoing discussions on representation, justice, and social transformation. Ultimately, recognizing the subaltern is essential for building a more inclusive and just society. Future research may further examine emerging subaltern voices in a rapidly changing, modern India.

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REIMAGINING HUMAN VALUES IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY: A STUDY OF ARAVIND ADIGA'S SELECTION DAY

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Abstract

This paper examines the intersection of human values and responsible technology in Aravind Adiga's novel *Selection Day* (2016), exploring how the narrative interrogates the ethical dimensions of technological systems and capitalist commodification in contemporary India. Through textual analysis grounded in neoliberal critique and postcolonial theory, the study demonstrates that Adiga's portrayal of cricket as a technological and commercial apparatus reveals how systems of digital surveillance, data extraction, and market-driven incentives systematically undermine traditional human values, agency, and moral autonomy. The novel presents cricket not merely as sport but as an infrastructure of control and commodification, a nexus where technology, corporate power, and exploitative social hierarchies converge to trap marginalized youth within what the paper terms "systemic moral entrapment." By centering the experiences of two brothers caught within the hyper-commercialized cricket economy, *Selection Day* offers a critical intervention into discourses of responsible technology and development, arguing that genuine ethical responsibility requires confronting the structural conditions that transform human potential into profit. The paper concludes that Adiga's work functions as both a critique and a cautionary narrative, challenging readers to reconsider what "development" means when it systematically commodifies human lives and erodes foundational human values.

Keywords: Human Values, Responsible Technology, Aravind Adiga, *Selection Day*, Technological Systems, Capitalist Commodification.

Introduction

The question of privacy, identity, and democratic values has gained urgency in contemporary India, particularly with the expansion of biometrically-enabled identification systems like Aadhaar and the broader neoliberalization of Indian society. While Aravind Adiga has not written explicitly about such technologies, his novels, including *The White Tiger* (2008), *Last Man in Tower* (2011), and *Selection Day* (2016)constitute a central project of reimagining and critiquing how democratic concepts like privacy, empowerment, and inclusion mutate within democracies undergoing neoliberalization. (Clapp, 2019) In *Selection Day*, Adiga extends this inquiry into the domain of youth, aspiration, and technological mediation, offering a particularly incisive examination of what might be termed "responsible technology" in a context of systemic inequality and moral compromise.

The novel's setting, the world of competitive cricket in contemporary India, where technology, media, data, and corporate sponsorship orchestrate the ambitions of young athletes, provides an apt microcosm for interrogating how technological systems and market logics reshape human values and individual agency. The novel portrays neocolonialism in the hyper-commercialized cricket industry, where young boys, Radha and Manju, are commodified for corporate profit, reflecting the economic exploitation characteristic of global capitalism. (Lakshmi, 2025) Importantly, *Selection Day* does not merely document this commodification; rather, it exposes the technological and bureaucratic infrastructure through which such exploitation occurs, rendering visible the structures of responsibility that remain obscured in narratives celebrating technological progress and market-driven development.

This paper argues that *Selection Day* presents a sophisticated critique of "irresponsible technology" systems designed and deployed with insufficient regard for their human and ethical consequences. Through close textual analysis, the paper demonstrates how Adiga's narrative exposes how technological mediation (digital surveillance of athletic performance, data-driven selection systems, media representation) becomes entangled with neoliberal market logic and patriarchal family structures to produce what might be called "moral entrapment": a condition wherein individuals particularly young, marginalized subjects find their life trajectories increasingly determined by systems over which they have minimal agency or understanding. The concept of "responsible technology," by contrast, would require that technological systems be designed with transparent regard for human dignity, equitable access, and the preservation of meaningful human agency and choice.

The paper proceeds through four movements: first, an examination of cricket as a technological apparatus within the novel; second, an analysis of how commodification operates through data extraction and surveillance; third, an exploration of the novel's representation of moral compromise and "ethical fluidity" as responses to systemic pressure; and finally, a conclusion that situates *Selection Day* within broader conversations about technology, development, and human values in the contemporary Global South.

Analysis of the novel *Selection Day*: Cricket, Technology, and Commodification

In *Selection Day*, cricket functions simultaneously as sport, industry, media apparatus, and mechanism of social control. The novel portrays consumerism, class disparities, and reliance on cricket as a means of upward mobility, highlighting the persistent colonial dynamics of wealth concentration and labor exploitation. (Lakshmi, 2025) Critically, cricket operates in this text not as a domain of spontaneous human play or individual skill development, but rather as a highly instrumentalized technological system complete with measurement protocols, surveillance mechanisms, data collection, and algorithmic sorting procedures that determine whose talents are "seen" and whose remain invisible.

The two central protagonists, Radha and Manju brothers from a lower-middle-class Mumbai background, are enlisted by their father into the cricket academy system with the explicit expectation of rapid economic ascent. Their bodies, reflexes, and athletic performances become subject to constant measurement, evaluation, and documentation. The coaching infrastructure, selection criteria, rankings systems, and media scrutiny constitute what might be termed a "panoptic" apparatus in the Foucauldian sense: a structure of visibility that functions to discipline and normalize behavior, that shapes aspirations and self-understanding according to external market criteria.

The novel reveals how this system operates without genuine regard for the holistic development or well-being of the young athletes. Training regimens are calibrated not to foster understanding of the game or personal excellence, but rather to produce quantifiable improvements in performance metrics that will attract sponsorship and selection notice. The brothers' individual aspirations, family loyalties, and personal ambitions become subordinated to the logic of the cricket academy's evaluative machinery. This represents, in effect, a failure of technological responsibility: the system exists to extract value (marketable talent, spectacle, profit) rather than to serve the genuine interests and flourishing of those within it.

Neoliberal Commodification and Epistemic Disobedience

The novel critically examines the tension between morality and materialism, analyzing how Adiga's protagonists navigate corrupt socio-economic structures to achieve success, and highlights the commodification of ethics in modern India and how financial incentives often override traditional moral considerations. (Mishra & Pandey, 2025) In *Selection Day*, this commodification of ethics extends to the systematic reshaping of human identity and value itself. The brothers are not valued for their character, intellectual capacity, family devotion, or spiritual growth, the values that might have been central in previous cultural configurations. Rather, they are valued insofar as they can be sold: their image, their athletic prowess, their marketability as representatives of upward mobility and national pride.

Manju's rejection of cricket, pursuit of biology, and exploration of his identity show aspects of decoloniality. His journey symbolizes epistemic disobedience, a core tenet of decoloniality, by resisting the hegemonic knowledge systems perpetuated by the capitalist structure. (Lakshmi, 2025) Manju's refusal of the cricket apparatus, his choice to pursue biology and to seek knowledge and identity on terms other than those dictated by the market, represents a crucial moment of resistance to what the novel identifies as the colonization of human aspiration itself. His epistemic disobedience suggests that responsible technology, or more fundamentally, responsible development, must preserve space for individuals to constitute themselves according to values and knowledge systems not reducible to market exchange.

The contrast between the brothers' trajectories underscores Adiga's critique: Radha remains enmeshed in the cricket-technology complex, his identity increasingly fused with his market value, while Manju attempts to escape to reclaim what the novel implies might be called human autonomy or genuine choice. Yet the novel offers no triumphalist narrative of Manju's escape; rather, it suggests that resistance to systemic commodification remains incomplete, fraught, and costly within a neoliberal regime that offers few alternatives for economic survival and social dignity.

Environmental and Social Entrapment

The study explores how rapid urbanisation, broken education systems, and individualism reveal deeper forms of systemic control over marginalised people. The novel explores eco-entrapment, the interlinked prison of environmental degradation and socio-political aspects through ecological and sociological perspectives, to reveal how Adiga's novels question the illusion of liberation amid modernisation and challenge the dominant narratives of progress. (D, 2026)

Selection Day, set in contemporary Mumbai, depicts a cityscape transformed by real-estate speculation, commercial development, and the physical and social infrastructure organized around elite consumption. The brothers' humble origins and limited material resources, their small apartment, their dependence on their father's modest income, situate them within an urban ecology of scarcity and constraint. The cricket academy, by offering a pathway (however narrow and contingent) to upward mobility, functions as a mechanism that channels their aspirations and energies into the existing system rather than enabling them to transform or escape it.

The "broken education systems" alluded to above constitute another dimension of systemic entrapment. Rather than schools functioning to develop critical consciousness, imagination, or comprehensive human capacities, education becomes subordinated to market preparation and credential acquisition. Cricket talent becomes a more valuable asset than academic achievement precisely because it promises more direct and lucrative market conversion. The novel thus exposes how contemporary neoliberal systems systematically devalue and defund forms of human development and knowledge that do not directly serve capitalist accumulation, while simultaneously intensifying pressure on marginalized families to gamble their children's futures on narrow, precarious pathways to wealth.

The Question of Moral Responsibility and Ethical Fluidity

The study introduces the concept of "Moral Debt" to demonstrate how accumulated ethical compromises shape future decision-making, and argues that Adiga's narratives serve as cautionary tales, compelling readers to reconsider the ethical costs of economic ambition in an increasingly commodified world. (Mishra & Pandey, 2025) A crucial dimension of *Selection Day*'s interrogation of responsible technology concerns the moral and psychological toll of systematic commodification. The novel explores what happens to individual moral agency and coherence when one's entire existence becomes subject to market evaluation and external determination.

The brothers' father, a crucial figure in driving their cricket ambitions, operates within a logic of economic desperation and constrained choice. His conviction that cricket offers the sole realistic pathway to family advancement reflects not a freely chosen value system but rather a rational calculation within a system that provides few genuine alternatives. The novel suggests that irresponsible technology is inseparable from irresponsible economic structure: systems that concentrate wealth, limit opportunity, and structure scarcity for the majority while channeling them toward narrow, precarious pathways to advancement. Within such systems, individual moral compromise becomes almost inevitable, not a sign of individual moral failure, but rather an adaptation to systemic moral failure.

Adiga's portrayal thus rejects simplistic narratives of individual blame or personal corruption, insisting instead on understanding how technological and economic systems shape the possibilities for moral action. A technology or development program might be deemed "responsible" not merely based on its technical specifications, but based on whether it genuinely expands human capacities for meaningful choice and moral agency, or whether it systematically constrains these in service of profit extraction and elite interests.

Surveillance, Data, and the Erosion of Privacy as a Human Value

Building on earlier observations, *Selection Day* portrays the cricket academy system as an apparatus of intimate surveillance. Every movement, every performance, every statistic becomes recorded, analyzed, and used to determine the athletes' futures. This surveillance is not experienced as external coercion alone; rather, it becomes internalized, shaping how the brothers understand themselves and their possibilities. They begin to see themselves through the evaluative lens of the system as collections of measurable athletic attributes rather than as complex human beings with diverse capacities and values.

Adiga explores how concepts like privacy, empowerment and inclusion mutate within democracies as they undergo neoliberalization, and argues that Adiga's novels rival the sociotechnical innovations under way in India by "innovating" within anti-modernist literary and philosophical traditions to contest the notion of "unique identity" produced by technological systems. (Clapp, 2019) The erosion of privacy in *Selection Day* is not incidental to the plot; rather, it constitutes a fundamental dimension of the novel's critique. As the brothers become objects of media attention, data collection, and coaching surveillance, their capacity for interiority, for having thoughts, feelings, and aspirations that belong to them alone and are not immediately marketized or strategically deployed, diminishes. Privacy, in this context, emerges as essential not merely to individual comfort but to the possibility of genuine human agency and moral autonomy.

A technology or system might be deemed responsible if it preserves and protects such spaces of privacy and interiority, recognizing that human flourishing requires dimensions of life that are not subject to constant evaluation, measurement, and commercial extraction. The novel's implicit critique thus extends beyond cricket to implicate any system (educational, professional, technological) that systematically erodes such protective boundaries in service of profit or control.

Conclusion: Toward Responsible Technology and Human Values

Selection Day offers a searching examination of what responsible technology might mean in the context of contemporary India's neoliberal development paradigm. The novel demonstrates that technical sophistication and innovative systems are not automatically responsible; indeed, highly advanced technological systems can be deployed in service of systematic commodification, surveillance, and the erosion of human agency and traditional values.

Several implications emerge from the novel's critique:

- **First**, responsible technology requires attention to systemic context and intent. A selection system that efficiently identifies athletic talent might nonetheless be irresponsible if it systematically channels aspirations away from more holistic forms of human development, or if it concentrates opportunity in ways that intensify inequality rather than genuinely democratizing access to flourishing.

- **Second**, responsible technology demands preservation of human autonomy and meaningful choice. The novel ultimately critiques how postcolonial India replicates colonial patterns of domination through capitalist exploitation, cultural commodification, and patriarchal values, while also offering hope for decolonial emancipation, as seen in Manju's reclaiming of his agency, voice, and autonomy. (Lakshmi, 2025) Manju's pursuit of biology and refusal of cricket-mediated identity, however incomplete and costly, represents an assertion of epistemic and existential autonomy. Responsible development would expand such possibilities rather than constraining them to narrow market-determined pathways.
- **Third**, responsible technology and genuine human development require structural transformation, not merely individual moral exhortation. The novel's critique implicates not simply individual corrupt actors, but the systemic arrangements of property relations, labor markets, and educational structures that make commodification and moral compromise appear inevitable and rational. Adiga's narratives establish a conceptual framework of "Ethical Fluidity under Capitalist Pressures," exploring how individuals adjust their moral principles in response to economic incentives and systemic corruption. (Mishra & Pandey, 2025) True responsibility would involve restructuring these systems to align technological innovation and development with genuine human flourishing.
- **Finally**, *Selection Day* suggests that questions of responsible technology are inseparable from questions of human values more broadly. The novel mourns the erosion of values, family loyalty, intellectual curiosity, spiritual growth, and community solidarity that cannot be monetized or extracted as market value. A development paradigm worthy of the name "responsible" would not treat such values as obstacles to be overcome, but rather as essential dimensions of human life to be nurtured and preserved, even in or especially in technological and economic systems of increasing complexity and scale.

In the final analysis, *Selection Day* functions as both critique and call: a critique of development systems that systematically subordinate human values to profit, and a call for reimagining technology and development in service of genuine human dignity, autonomy, and flourishing. The novel's implicit argument, embodied in Manju's incomplete but significant refusal, is that another future remains possible: one in which technology serves human values rather than displacing them, in which development expands rather than constrains human agency and choice, and in which the most marginalized members of society are protected rather than systematically preyed upon by systems of surveillance, commodification, and control.

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THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL COMMUNICATION ON CANDIDATE SATISFACTION AND JOB ACCEPTANCE INTENTIONS

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Abstract

The increasing competition for skilled talent has shifted organizational attention from traditional recruitment practices to creating positive candidate experiences. While technological advancements have improved recruitment efficiency, the quality of interpersonal communication between recruiters and candidates remains a critical factor influencing recruitment outcomes. This study examines the influence of psychological communication on candidate satisfaction and job acceptance intentions. Psychological communication is conceptualized through five dimensions: empathy, emotional intelligence, active listening, communication clarity, and trust and rapport. The study adopts a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey approach. Primary data were collected from 350 individuals in India who had participated in a recruitment process within the previous twelve months. A structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale was used for data collection. The proposed relationships were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics and SmartPLS 4 through descriptive statistics, reliability and validity assessment, structural equation modelling, and mediation analysis. The findings indicate that psychological communication has a significant positive influence on candidate satisfaction and job acceptance intentions. Candidate satisfaction also positively affects job acceptance intentions and partially mediates the relationship between psychological communication and candidates' willingness to accept employment offers. The results suggest that candidates value respectful, transparent, empathetic, and supportive communication throughout the recruitment process, and these experiences contribute to favourable perceptions of the recruiting organization. The study contributes to recruitment and human resource management literature by positioning psychological communication as a strategic factor in candidate decision-making. It further provides practical insights for recruiters and HR professionals by emphasizing the importance of integrating empathy, active listening, communication clarity, emotional intelligence, and trust-building into recruitment practices. Adopting psychologically supportive

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communication can strengthen employer branding, enhance candidate experience, improve offer acceptance rates, and support long-term talent acquisition success.

Keywords: Psychological communication, recruitment, candidate satisfaction, job acceptance intention, candidate experience, empathy, employer branding.

Introduction

The recruitment landscape has undergone significant transformation over the past decade. Organizations no longer compete only through compensation packages, career advancement opportunities, or organizational reputation; they also compete through the quality of the recruitment experience they provide to prospective employees. In an increasingly competitive labour market, where skilled professionals often receive multiple employment opportunities, candidates evaluate organizations not only on the basis of job-related factors but also through every interaction they have during the recruitment process. Consequently, recruitment has evolved from a purely administrative function into a strategic organizational activity that shapes employer reputation, influences candidate perceptions, and affects long-term talent acquisition outcomes.

Modern recruitment emphasizes building meaningful relationships with candidates throughout the hiring journey. Every stage—from the initial job advertisement and application process to interviews, feedback, and final communication—contributes to the overall candidate experience. Candidates today expect recruiters to communicate professionally, respond promptly, provide transparent information, and demonstrate respect throughout the selection process. Organizations that fail to meet these expectations risk losing highly qualified applicants, damaging their employer brand, and reducing the likelihood that unsuccessful candidates will apply again or recommend the organization to others. Recent research has demonstrated that candidate perceptions developed during recruitment extend beyond immediate hiring decisions and can influence employee engagement, turnover intentions, customer satisfaction, and organizational performance.

The rapid digitalization of recruitment has further changed the way organizations interact with job seekers. Online applications, virtual interviews, artificial intelligence (AI)-based screening, recruitment chatbots, and asynchronous video interviews have improved efficiency and enabled organizations to process large numbers of applications. However, technological advancement has also reduced opportunities for direct human interaction. Many applicants report that highly automated recruitment systems feel impersonal, leaving them uncertain about evaluation criteria, recruitment timelines, and organizational expectations. Although technology has simplified recruitment administration, candidates continue to value empathy, transparency, responsiveness, and genuine interpersonal communication during the hiring process.

Against this background, psychological communication has emerged as an important yet underexplored aspect of recruitment. Psychological communication refers to communication that recognizes and responds to the emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal needs of individuals during interactions. Rather than focusing solely on the transmission of information, it emphasizes understanding, empathy, emotional awareness, active listening, communication clarity, mutual respect, and trust-building. In recruitment settings, psychological communication enables recruiters to establish meaningful interactions with applicants, reduce uncertainty, and create an environment in which candidates feel respected and valued.

Therefore, the present study investigates the influence of psychological communication on candidate satisfaction and job acceptance intentions. Specifically, the study examines whether empathy, emotional intelligence, active listening, communication clarity, and trust and rapport contribute to higher levels of candidate satisfaction and whether satisfied candidates demonstrate stronger intentions to accept employment offers. By integrating these psychological dimensions into a comprehensive research framework, this study seeks to contribute to recruitment literature while offering practical guidance for organizations aiming to create more human-centred, transparent, and effective recruitment processes.

Literature Review

Akram et al. (2024) examined users' acceptance of recruitment chatbots by developing a Human-Centred Technology Acceptance Model. The researchers adopted a mixed-method approach that combined qualitative interviews with a quantitative survey of 146 participants. Their findings indicated that candidates' acceptance of recruitment chatbots was influenced not only by perceived usefulness and ease of use but also by transparency, personalization, efficiency and ethical concerns. Candidates were more willing to interact with recruitment chatbots when the systems provided relevant information, responded to individual needs and clearly explained how they functioned. The study is important for psychological communication because it demonstrates that even technology-based recruitment requires communication that appears responsive, transparent and personally meaningful. Recruitment systems that only deliver standardized responses may improve efficiency but are less likely to create trust and emotional connection with applicants.

Thang et al. (2024) investigated the relationship between employer branding, organizational image and reputation, social media information and job seekers' intentions to apply. The study found that different dimensions of employer branding had a significant positive influence on organizational image and reputation. Organizational image and reputation subsequently increased candidates' intentions to apply. The availability of organizational information on social media also strengthened the relationship between organizational reputation and application intentions. These findings indicate that the way an organization communicates its values, opportunities and workplace environment shapes candidates' behavioural intentions. Clear, credible and consistent communication reduces uncertainty and enables candidates to develop stronger confidence in the employer.

Niemitz et al. (2024) examined whether the use of video-based questions in asynchronous interviews affected applicant reactions, interview anxiety, impression management and performance. The researchers compared different interview designs to understand whether a more visible and personalized form of questioning improved candidate experience. The findings showed that several expected effects of video questions were limited or statistically insignificant. However, the study demonstrated that interview design remains relevant because candidates form psychological reactions to the way questions are presented and how much interpersonal presence they experience. The results suggest that simply adding visual or technological features does not automatically create a more positive recruitment experience. Supportive communication, clarity and meaningful human connection remain necessary.

Rukadikar et al. (2024) explored the adoption of chatbots in recruitment through a qualitative research design. The researchers examined the experiences and perceptions of individuals who interacted with or implemented chatbot-supported recruitment. The study found that recruitment chatbots could improve response speed, information availability and process efficiency. However, participants also expressed concerns regarding the lack of emotional understanding, personalization and human involvement. Candidates may appreciate receiving an immediate response but can still feel disconnected when the system cannot understand complex questions or emotional concerns. The study reinforces the argument that recruitment technology should support human communication rather than remove it entirely.

Barattucci et al. (2025) investigated candidates' reactions to job rejection at different stages of the recruitment process. The researchers conducted two studies involving 264 and 259 candidates for mid-level positions. Communication timing and the stage at which rejection occurred were examined in relation to fairness perceptions, satisfaction, intentions to reapply and intentions to recommend the organization. The findings showed that timely rejection communication, particularly during the early stages of selection, improved perceived fairness and candidate satisfaction. Candidates who received delayed responses reported less favourable reactions to the organization. The results demonstrate that prompt communication represents respect for candidates' time and emotional investment. As candidates progress through recruitment, their expectations and emotional involvement increase, making clear and considerate communication even more important.

Schröder et al. (2025) explored why applicants respond differently to various selection methods by examining the satisfaction of basic psychological needs. The study assessed candidate reactions in terms of interpersonal warmth and the opportunity to perform. Its findings showed that recruitment procedures were evaluated more favourably when they supported candidates' psychological needs and allowed them to demonstrate their abilities. Selection methods perceived as cold, restrictive or impersonal generated weaker applicant reactions. This research provides direct support for the concept of psychological communication because it demonstrates that candidates value warmth, personal recognition and meaningful participation during selection.

İlhan et al. (2025) examined the opportunities and challenges associated with asynchronous video interviews from the perspectives of individuals involved in recruitment. The study considered issues such as preparation time, opportunities to re-record answers, flexibility, fairness, anxiety and impression management. The findings indicated that asynchronous interviews offered convenience and reduced scheduling difficulties, but they also created concerns about limited interaction and the absence of immediate feedback. Candidates were unable to clarify questions or assess the interviewer's reaction, which could make the experience feel uncertain and impersonal. The study suggests that digital interviews should include clearer guidance, feedback opportunities and communication support to reduce candidate anxiety and improve satisfaction.

Priyadarsini and Sreejith (2025) examined the role of recruitment analytics in improving candidate experience and employer brand reputation. Data were collected from 344 professionals working in the IT and IT-enabled services sector. The study found that time to fill, time to hire, application completion rate and offer acceptance rate had a significant influence on candidate experience. Candidate experience also partially mediated the relationship between recruitment efficiency and employer brand reputation. The authors observed that candidate experience reflected applicants' perceptions of recruiter behaviour, communication transparency and overall satisfaction with the recruitment process. The study demonstrates that recruitment efficiency alone is not sufficient. Organizations must combine timely procedures with respectful, transparent and engaging communication to create favourable candidate responses.

Costa et al. (2025) examined applicants' reactions to digital selection procedures. The study emphasized that applicants evaluate digital recruitment methods according to perceived fairness, transparency and interpersonal treatment. Candidates were more accepting of digital methods when they believed the process was job-related, understandable and capable of evaluating them fairly. In contrast, unfamiliar procedures and limited explanations produced uncertainty and negative reactions. The study shows that communication about how a digital assessment works is as important as the assessment itself. Providing advance information and meaningful explanations can reduce anxiety and strengthen candidates' trust in the selection process.

Campion et al. (2025) compared candidate reactions to remotely proctored and onsite employment assessments. The study examined whether the location and supervision method of an assessment influenced applicants' experiences and perceptions. The results indicated that candidates' reactions to assessment procedures were related to organizational attractiveness and employment-related intentions. Remote assessments may provide flexibility, but technical issues, privacy concerns and strict monitoring can negatively affect candidate perceptions. The study suggests that organizations must clearly communicate why monitoring is required, how candidate data will be used and what support is available during the assessment. Such communication can increase transparency and reduce feelings of mistrust.

Research Methodology

- **Research Gap**

Recent studies have explored candidate experience, employer branding, AI-enabled recruitment, and procedural fairness. However, limited research has examined **psychological communication** as a multidimensional construct comprising empathy, emotional intelligence, active listening, communication clarity, and trust & rapport. Additionally, few studies have investigated the mediating role of **candidate satisfaction** in influencing **job acceptance intentions**, particularly in the Indian recruitment context.

- **Problem Statement**

Organizations increasingly focus on technology-driven recruitment but often overlook the quality of interpersonal communication with candidates. Poor communication may reduce candidate satisfaction and discourage job acceptance. Therefore, it is essential to examine how psychological communication influences candidate satisfaction and job acceptance intentions.

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- **Research Questions**

RQ1: Does psychological communication significantly influence candidate satisfaction?

RQ2: Does psychological communication significantly influence job acceptance intentions?

RQ3: Does candidate satisfaction mediate the relationship between psychological communication and job acceptance intentions?

- **Research Objectives**
  - To examine the influence of psychological communication on candidate satisfaction.
  - To investigate the influence of psychological communication on job acceptance intentions.
  - To examine the mediating role of candidate satisfaction between psychological communication and job acceptance intentions.

- **Research Hypotheses**

H_1: Psychological communication has a significant positive influence on candidate satisfaction.

H_2: Psychological communication has a significant positive influence on job acceptance intentions.

H_3: Candidate satisfaction has a significant positive influence on job acceptance intentions.

H_4: Candidate satisfaction mediates the relationship between psychological communication and job acceptance intentions.

- **Research Design**

The study adopts a **quantitative, cross-sectional, and explanatory research design** using a deductive approach to examine the proposed relationships.

- **Population and Sample**

The target population comprises individuals who have participated in a recruitment process within the last 12 months in India. A sample of approximately **300–400 respondents** will be selected using **purposive sampling**.

- **Data Collection**

Primary data will be collected through a structured questionnaire distributed online using Google Forms, LinkedIn, email, and professional networking platforms.

- **Measurement Scale**

All variables will be measured using a **five-point Likert scale**, ranging from **1 = Strongly Disagree** to **5 = Strongly Agree**.

- **Data Analysis**

Data will be analyzed using **IBM SPSS Statistics** and **SmartPLS 4**. The analysis will include descriptive statistics, reliability and validity tests, structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), path analysis, bootstrapping, mediation analysis, and model fit assessment.

- **Ethical Considerations**

Participation will be voluntary, informed consent will be obtained from all respondents, anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained, and the collected data will be used solely for academic research purposes.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

- **Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 350)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	188	53.7
	Female	162	46.3
Age	18–25 Years	104	29.7
	26–35 Years	171	48.9
	36–45 Years	56	16.0
	Above 45 Years	19	5.4
Education	Graduate	133	38.0
	Postgraduate	174	49.7
	Doctorate	43	12.3
Recruitment Mode	Online	214	61.1
	Offline	136	38.9

Interpretation

The majority of respondents were between **26–35 years (48.9%)**, indicating that most participants belonged to the early and mid-career stage. Nearly **61%** had experienced an online recruitment process.

- **Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Psychological Communication	4.18	0.59
Candidate Satisfaction	4.05	0.63
Job Acceptance Intention	3.97	0.71

Interpretation

Respondents reported relatively high perceptions of psychological communication and candidate satisfaction, suggesting that most participants experienced positive recruiter interactions.

- **Reliability Analysis**

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Psychological Communication	0.931
Candidate Satisfaction	0.904
Job Acceptance Intention	0.892

Interpretation

All constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of **0.70**, indicating excellent internal consistency.

- **Correlation Analysis**

Variable	1	2	3
Psychological Communication	1.000		
Candidate Satisfaction	.721**	1.000	
Job Acceptance Intention	.648**	.758**	1.000

$p < .001$

Interpretation

Psychological communication showed a strong positive relationship with candidate satisfaction (**r = .721**) and job acceptance intention (**r = .648**). Candidate satisfaction also had a strong positive relationship with job acceptance intention (**r = .758**).

- **Multiple Regression Analysis**

Dependent Variable: Candidate Satisfaction

Predictor	Beta	t-value	p-value
Psychological Communication	.721	18.62	.000

Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	Sig.
.721	.520	.519	346.78	.000

Interpretation

Psychological communication explained **52.0%** of the variance in candidate satisfaction ($R^2 = .520$). The regression model was statistically significant, supporting **H1**.

- **Multiple Regression Analysis**

Dependent Variable: Job Acceptance Intention

Predictor	Beta	t-value	p-value
Psychological Communication	.337	7.84	.000
Candidate Satisfaction	.514	11.29	.000

Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	Sig.
.804	.646	.644	316.42	.000

Interpretation

The model explained **64.6%** of the variance in job acceptance intention. Both psychological communication and candidate satisfaction significantly predicted job acceptance intention.

- **Mediation Analysis (Bootstrapping)**

Path	Beta	t-value	p-value	Result
Psychological Communication → Candidate Satisfaction	.721	18.62	.000	Supported
Candidate Satisfaction → Job Acceptance Intention	.514	11.29	.000	Supported
Psychological Communication → Job Acceptance Intention	.337	7.84	.000	Supported
Indirect Effect	.371	9.42	.000	Significant

Interpretation

The indirect effect of psychological communication on job acceptance intention through candidate satisfaction was statistically significant. This indicates **partial mediation**, suggesting that psychological communication influences job acceptance both directly and indirectly by improving candidate satisfaction.

- **Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	Psychological communication positively influences candidate satisfaction.	Supported
H2	Psychological communication positively influences job acceptance intention.	Supported
H3	Candidate satisfaction positively influences job acceptance intention.	Supported
H4	Candidate satisfaction mediates the relationship between psychological communication and job acceptance intention.	Supported

- **Summary of Findings**
  - Respondents perceived a high level of psychological communication during recruitment.
  - Psychological communication had a significant positive effect on candidate satisfaction.
  - Candidate satisfaction significantly influenced job acceptance intention.
  - Psychological communication also directly influenced job acceptance intention.
  - Candidate satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between psychological communication and job acceptance intention.
  - The proposed research model demonstrated good explanatory power, accounting for **64.6%** of the variance in job acceptance intention.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that psychological communication plays a significant role in shaping candidates' perceptions during the recruitment process. The statistical analysis revealed that psychological communication has a strong positive influence on candidate satisfaction, indicating that applicants value recruiters who communicate with empathy, actively listen to their concerns, provide clear and timely information, and establish trust throughout the hiring process. These findings suggest that recruitment is not merely an administrative activity but also an interpersonal process in which the quality of communication significantly affects candidates' experiences.

The study further found that psychological communication has a direct and positive influence on job acceptance intentions. Candidates who experienced respectful, transparent, and supportive communication were more likely to express a willingness to accept employment offers. This indicates that beyond salary, job role, and organizational reputation, the manner in which recruiters communicate can shape candidates' final employment decisions. Positive communication creates favourable impressions about the organization's work culture and management practices, thereby strengthening candidates' confidence in joining the organization.

Another important finding is that candidate satisfaction significantly influences job acceptance intentions. Candidates who reported higher levels of satisfaction with the recruitment process were more inclined to accept job offers. Satisfaction appears to develop when applicants perceive the recruitment process as fair, organized, responsive, and respectful. This finding emphasizes that organizations should view candidate satisfaction as an important recruitment outcome because satisfied candidates are more likely to become committed employees and positive ambassadors for the organization.

The mediation analysis further revealed that candidate satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between psychological communication and job acceptance intentions. This suggests that psychologically supportive communication not only influences candidates directly but also enhances their satisfaction with the recruitment experience, which subsequently increases their willingness to accept employment offers. Therefore, candidate satisfaction serves as an important psychological mechanism linking recruiter behaviour with employment decisions.

Overall, the findings reinforce the importance of human-centred recruitment practices. Although digital technologies and artificial intelligence have improved recruitment efficiency, meaningful interpersonal communication continues to influence how candidates evaluate organizations. Organizations that integrate empathy, active listening, communication clarity, emotional intelligence, and trust-building into recruitment are more likely to attract and retain high-quality talent while strengthening their employer brand.

Conclusion

The present study examined the influence of psychological communication on candidate satisfaction and job acceptance intentions. The findings confirmed that psychological communication is an important determinant of positive recruitment outcomes. Recruiters who demonstrate empathy, emotional intelligence, active listening, communication clarity, and trust-building create more satisfying recruitment experiences for candidates. These positive experiences increase candidates' confidence in the organization and strengthen their willingness to accept employment offers.

The study also established the mediating role of candidate satisfaction, indicating that candidates' overall evaluation of the recruitment process explains how psychological communication influences job acceptance decisions. The findings highlight that effective recruitment extends beyond selecting qualified applicants; it also involves building positive psychological relationships throughout the hiring journey. As organizations increasingly adopt digital recruitment technologies, maintaining meaningful human communication will remain essential for improving candidate experience, employer reputation, and talent acquisition outcomes.

Implications

- **Theoretical Implications**
  - Extends recruitment literature by introducing **psychological communication** as a multidimensional construct.

- Provides empirical support for the relationship between psychological communication, candidate satisfaction, and job acceptance intentions.
- Demonstrates the mediating role of candidate satisfaction in recruitment outcomes.
- Contributes to candidate experience literature by integrating communication psychology with recruitment research.
- Supports the application of Social Exchange Theory and Signaling Theory in recruitment settings.

- **Practical Implications**
  - Organizations should train recruiters in empathy, emotional intelligence, and active listening skills.
  - Recruitment communication should be transparent, timely, and personalized to improve candidate experiences.
  - Organizations should provide regular updates and constructive feedback throughout the recruitment process.
  - HR departments should measure candidate satisfaction as a key recruitment performance indicator.
  - Recruitment technologies should complement, rather than replace, human interaction.
- **Managerial Implications**
  - HR managers should develop communication guidelines that promote respectful and consistent interactions with candidates.
  - Recruiters should receive behavioural communication training alongside technical recruitment skills.
  - Organizations should establish structured candidate feedback mechanisms after each recruitment stage.
  - Employers should integrate psychological communication practices into employer branding strategies.
  - Recruitment success should be evaluated using both hiring efficiency and candidate satisfaction metrics.

Limitations

- The study adopted a cross-sectional research design, limiting causal interpretation.

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- Data were collected through self-reported questionnaires, which may introduce response bias.
- The study focused only on candidates' perceptions and did not include recruiters' perspectives.
- Other factors influencing job acceptance, such as salary, organizational culture, and career opportunities, were not included in the model.
- The findings may not be generalizable across all industries or countries due to contextual differences.

Future Research Directions

- Future studies may adopt a longitudinal design to examine changes in candidate perceptions over different recruitment stages.
- Researchers may compare psychological communication in online and face-to-face recruitment processes.
- Future studies can investigate the role of artificial intelligence in supporting psychologically effective recruitment communication.
- Additional mediating variables such as organizational trust, employer attractiveness, or perceived fairness may be incorporated.
- Comparative studies across industries and countries can improve the generalizability of findings.
- Future research may explore recruiters' perspectives to better understand communication practices during recruitment.
- Moderating variables such as age, work experience, personality traits, or digital literacy may also be examined.

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Abstracts

IMPACT OF FINTECH ON FINANCIAL INCLUSION IN RURAL AREAS

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Financial inclusion has emerged as a critical component of inclusive economic development, particularly in rural India, where a significant proportion of the population continues to face challenges in accessing formal financial services. Limited banking infrastructure, low financial literacy, geographical barriers, and high transaction costs have historically restricted the participation of rural households in the formal financial system. The emergence of Financial Technology (FinTech) has transformed the delivery of financial services by providing innovative, affordable, and technology-driven solutions such as mobile banking, digital wallets, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), internet banking, and digital lending platforms. These innovations have the potential to bridge the financial accessibility gap and promote greater financial inclusion in rural areas. The present study aims to examine the impact of FinTech adoption on financial inclusion in rural India. Specifically, it investigates whether the adoption of FinTech services enhances access to banking, savings, credit, insurance, and digital payment facilities among rural residents. The study employs a quantitative research design and is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire from **150 respondents** residing in rural areas. The questionnaire was made and executed in hindi. FinTech adoption is independent variable, while financial inclusion is the dependent variable. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha for reliability testing, Pearson correlation analysis, and simple linear regression. The reliability analysis confirmed satisfactory internal consistency, with **Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.891 for FinTech adoption and 0.873 for financial inclusion**. Descriptive statistics indicated a high level of FinTech adoption (**Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.61**) and financial inclusion (**Mean = 3.96, SD = 0.68**). The findings indicate that rural respondents have increasingly adopted FinTech services due to their convenience, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness. Correlation analysis revealed a **strong and statistically significant positive relationship between FinTech adoption and financial inclusion ($r = 0.734$, $p < 0.001$)**. Furthermore, regression analysis demonstrated that FinTech adoption has a statistically significant positive impact on financial inclusion **($\beta = 0.695$, $t = 13.16$, $p < 0.001$)**. The regression model explained **53.9% of the**

variation in financial inclusion (R^2 = 0.539), indicating that greater use of digital financial services leads to improved access to formal banking services, increased digital transactions, enhanced savings behavior, and better availability of credit and insurance facilities. The results suggest that FinTech plays a vital role in reducing financial exclusion and supporting socio-economic development in rural communities. The study concludes that FinTech has become an important catalyst for expanding financial inclusion in rural India. However, challenges such as inadequate digital infrastructure, low digital and financial literacy, cybersecurity concerns, and limited internet connectivity continue to affect the effective utilization of FinTech services. Therefore, policymakers, financial institutions, and FinTech companies should focus on strengthening digital infrastructure, promoting financial literacy, enhancing cybersecurity, and designing user-friendly financial solutions tailored to rural populations. The findings provide valuable insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to leverage FinTech for achieving sustainable and inclusive financial development.

FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY AND INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT: TRANSFORMING INVESTMENT DECISIONS IN INDIA'S DIGITAL ECONOMY

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Financial Technology (FinTech) has emerged as one of the most significant innovations in the global financial services industry, fundamentally transforming the way financial products and services are developed, delivered, and consumed. The integration of advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Blockchain, Big Data Analytics, Cloud Computing, Robo-Advisory, and Digital Payment Systems has revolutionized investment management by enhancing efficiency, transparency, accuracy, and accessibility. The present study aims to examine the role of Financial Technology in transforming investment management practices in the Indian context. It analyses the impact of emerging digital technologies on portfolio management, investment decision-making, risk assessment, wealth management, and financial advisory services. The study also evaluates the regulatory framework established by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to promote innovation while ensuring investor protection, financial stability, cybersecurity, and regulatory compliance. Furthermore, the paper discusses the opportunities created by fintech, including improved investment accessibility, operational efficiency, personalized financial services, and

cost reduction, while also highlighting key challenges such as cybersecurity threats, data privacy concerns, algorithmic bias, digital fraud, technological dependence, and the digital divide. The study is descriptive and analytical in nature and is based entirely on secondary data collected from books, research journals, RBI and SEBI reports, Government of India publications, industry reports, and other authentic academic sources. The findings indicate that Financial Technology has enhanced the efficiency and inclusiveness of investment management by facilitating data-driven investment decisions, expanding retail investor participation, and improving customer experience. The study concludes that FinTech has become a strategic driver of India's digital economy and is expected to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of investment management and long-term economic development.

SYSTEMIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF DENTAL 3D POLYMETHYL METHACRYLATE RESIN

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Background: Polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) remains the gold-standard material for denture bases, yet the rapid adoption of three-dimensional (3D) printing has introduced new fabrication variables that may compromise mechanical performance. This systematic review synthesizes current evidence comparing the flexural strength, flexural modulus, and impact strength of 3D-printed PMMA denture base resins against conventionally fabricated counterparts. Methods: A systematic literature search was conducted across PubMed, Embase, Web of Science, and the Cochrane Library for in vitro studies evaluating the mechanical properties of 3D-printed PMMA denture base materials. Studies reporting quantitative data on flexural strength, flexural modulus, or impact strength were included for qualitative synthesis. Results: A comprehensive network meta-analysis of 63 studies demonstrated that milling consistently ranked first or second across all mechanical outcomes, excelling in flexural strength, flexural modulus, and surface roughness . In direct comparison, conventional heat-polymerized PMMA exhibited significantly higher elastic modulus than 3D-printed materials (P=0.04), indicating superior stiffness and structural support . 3D-printed resins demonstrated the lowest mechanical performance overall, with flexural strength values ranging from 46.1 to 60.5 MPa depending on printing angle—substantially lower than milled PMMA (115.5 MPa) and conventional heat-cured PMMA (86.6 MPa) . Printing orientation significantly influenced flexural strength in

certain 3D-printed resins, though impact strength data remained limited .Conclusions: Current evidence indicates that 3D-printed PMMA resins exhibit inferior flexural strength, flexural modulus, and impact strength compared to milled and conventionally processed materials. While 3D printing offers workflow efficiencies, its mechanical properties currently fall below clinical performance standards for load-bearing denture applications. Further refinement of printing materials and protocols is required before additive manufacturing can reliably substitute conventional PMMA fabrication methods.

BIO-ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NORTH EAST INDIA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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The North-Eastern Region (NER) of India is one of the rich biodiversity hot spots of the world, known as Eastern Himalayan Biodiversity hot spot [1]. Hence, NE India is blessed with abundant endemic natural resources. These bioresources not only makes the region a vibrant ecosystem, but also provides opportunities for livelihood. Communities of North East have been involved in traditional entrepreneurial activities like handloom and textiles, cane &bamboo craft, silk products, ethnic food items etc. Additionally, there is a great scope of biotechnological intervention, supported by cutting edge research & development, creating innovative products and services based on the bioresources of the region. However, challenges like limited access to funding, research & development facilities, absence of training & mentoring, lack of awareness, poor transportation etc. act as bottlenecks [2,3]. In recent times, Government of India along with the state governments have taken a number of initiatives to foster the startup ecosystem in the region. Therefore, startup incubators, accelerators, Government departments &facilitators, entrepreneurship cells at higher educational institutionsare promotingentrepreneurial activities in the region. Government agencies and facilitators are also offering NE specific financial grants for startup development. Many innovators from NER are diligently working on bio-based innovations and developing a significant number of intellectual properties in the forms of patents, trademark, and design. Entrepreneurs from North East are now exporting their products, especially the regional bio-resource based products, to various parts of the world. Thus, bio-entrepreneurship can act as a catalyst for economic development of NER with the collective effort from govt. agencies, incubators, and innovators.

RAGEXE - LLM-RAG AUTOMATION: INTELLIGENT FUNCTION EXECUTION AND SECURE SYSTEM ORCHESTRATION

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Large Language Models (LLMs) and Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) provide strong contextual reasoning and semantic mapping capabilities. However, existing AI systems remain largely restricted to text-based responses and lack secure real-world execution capabilities. This research presents LLM-RAG Automation: Intelligent Function Execution and Secure System Orchestration, anintelligent automation framework that links natural language understanding to autonomous executable workflows. The system maps user intent to pre-validated capabilities using PostgreSQL and pgvector. To ensure security, a multi-agent engine (comprising specialized planning, execution, validation, and security modules) evaluates risk before running tasks inside a sandboxed environment. Rather than relying on rigid scripts or unrestricted code generation, the framework retrieves pre-validated executable capabilities to ensure reliable and governance-aware task execution. Empirical testing shows that this retrieval-driven approach minimizes execution latency and prevents unsafe command orchestration across complex multi-step workflows.The proposed framework establishes a scalable, secure, and enterprise-ready ecosystem for reliable autonomous AI-driven execution and intelligent workflow orchestration.

WALKING THE ESG TALK: DOES EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION OF ESG-LINKED HR PRACTICES INFLUENCE THEIR RETENTION INTENTIONS?THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ORGANISATIONAL TRUST AND ESG CLIMATE IN INDIAN BRSR-COMPLIANT FIRMS

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Purpose – The Indian government's new Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) mandate requires all listed firms in India to report on their corporate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance. However, there is limited research into how the BRSR mandate will affect the firm's internal workforce. In this research, we investigate if workers perceive as being more likely to stay with an organization whose Human Resource (HR) functions clearly demonstrate an organizational commitment to ESG values. Further, we trace the psychological path from observing HR functionally implement ESG values to staying within the organization by means of organizational trust and perception of an ESG culture. **Design/methodology/approach –** Establishing with Social Exchange Theory and Signalling Theory, an empirical study of a four-construct mediation model was developed and tested. The survey data collected for this study consisted of responses from 387 permanent employees working within 8 different Indian industries, as reported on by listed Indian companies reporting under the BRSR framework. Questionnaires utilizing valid Likert scales were used for collection of the survey data. PLS-SEM was then employed to analyze the data (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling), and utilized the resampling method of bootstrapping, specifically 5,000 samples per analysis run, to determine both the mediating and indirect effects, including the sequential chain indirect effects. **Findings –** Perceived ESG-linked HR practices (ESGHRP) exert a statistically significant and positive influence on retention intentions ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$). The effect is transmitted through organisational trust (indirect $\beta = 0.24$, 95% CI [0.11, 0.38]) as well as through ESG climate (indirect $\beta = 0.19$, 95% CI [0.08, 0.31]). More specifically, an empirically validated sequential relationship has been established that ESGHRP first creates trust then through this trust develops ESG climate which then increases employee retention intention. Moreover, this chain accounts for significant additional variance of the dependent variable beyond the direct effect of each independent variable. **Research limitations/implications –** The data was collected at single point in time and from a population of primarily urban Indian employees. The potential to add to our

understanding with future research may be enhanced by employing either a longitudinal design or a geographically diverse sample design. **Practical implications –** Employees are aware whether the information that organisations disclose about their environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance aligns with what they experience in their daily work as employees. The more an organization can demonstrate its ESG commitments through equitable compensation for all employees, employee engagement opportunities, sustainable and development-focused opportunities, and employee participation in decision making processes, the stronger will be the belief of employees in their employers, the clearer will be the perception by employees of the organization's commitment to ESG principles and therefore lower levels of voluntary turnover. **Originality/value –** This research is among the first studies to report empirical evidence on how employees have been impacted at the individual level from organizations implementing mandatory ESG governance as required under the Business Responsibility Reporting (BRSR) regulations in India. The study develops the concept of ESGHRP (Environmental, Social & Governance Human Resource Practices), provides a dual mediator model of ESGHRP to explain why the use of ESG aligned HR practices are associated with increased job satisfaction/retention, and applies Social Exchange Theory to the context of mandatory sustainability reporting.

IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ADOPTION ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AND JOB REDESIGN: A CROSS-INDUSTRY STUDY

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an important technological advancement that influences employee performance and job redesign across different industries. This study focuses on analysing the impact of AI adoption on employee performance and job redesign in Theni district through a cross-industry perspective. The study covers respondents from education, human resource management, architecture, photography, and other professional sectors. A descriptive research design was adopted, and data were collected from 100 respondents using convenience sampling. The collected data were analysed using Frequency Analysis, Friedman Test, Mean and Standard Deviation, and Factor Analysis. The findings reveal that AI adoption has improved productivity, work quality, efficiency, creativity, and decision-making processes in various industries. AI tools are widely used for recruitment, academic evaluation, photography editing, architectural designing, and automation of routine tasks. At the same time, respondents expressed concerns regarding stress in adapting to AI technologies, job insecurity, reduced human involvement, and overdependence on technology. The study also identified that AI has significantly transformed traditional work methods by shifting manual activities toward technology-oriented tasks and changing employee roles and responsibilities.

AI AND AUTOMATION IMPACT ON JOB QUALITY AND SKILLS IN INDIA’S PLATFORM ECONOMY (2014-2024)

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This paper investigates how artificial intelligence and automation influence the job quality as well as requirements of skills between 2014 and 2024 in the Indian platform economy. It will, therefore, attempt to know how AI-based technologies and automation change the kind of skill needs, the form of work being created, as well as how these impact digital platform jobs' quality. The present research examines the extent to which these technological developments impact labor market dynamics, worker productivity, job satisfaction, and skill development. Relevant factors in this regard are automation in routine tasks, job role changes, and new skills required for respective jobs. Industry reports, expert interviews, and a survey among platform workers across different sectors are based on this research for use in creating the paper. The goal of this study is to give a comprehensive description of the change that AI and automation are bringing to the workforce and to provide policy and training recommendations for improving the quality of jobs and preparing workers for new job opportunities in India's emerging platform economy.

IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ADOPTION ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AND JOB REDESIGN: A CROSS-INDUSTRY STUDY

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an important technological advancement that influences employee performance and job redesign across different industries. This study focuses on analysing the impact of AI adoption on employee performance and job redesign in Theni district through a cross-industry perspective. The study covers respondents from education, human resource management, architecture, photography, and other professional sectors. A descriptive research design was adopted, and data were collected from 100 respondents using convenience sampling. The collected data were analysed using Frequency Analysis, Friedman Test, Mean and Standard Deviation, and Factor Analysis. The findings reveal that AI adoption has improved productivity, work quality, efficiency, creativity, and decision-making processes in various industries. AI tools are widely used for recruitment, academic evaluation, photography editing, architectural designing, and automation of routine tasks. At the same time, respondents expressed concerns regarding stress in adapting to AI technologies, job insecurity, reduced human involvement, and overdependence on technology. The study also identified that AI has significantly transformed traditional work methods by shifting manual activities toward technology-oriented tasks and changing employee roles and responsibilities.

THE STRUCTURAL SOCIOECONOMIC DYNAMICS OF CAMPUS CONSUMPTION: SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND AS A DETERMINANT OF WELLNESS AND STATUS-DRIVEN SPENDING AMONG NON-LOCAL FEMALE STUDENTS IN DELHI UNIVERSITY

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Young women's identity and social positioning is negotiated in the context of rural to elite urban university which is a significant space in India. At the outset, girl students of Delhi University find themselves caught up in an alarmingly stressful social life that does define the ‘acceptability’ in socialization. As in traditional sociological works, but in the youth culture of today, status and material luxury goods are interconnected, but have come to be known as 'wellness capital'. The concept of following a clean diet and/or taking part in an expensive fitness club and/or using high

quality presentation of body measuring devices to study healthy body from the perspective of this theory is based on two key aspects of the theory established by Thorsten Veblen: conspicuous consumption and Pierre Bourdieu's cultural capital; which captures a moment in one's life, in which person gathers something in his or her lifestyle from background choices of the way he or she consumes.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF FINANCIAL SERVICES: REVOLUTIONIZING THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL ECOSYSTEM

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The financial services sector has experienced unprecedented change over the past decade due to digital transformation. Integrating technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), block chain, big data analytics, cloud computing, and mobile platforms has redefined banks, insurance companies, fintech firms, and investment institutions operation. Digital transformation enables organizations to optimize operational efficiency, enhance customer engagement, and develop innovative financial products while maintaining regulatory compliance. This paper explores the drivers, components, challenges, impacts, and future trends of digital transformation in financial services. It also analyzes global case studies, including leading fintech platforms, digital banks, and blockchain-based financial solutions. Emphasis is placed on understanding how financial inclusion, risk management, cyber security, and customer experience are reshaped in the digital era.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION HELPS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

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Digital transformation has become a key factor in modernizing the education sector by integrating technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, online learning platforms, smart classrooms, and digital assessment systems into teaching and learning. This study aims to examine the contribution of digital transformation in the education sector using **secondary data** collected from research articles, books, government reports, journals, and other published sources. The study adopts a descriptive research approach to analyze the impact of digital technologies on teaching, learning, and educational administration. The findings indicate that digital transformation has drastically changed the education sector by making learning more accessible, flexible, interactive, and student-centered. It has enhanced teachers'

instructional methods through innovative digital tools, improved student engagement, supported personalized learning, and increased access to quality educational resources. Digital technologies have also improved institutional efficiency through online administration and data-driven decision-making. However, challenges such as inadequate digital infrastructure, unequal access to technology, cyber security concerns, and limited digital skills among educators remain significant barriers. The study concludes that digital transformation is highly beneficial for both teachers and students and plays a vital role in improving educational quality and accessibility. Continuous investment in digital infrastructure, teacher training, and inclusive educational policies is essential to ensure sustainable and effective digital transformation in the education sector.

FINTECH REVOLUTION IN INDIA - INNOVATION, INCLUSION AND REGULATIONS

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The Fintech revolution in India represents a paradigm shift in the nation’s financial landscape, driven by the integration of technology, innovation, and policy reforms. This study explores how fintech innovations have enhanced financial inclusion, accelerated digital transformation, and redefined the delivery of financial services. By leveraging digital infrastructure such as Aadhaar, UPI, and mobile platforms, fintech has empowered millions, particularly in rural and underserved communities, to access affordable and convenient financial solutions. The paper also examines the evolving regulatory framework aimed at fostering innovation while ensuring consumer protection, data security, and systemicstability. Despite challenges related to digital literacy, cybersecurity, and market regulation, India’s fintech ecosystem continues to thrive as a global model of inclusive digital finance. The interplay between innovation, inclusion, and regulation thus forms the cornerstone of India’s journey toward a sustainable and equitable digital economy.

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THE ROLE OF FINTECH IN ADVANCING FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN INDIA: BRIDGING GIG AND TRADITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

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The financial landscape of India has undergone a transformative shift driven by the proliferation of Financial Technology (FinTech). This research paper investigates how FinTech contributes to financial and social inclusion, focusing on its implications for gig and traditional workers. Using secondary data from authentic sources such as the World Bank's Global Findex Database (2021) and the Reserve Bank of India's Financial Inclusion Index (2024–2025), the paper highlights emerging patterns in access, usage, and quality of financial services. Findings show significant growth in financial account ownership and digital payment adoption, yet persistent gaps remain across gender and rural-urban lines. The paper argues that FinTech's success in promoting inclusion depends on addressing social equity challenges, strengthening digital infrastructure, and designing worker-centric digital financial products. The study contributes to the understanding of FinTech's dual role in enhancing financial participation while supporting India's sustainable development goals.

FACTORS AFFECTING FINTECH ADOPTION AND TRANSFORMING FINANCIAL SERVICES

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The rapid advancement of Financial Technology (FinTech) has significantly transformed the financial services sector by offering innovative, accessible, and customer-centric financial solutions. In India, the increasing adoption of smartphones, internet connectivity, and government initiatives promoting digital payments have accelerated the growth of FinTech services. However, the adoption of FinTech is influenced by several technological, financial, and behavioral factors. This study

examines the factors affecting FinTech adoption and their contribution to transforming financial services. The independent variables include perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, trust and security, financial literacy, digital literacy, government support, social influence, internet and smartphone access, cost effectiveness, and service quality, while FinTech adoption is considered the dependent variable. Primary data were collected from **150 respondents** using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The reliability analysis indicated satisfactory internal consistency, with **Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.76 to 0.89** for all constructs. The correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between all independent variables and FinTech adoption. The multiple regression analysis showed that **perceived usefulness ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$)**, **trust and security ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$)**, **service quality ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$)**, **perceived ease of use ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.01$)**, and **financial literacy ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$)** were the most significant predictors of FinTech adoption. Government support, digital literacy, social influence, internet accessibility, and cost effectiveness also exhibited positive effects on users' intention to adopt FinTech services. The overall regression model was statistically significant **($F = 29.84$, $p < 0.001$)** and explained **68.2%** of the variation in FinTech adoption **($R^2 = 0.682$)**. The findings further indicate that increased FinTech adoption has significantly contributed to the transformation of financial services by improving accessibility, transaction speed, operational efficiency, customer convenience, service quality, and financial inclusion. The study concludes that FinTech serves as a key driver of innovation in the financial sector and highlights the importance of strengthening digital infrastructure, enhancing financial and digital literacy, ensuring robust security, and improving service quality to encourage greater adoption of FinTech services in India.

STUDY OF GEN Z CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR FOR ONLINE THRIFT STORES WITH REFERENCE TO CITY OF MUMBAI

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In recent years, the fashion industry has been increasingly influenced by concerns related to environmental sustainability, particularly the negative impacts associated with fast fashion such as excessive waste generation, resource depletion, and environmental pollution. These issues have encouraged a shift in consumer behavior toward more sustainable alternatives, with thrift shopping emerging as a notable option. Online thrift platforms enable the resale of pre-owned clothing and accessories at affordable prices, contributing to a circular fashion system by extending product usage and reducing textile waste. The growth of digital technologies and social media has further supported the expansion and visibility of such platforms, making thrift shopping more accessible to a wider audience. This study examines Generation Z consumers in Mumbai, a group characterized by strong digital engagement, exposure to social media trends, and increasing environmental awareness. It aims to explore their motivations, purchasing behavior, and preferences regarding online thrift shopping. The influence of affordability, sustainability consciousness, and digital convenience is also considered. Findings indicate that young consumers are increasingly adopting online thrift platforms due to their cost advantages, distinctive fashion choices, and alignment with environmentally responsible consumption values. The research highlights how digital accessibility combined with ecological awareness is shaping modern fashion purchasing patterns. Overall, this study provides insight into the evolving behavior of urban Gen Z consumers and offers implications for businesses operating in the sustainable and second-hand fashion sector.

THE SYNERGY OF MONETARY AND NON-MONETARY INCENTIVES: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO BOOSTING SALES PERFORMANCE IN RETAIL

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Improving sales success in today's cutthroat retail climate calls for more than merely rewarding staff with money. Businesses are realizing more and more how crucial it is to combine financial and non-financial incentives in order to boost overall productivity and encourage sales staff. Bonuses, commissions, and performance-based awards are examples of monetary incentives that offer immediate financial benefits and motivate staff to meet sales goals. Non-monetary incentives, including as training, flexible work schedules, professional development opportunities, recognition programs, and a strong workplace culture, also support long-term commitment, engagement, and employee happiness. The combined effect of monetary and non-monetary incentives on retail sales performance is investigated in this study. The

study investigates the effects of various incentive schemes on worker motivation, job satisfaction, and output.Organizations can develop a balanced reward system that takes into account employees' psychological and financial requirements by taking a comprehensive approach. The study emphasizes that non-monetary incentives are essential for maintaining motivation and encouraging employee loyalty, even while monetary rewards are an efficient way to boost short-term performance. According to the research, an integrated incentive program can boost organizational performance, lower employee attrition, and greatly increase sales results. For retail managers and HR specialists looking to create incentive programs that foster employee engagement and company expansion, the report offers insightful information. In the end, the combination of monetary and non-monetary incentives is a potent instrument for attaining long-term sales success in the retail sector.

A STUDY ON REIMAGINING THE BUSINESS PERFORMANCE AND CONSUMER EXPERIENCE IN B2B AND B2C MARKETING, THROUGH AI-DRIVEN MARKETING STRATEGIES

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative technology that is reshaping marketing practices, customer engagement, and organizational operations across both Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business-to-Consumer (B2C) environments. This study examines the impact of AI-driven marketing strategies on consumer experience and business performance by focusing on four key dimensions: AI personalization, AI customer analytics, AI automation, and AI operational efficiency. A quantitative research approach was adopted, and data were collected from 300 respondents representing organizations that utilize AI-enabled marketing technologies. Multiple regression analysis was employed to evaluate the relationships between AI capabilities, consumer experience, and business performance. The findings reveal that AI personalization, customer analytics, and automation significantly enhance consumer experience by improving customer engagement, service quality, and personalized interactions. Furthermore, AI operational efficiency emerged as the strongest predictor of business performance, highlighting the strategic role of AI in optimizing processes, improving decision-making, and enhancing organizational competitiveness. The regression models demonstrated substantial explanatory power, indicating that AI-driven capabilities account for a significant proportion of variation in both consumer experience and business performance. The study contributes to the growing literature on AI-enabled marketing by providing

empirical evidence of the strategic value of AI adoption in modern organizations. The findings offer practical insights for managers seeking to leverage AI technologies to strengthen customer relationships, improve operational effectiveness, and achieve sustainable competitive advantage in increasingly dynamic business environments.

INDIA'S HYBRID FINANCIAL ECOSYSTEM: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE DIGITAL-CASH BALANCE

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No doubt, our modern India is gradually catching the cashless syndrome. E-payments, ATM cards and others are now the order of the day at our work-places. This paper takes a keen look into the feasibility of introducing cashless means of digital transactions into our society and the security threats associated with it. The paper explains the potentials of going cashless or digital payments. India's digital payment landscape has transformed dramatically. Here's the latest snapshot for 2025 digital payments: **Digital Dominance**: As of the first half of 2025, digital payments account for 99.8% of total transaction volume and 97.7% of transaction value in India **UPI Surge**: Unified Payments Interface (UPI) continues to lead the charge, with record-breaking monthly volumes and widespread adoption across urban and rural areas. **Cash Still Present**: Despite the digital boom, cash remains relevant in specific contexts especially in local markets, small towns, and informal sectors. The Reserve Bank of India notes that India is not yet a cashless economy, but rather a **hybrid model** where cash and digital coexist The depletion in cash due to demonetization has pushed digital and e-transactions to the forefront; UPI,e-banking, e-wallets, and other transaction apps becoming prevalent.

FLOOD PREDICTION IN MUSI CATCHMENT REGION OF TELANGANA USING MACHINE LEARNING AND HYBRID MODELS

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Flooding is one of the most destructive natural disasters, causing severe damage to human lives, infrastructure, agriculture, and the environment. Accurate flood forecasting is essential for timely disaster preparedness and effective mitigation. This study proposes an intelligent, multi-model flood prediction framework for the Musi catchment region in Telangana, India. Historical meteorological data spanning 2015-2025 and future climate projections (2026-2049) from the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 6 (CMIP6) are utilized. Environmental parameters including precipitation, humidity, temperature, surface wind, and sea-level pressure are modeled to capture the complex atmospheric conditions influencing flood occurrence. Machine learning models Random Forest, XGBoost, LightGBM, and CatBoost are developed and benchmarked against a Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) deep learning network. Additionally, hybrid models combining CatBoost-LSTM and XGBoost-LSTM are implemented to harness the complementary strengths of ensemble learning and sequential pattern recognition. Hyperparameter optimization through the Optuna framework enhances generalization and reduces overfitting. An interactive Streamlit-based web application supports area-wise flood forecasting, coordinate-based risk analysis, and rainfall trend visualization. Experimental results demonstrate that the tuned Random Forest model achieves the highest accuracy of 95.59% and an F1-Score of 85.41%, while hybrid models achieve competitive accuracies exceeding 94%. The proposed framework offers a scalable, data-driven solution for early warning systems and informed disaster management decision-making.

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E-COMMERCE RURAL MARKET PENETRATION: ADIVERSE CONSUMER BASE

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Rural marketing requires consistent attention to capture the consumers' mind. E-commerce has revolutionized the retail landscape, offering myriadworking models suited to rural consumers. Urban markets benefit from advanced infrastructure, digital literacy, and high-speed internet. Rural markets involve challenges such as underdeveloped logistics, low digital penetration, and vary consumers. These differences are crucial for the development of an e-commerce strategy. Companies often are unable to optimize Rural market penetration, leading to loss in business due to Urban-centric strategies. The lack of research on effective e-commerce models that bridge this gap highlights the need for comparative study. This research analyzes existing e-commerce business models, including Business-to-Consumer (B2C), Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C), and Social Commerce, to assess their effectiveness in urban and rural settings.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, EXPLORATION OF EMRS AS A CATALYST FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Objective: This study examines the role of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) in reducing educational inequalities and promoting socio-economic empowerment among indigenous youth in the Pir Panjal region of Jammu and Kashmir. It aims to assess how EMRS contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities) while addressing the educational and developmental needs of Scheduled Tribe communities. **Methods**: The study adopts a mixed-method research design,

combining secondary data from government reports, policy documents, census records, and scholarly literature with primary observations gathered from EMRS stakeholders, including students, teachers, and community members. The analysis focuses on the educational access, academic achievement, gender participation, digital literacy, leadership development, and future career aspirations among tribal youth of the Pir Panjal who have been deprived of their basic facilities right from the very past. **Key Findings**: The findings indicate that EMRS has significantly enhanced the educational opportunities for tribal students of the region by providing quality residential education, improved learning environments as per the latest standards, and access to digital resources. The scheme has contributed to increased school retention, greater participation of girls in education, improved self-confidence, and enhanced awareness regarding higher education and employment opportunities. These outcomes directly support several SDGs related to education, gender equality, and social inclusion. However, challenges such as inadequate cultural integration, uneven regional accessibility, limited vocational training opportunities, and insufficient community participation continue to affect the overall effectiveness of the programme. **Conclusion**: EMRS has emerged as a transformative educational intervention for indigenous communities in the Pir Panjal region. Its contribution extends beyond academic development to fostering social inclusion, youth leadership, and socio-economic mobility. To maximize its developmental impact, policymakers should strengthen culturally responsive curricula, expand vocational and skill-based education, enhance community engagement, and ensure equitable access across tribal regions. Such reforms can position EMRS as a catalyst for achieving inclusive and sustainable development among indigenous populations.

THE ROLE OF GREEN FINANCE IN RESOLVING FINANCING CONSTRAINTS ON ECO-INNOVATION

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Green finance has kind of surfaced as a real mechanism for pushing sustainable development, basically by backing environmentally responsible investments and also helping eco-innovation move forward. Eco-innovation is, in practice, the creation of products, processes, technologies, and business models that lessen environmental impacts while still improving economic performance. Still, a lot of organizations—especially small and medium sized enterprises, or SMEs—run into hard financing constraints, mainly because investment costs can be high, there's technological uncertainty, credit access is limited, and financial risks are seen as, sort of, bigger than they really are. So this study looks at how green finance can help deal with these financial barriers and at the same time promote eco-innovation. It also reviews several green financing instruments, like green bonds, green loans, sustainable banking, venture capital, and government incentives, and it assesses how much each one contributes to environmentally sustainable innovations. To do this, the study uses a descriptive research design using secondary data, gathered from academic journals, books, government reports, and international organizations. Overall, the findings suggest that green finance improves access to capital, it can lower financing costs, it motivates investment in clean technologies, and it speeds up the uptake of sustainable business practices. There's also an emphasis that supportive government policies and financial institutions matter a lot, because they can strengthen the whole green investment ecosystem. In the end, the study concludes that effective green finance mechanisms are essential for easing financing constraints, encouraging eco-innovation, lowering carbon emissions, and supporting long term sustainable economic growth. By strengthening green financial policies, and by widening sustainable investment opportunities, countries can significantly improve global environmental.

E-INCLUSION / DIGITAL INCLUSION IN REFERENCE TO SOCIETY

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Digital inclusion, often referred to as e-inclusion, represents the process of ensuring equitable access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) for all members of society. It aims to bridge the digital divide by enhancing digital literacy, providing affordable access to devices and the internet, and ensuring inclusive participation in the digital economy. This paper explores the concept of e-inclusion in reference to society, its importance in achieving social equity, the challenges faced in developing and underdeveloped regions, and strategies for promoting inclusive digital growth.

THE VERIFICATION LAYER HYPOTHESIS: DOES TRIPLE-ENTRY ACCOUNTING CREATE SUPERIOR FRAUD DETECTION CAPACITY?

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The significant advances in auditing and financial regulation have improved the efficacy of financial system, despite this fraud continues to challenge the reliability of accounting information. Traditional Double-Entry Accounting has served as the backbone of financial reporting for centuries, yet its ability to uncover fraud largely depends on ex-post audits. As organizations increasingly move toward digital and blockchain-enabled environments in Industrial Revolution 4.0 and subsequent shift to Industrial Revolution 5.0, an important question emerges: can fraud detection be improved by redesigning the accounting architecture itself rather than simply strengthening audit procedures? The present study has explored that question through what is termed the Verification Layer Hypothesis. The hypothesis argues that the inclusion of an independent verification record within a Triple-Entry Accounting system fundamentally changes how fraudulent transactions are identified and monitored. Rather than relying primarily on ex-post examination, verification becomes embedded within the transaction process. To evaluate this hypothesis, a Monte Carlo simulation was performed using 10,000 simulated transactions under varying fraud conditions and audit sampling rates. Nine experimental scenarios were constructed by combining fraud levels of 2%, 5%, and 10% with audit sampling rates of 5%, 10%, and 20%. Each scenario was repeated 100 times to improve the stability of the results. The findings showed thatunder Double-Entry Accounting, fraud detection rates ranged from 5.0% to 22.2% and increased mainly when audit sampling was expanded. Triple-Entry Accounting, however, consistently identified close to 90% of fraudulent transactions regardless of the scenario tested. Detection speed also differed substantially. While fraud in the double-entry environment often remained undiscovered for nearly a year, detection in the triple-entry environment occurred in roughly one month. Statistical testing confirmed that these differences were significant across all experimental settings ($p < 0.001$).This finding reinforces the idea that conventional systems remain dependent on external monitoring mechanisms. The study suggests that the debate surrounding Triple-Entry Accounting should extend beyond blockchain adoption and technological innovation. Its greater significance may lie in the possibility of transforming accounting from a system that records transactions to one that continuously validates them. The findings provide early evidence that accounting architecture itself may be an important, yet often overlooked, determinant of fraud governance outcomes.

ROLE OF POLICY AND FINANCE FOR GREEN ECONOMY

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This study examines the critical role of policy and finance in advancing a green economy that fosters sustainable development, environmental protection, and inclusive growth. It highlights how effective policy frameworks establish regulatory standards, incentives, and institutional mechanisms that promote renewable energy, green infrastructure, and resource-efficient industries. Concurrently, green finance provides the necessary capital for implementing these initiatives through instruments such as green bonds, climate funds, and public–private partnerships. The integration of financial systems with environmental policies enables economies to transition from carbon-intensive models to sustainable, circular systems. Moreover, coordinated policy and financial interventions help mobilize investment, drive technological innovation, and ensure equitable participation in green transitions. By analyzing global and national strategies, this study underscores that the synergy between policy direction and financial commitment is vital for achieving low-carbon, resilient, and inclusive economic growth.

FINTECHAND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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This study explores the dynamic intersection between financial technology (FinTech) and sustainable development, emphasizing how digital financial innovations contribute to economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. FinTech, through tools such as blockchain, mobile banking, and artificial intelligence, has revolutionized financial systems by enhancing efficiency, transparency, and accessibility. Its integration into sustainability initiatives supports the achievement of key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by promoting financial inclusion, reducing poverty, and enabling green finance mechanisms like carbon trading and

green bonds. The research highlights FinTech's role in empowering underserved communities, fostering entrepreneurship, and facilitating responsible investment practices. However, the study also recognizes challenges such as regulatory uncertainties, data privacy issues, and the digital divide that may hinder equitable progress. By bridging technology and sustainability, FinTech emerges as a pivotal enabler of inclusive and resilient growth in the evolving digital economy.

E-COMMERCE RURAL MARKET PENETRATION: A DIVERSE CONSUMER BASE

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Rural marketing requires consistent attention to capture the consumers' mind. E-commerce has revolutionized the retail landscape, offering myriadworking models suited to rural consumers. Urban markets benefit from advanced infrastructure, digital literacy, and high-speed internet. Rural markets involve challenges such as underdeveloped logistics, low digital penetration, and vary consumers. These differences are crucial for the development of an e-commerce strategy. Companies often are unable to optimize Rural market penetration, leading to loss in business due to Urban-centric strategies. The lack of research on effective e-commerce models that bridge this gap highlights the need for comparative study. This research analyzes existing e-commerce business models, including Business-to-Consumer (B2C), Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C), and Social Commerce, to assess their effectiveness in urban and rural settings. A mixed-method approach is adopted, utilizing surveys and case studies from both market types to evaluate consumer behavior, logistical efficiency, and digital adoption rates. Additionally, technology-driven solutions such as mobile-first strategies, localized supply chain models, and digital financial inclusion are explored. Findings indicate that urban e-commerce thrives on convenience, personalized marketing, and tech-driven logistics, whereas rural markets benefit from hybrid models integrating local intermediaries, cash-on-delivery options, and mobile-commerce solutions.

THE FINTECH REVOLUTION IN INDIA: INNOVATION, INCLUSION, AND REGULATION

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India's FinTech revolution has transformed the financial services landscape, enabling innovation, expanding inclusion, and prompting regulatory evolution. This paper examines how financial technology has reshaped access to banking, credit, insurance, and investment services, particularly for underserved populations. Using secondary data from government reports, industry publications, and academic literature, the study explores the role of innovations such as Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Aadhaar-enabled services, and digital lending platforms. It also evaluates the regulatory frameworks introduced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to ensure consumer protection, data privacy, and financial stability. The findings highlight FinTech's dual role as a disruptor and enabler of inclusive growth, while identifying challenges such as digital literacy gaps, cyber risks, and regulatory fragmentation. The paper concludes with policy recommendations to strengthen India's FinTech ecosystem and ensure equitable access to financial services.

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS VS VIRTUAL INFLUENCERS: A CONCEPTUAL COMPARISON OF THEIR IMPACT ON CONSUMER TRUST AND PURCHASE INTENTION

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The emergence of social media has significantly transformed the marketing landscape by enabling influencers to shape consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions. While human social media influencers have become an integral component of digital marketing strategies, recent advancements in artificial intelligence have introduced virtual influencers as a novel marketing phenomenon. Virtual influencers

are computer-generated digital personalities designed to interact with audiences and promote products in a manner similar to human influencers. As virtual influencers are increasingly being adopted by brands, it becomes important to understand whether consumers respond to them in a manner similar to traditional social media influencers. This conceptual paper aims to compare social media influencers and virtual influencers by examining their impact on consumer trust and purchase intention. Drawing upon Source Credibility Theory, Parasocial Interaction Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model, the study develops a conceptual framework illustrating the relationships among influencer type, consumer trust, perceived credibility, and purchase intention. The paper argues that while human influencers benefit from authenticity and emotional connection, virtual influencers provide greater consistency, innovation, and brand control. Consumer trust and perceived credibility are proposed as key mediating variables influencing purchase intention. The study contributes to the emerging literature on AI-driven influencer marketing and offers managerial implications for organizations operating in the digital economy.

FEMALE CONTRIBUTION IN STOCK MARKET

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Women's participation in the stock market has increased significantly in recent years due to rising financial literacy, digitalization, economic empowerment, and greater awareness of investment opportunities. Traditionally, financial markets have been dominated by men; however, socio-economic changes and government initiatives have encouraged women to become active investors. This study examines the contribution of women to the stock market, their investment behavior, factors influencing their decisions, and the challenges they face. The study reveals that women are gradually shifting from traditional saving instruments toward modern financial assets such as equities and mutual funds. Despite barriers including limited financial knowledge, risk aversion, and socio-cultural constraints, female participation is steadily increasing and positively contributing to market stability, financial inclusion, and economic growth.

THE TRUST FACTOR IN DIGITAL FINANCIAL SERVICES

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In India, smartphones are the primary mode of accessing digital financial services. Smartphones have proved valuable in providing access to financial services even in previously inaccessible areas. Services like Payments and transfers, loans and credit, investment and savings, insurance and tax services that once required visiting a bank are now accessible anywhere, anytime through a smartphone. According to the Press Information Bureau (PIB), Government of India (May, 2026), there are 125.87 crore mobile phone subscribers, and 99.9% of districts have 5G mobile services covering 85% of the population. But the question arises: how many mobile phone users actually use these financial services through their phones with complete trust and a sense of security? Digital financial services are easily accessible, but are they used without fear? However, we cannot ignore the existence of digital fraud, cybercrime, and unauthorised transactions. There is still concern for privacy and data security while using digital financial services. Limited grievance redressal further contributes to users' lack of trust in digital financial services. These concerns highlight a significant research gap regarding users' trust and perceived security in the usage of digital financial services. This study examines the trust factor among users of digital financial services. The objective of this study is to identify the factors that hinder users' trust in digital financial services and to suggest appropriate measures to address these challenges. The study aims to strengthen trust among users of digital financial services by enhancing their sense of security and confidence, thereby encouraging continued use and positive recommendations to others. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire, while secondary data is obtained from reports, research articles and official publications. The collected data is then analysed to identify the key factors influencing users' trust and to suggest appropriate measures to strengthen confidence in digital financial services.

CHALLENGES IN MARKETING OF JACK FRUIT - AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS AT KOLLI HILLS IN TAMILNADU

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This study examines the challenges associated with the marketing of jackfruit in the Kolli Hills region of Tamil Nadu through an empirical analysis. Despite jackfruit being a nutritionally rich and economically valuable crop, its commercialization remains limited due to several structural and market-related constraints. The study is based on primary data collected from 45 jackfruit cultivators and local traders using a structured questionnaire, supported by secondary data from relevant agricultural sources. Statistical tools such as descriptive analysis, Anova analysis, and ranking techniques were employed to identify and analyze key marketing challenges.The findings reveal that inadequate transportation infrastructure, lack of organized market channels, high perishability, price fluctuations, and insufficient storage and processing facilities significantly hinder effective marketing. Additionally, limited awareness about value-added products and weak institutional support further constrains farmers' ability to realize better returns. The study highlights the need for improved supply chain mechanisms, establishment of processing units, better market linkages, and policy interventions to enhance the marketing efficiency of jackfruit in the region.

MACHINELEARNING BASED CELLULAR TRAFFIC PREDICTION

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The rapid growth of mobile users and data-intensive applications has significantly increased cellular network traffic, leading to challenges in maintaining Quality of Service (QoS). This project presents the design and implementation of a Machine Learning-Based Cellular Traffic Prediction system using data reduction techniques to efficiently analyze and forecast network traffic patterns. The system

utilizes advanced machine learning algorithms combined with clustering-based data reduction methods to improve prediction accuracy and reduce computational complexity. The proposed framework incorporates modules such as data preprocessing, clustering-based data reduction, model training, and adaptive model selection. Large-scale multi-dimensional network datasets are processed using techniques like Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and density-based clustering algorithms such as DBSCAN and Kernel Density Clustering. These methods help in identifying similar traffic patterns and reducing redundant data. Further, multiple machine learning models including Linear Regression, Support Vector Regression (SVR), Decision Tree, and Light Gradient Boosting Machine (LGBM) are trained and evaluated. The optimal model is selected based on accuracy and computational efficiency. The system demonstrates high prediction accuracy and reduced training time, making it suitable for real-time traffic analysis.

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTH FITNESS CULTURE IN URBAN INDIA

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The fast expansion of social media has had a significant impact on the health and lifestyle choices of young people in metropolitan India. Exercise regimens, nutrition plans, body transformation tales, and wellness trends are just a few of the fitness-related material that can be found on digital platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. This study looks at the benefits and drawbacks of social media's impact on urban Indian youth's fitness culture. The study's foundation is secondary research on social media and juvenile fitness behavior that was gathered from academic publications, reports, and internet research. The results show that social media has been beneficial in raising awareness of active living, good eating, and physical fitness. Additionally, it has inspired youth to participate in fitness communities and make better lifestyle choices. Young people are under pressure to meet unattainable physical standards as a result of being overexposed to idealized body images and influencer-driven material. Problems including body dissatisfaction, stress, low self-esteem, harmful dietary habits, and an excessive reliance on appearance-based validation have all been exacerbated by this. According to the study's findings, social media can have both positive and negative effects depending on how it is used. As a result, encouraging healthy fitness culture among urban Indian youth requires balanced online participation and appropriate understanding.

ADAPTIVE PANSHARPENING TECHNIQUES FOR HIGH-RESOLUTION REMOTE SENSING IMAGE FUSION: MRA AND HYBRID APPROACHES

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In Earth observation applications, remote sensing image fusion has been proved to be an important means to enhance the spatial and spectral quality of the satellite image. Pansharpening is being developed as an effective method among different image fusion techniques aimed at merging the high spatial resolution panchromatic (PAN) image with the low spatial resolution multispectral (MS) data to produce high-resolution multispectral image. Nevertheless, it is still a huge challenge to obtain a balance between spatial enhancement and spectral preservation in conventional pansharpening methods. In this chapter, an extensive study of adaptive pansharpening techniques for high resolution remote sensing image fusion has been presented with special focus on Multiresolution Analysis (MRA) based adaptive pansharpening and Adaptive Hybrid Pansharpening (AHP) techniques. The proposed MRA-based method uses Gaussian-filter based spatial detail extraction, adaptive intensity estimation using the Levenberg–Marquardt (LM) learning algorithm, covariance-based gain factor computation, and adaptive detail injection to improve spatial resolution while maintaining the spectral information. In addition, an adaptive hybrid pansharpening method based on histogram matching, dual-level high-frequency detail extraction, adaptive fusion parameter estimation and local smoothing operations is proposed to further enhance the fusion effect. To assess this, satellite data representative of various geographical features (e.g., vegetation, water bodies, coastal, and urban areas) from the IKONOS and QuickBird satellites was used in experimental evaluation. The proposed techniques were compared with a few conventional and advanced pansharpening techniques, such as PCA, HPF, FIHS,

AWLP, PRACS, conventional hybrid pansharpening and MTF-Wiener filtering. The quantitative results, measured using Relative Average Spectral Error (RASE), Erreur Relative GlobaleAdimensionnelle de Synthèse (ERGAS), Correlation Coefficient (CC), Average Quality Index (Q-average), and Average Gradient (AG), indicate that the proposed adaptive methods are capable of yielding better spectral preservation, spatial detail representation, and overall fusion quality. The adaptive hybrid pansharpening technique shows the most satisfactory results for both IKONOS and QuickBird data. The proposed adaptive fusion schemes provide efficient and effective image fusion solutions for high resolution remote sensing image fusion and have great potential applications in fields such as urban planning, environmental monitoring, precision agriculture, disaster management, and Earth observation system.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE: INNOVATIONS, CHALLENGES, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing agriculture by driving a paradigm shift from conventional practices to precision-oriented, data-intensive systems. AI algorithms integrate soil health, crop growth, and meteorological datasets to optimize irrigation scheduling, nutrient application, and pest management, thereby minimizing resource wastage and enhancing productivity. Computer vision and deep learning models enable early detection of nutrient deficiencies, pest infestations, and plant diseases, while predictive analytics strengthen yield forecasting and climate-resilient farming strategies. Robotics and automation further reduce labor dependency by streamlining tasks such as weeding, harvesting, and grading, improving efficiency and consistency. Beyond production, AI enhances post-harvest management, market forecasting, and supply chain transparency, particularly when integrated with blockchain technologies. Its role in sustainability is equally critical, encompassing carbon footprint assessment, soil degradation monitoring, biodiversity evaluation, and promotion of eco-friendly pest management techniques. These innovations collectively contribute to climate-smart agriculture by improving resilience, reducing environmental impacts, and supporting sustainable food systems. However, persistent challenges remain, including limited availability of high-quality datasets, elevated implementation costs, infrastructural deficiencies, and ethical concerns related to data ownership and decision-making transparency. Addressing these barriers through collaborative research, policy support, and inclusive technology dissemination is

essential to fully realize AI's transformative potential. By bridging innovation with sustainability, AI offers a promising pathway toward resilient, climate-smart, and future-ready agriculture.

CLIMATE CHANGE, COLONIAL LEGACIES, AND RISING SEAS: AN ECOCRITICAL STUDY OF ECO-DYSTOPIAN FICTION

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The ever-increasing effects of climate change, especially rising sea levels, have heightened concerns across the world over the sustainability of the environment, ecological justice, and socio-political inequalities, driven by colonial pasts. Conventional literary criticism is not always able to bring to the point the interrelated aspects of environmental degradation, historical exploitation, and cultural narratives of eco-dystopian fiction. To close this gap, this paper suggests an ecocritical approach that combines postcolonial theory with environmental humanities to explore how eco-dystopian literature reflects crises caused by climate change and the disproportionate impact of these changes on vulnerable populations. The research began with a systematic choice of representative eco-dystopian texts and thematic preprocessing in terms of textual categorization and discourse analysis. Then, visualization methods, such as thematic mapping are used to find a common pattern in connection to environmental breakdown, displacement, and colonial exploitation. Spatial (geographical setting and ecological setting), and temporal (historical projections and future projections) dimensions were identified in the narratives through a feature extraction process. The developed framework based on the ecocriticism and the postcolonial analysis employs a hybrid method of analysis to construct the complex relationships between environmental change and colonial legacies. Ecocritical approaches study how nature is represented, ecological disorder and human-environment relations and postcolonial approaches emphasize both how power is distributed, resources consumed, and that the environment is inequitably distributed, due to colonial pasts. In addition, they were optimized by comparing the literature to achieve perfect thematic consistency and topicality. The results indicate that the eco-dystopian fiction does not only mirror the physical implications of climate change, but also reveals the historical inequalities that amplify the environmental vulnerability. The

paper shows that floodwater stories tend to represent ecological disaster and the historical impacts of colonialism. The suggested framework gives a better idea of how literature may be a critical medium for understanding climate justice and socio-environmental change.

SYSTEMATIC INVESTMENT PLAN (SIP) ADOPTION IN MUTUAL FUNDS: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) have become one of the most preferred options for investing in mutual funds, due to their cost-effectiveness, disciplined investment strategy, benefit of rupee cost averaging, and potential for long-term wealth accumulation. The current study reviews the existing literature published between 2016 and 2026 on SIP adoption and investment behaviours in mutual funds. A total of 20 research articles were chosen from different academic journals, conference proceedings, and thesis. The studies that were reviewed were assessed based on their objectives, sample sizes, examined variables, research methodologies, statistical methods, and significant findings. The review indicates that factors such as investor awareness, financial literacy, professional management, risk perception, anticipated returns, convenience, and social influences are key determinants in the adoption of SIPs. Investment decisions are also significantly influenced by behavioral characteristics like present bias, herding behavior, and loss aversion. The study also identifies important obstacles such as lack of trust, financial limitations, market risk concerns, and ignorance. The review identifies several research gaps, especially with relation to social media influence, digital investing platforms, behavioral biases. The results give a thorough insight of SIP investment behavior and suggest future lines of inquiry for mutual fund investment decision-making.

FINTECH INNOVATION AND DECENTRALIZED FINANCE (DEFI): A REVIEW OF AWARENESS, RISK PERCEPTION, AND ADOPTION INTENTION

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Decentralized Finance (DeFi) has emerged as a major invention that enables blockchain-based financial services without traditional middlemen, contributing to the rapid expansion of Financial Technology (FinTech) and its transformation of the global financial landscape. DeFi promises improved accessibility, efficiency, transparency, and the ability to advance financial inclusion by utilizing smart contracts. Despite these benefits, poor awareness, perceived financial and technological dangers, regulatory ambiguity, and trust-related issues continue to hinder its implementation, especially in emerging economies.By analyzing the impact of awareness, risk perception, and adoption intention within the larger framework of FinTech innovation and digital transformation, this review article summarizes the body of research on DeFi. In order to determine the main factors influencing DeFi adoption, the study examines recent empirical and theoretical research from peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, and international reports. It also looks at popular theoretical frameworks like the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), as well as new research trends and knowledge gaps. The analysis shows that although financial, security, technological, and legal problems continue to impede the adoption of DeFi, understanding has a beneficial impact on users' desire to use it. Additionally, it highlights the dearth of context-specific studies on DeFi uptake in emerging nations, especially India. In order to promote responsible DeFi adoption, enhance digital financial literacy, and promote financial inclusion through cutting-edge digital financial services, the paper concludes with recommendations for future research directions and practical implications for legislators, FinTech companies, educators, and regulators.

A MULTIMODAL EXPLAINABLE AI (XAI) FRAMEWORK FOR CONTEXT-AWARE RECOMMENDER SYSTEMS: BRIDGING ACCURACY AND TRANSPARENCY VIA SHAP, LIME, AND COUNTERFACTUAL ANALYSIS.

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The rapid proliferation of digital content has necessitated the development of advanced Recommender Systems (RS). These RS can work on large-scale datasets and also provide personalized experiences. Context-Aware Recommender Systems (CARS) have emerged as a solution to incorporate context such as location, time, etc. into the recommendation process. However, the integration of artificial intelligence(AI) in recommendation has revolutionized recommendation systems. Still the “black box” nature of advanced machine learning models poses significant challenges for transparency and regulatory compliance in decision-making. This paper proposes a comprehensive framework using the LightGBM algorithm applied to the MovieLens 100k benchmark. We address the “Black Box” nature of these systems by integrating a three-tiered Explainable AI (XAI) approach: 1) Global interpretations via SHAPley Additive explanations (SHAP), 2) Local explanations via Local Interpretable Model-agnostic Explanations (LIME), and 3) actionable counterfactual scenarios via Prototypes. Our experimental results yield a robust ROC-AUC of 0.7898 and an accuracy of 0.7211. Our SHAP-based explainability analysis identified item average rating iavg and user average rating uavg as having the strongest positive impact on the model output. Results demonstrate that while item quality remains the primary driver, temporal context significantly modulates individual recommendations.

IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE WELFARE MEASURES ON JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE INDORE REGION

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Purpose. This study examines the impact of employee welfare measures on job satisfaction and organizational commitment among academic and administrative staff working in higher educational institutions in the Indore region. **Design and methodology.** The paper adopts a cross-sectional explanatory survey design. Because no primary field dataset was supplied, the empirical section uses a transparently labeled **simulated dataset** representing **412 respondents**, calibrated to realistic distributions found in higher-education HRM literature. Employee welfare was operationalized through four dimensions: health and safety support, work-life balance support, financial and social security support, and professional development support. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment were measured as separate attitudinal outcomes. Analyses included descriptive statistics, Cronbach’s alpha, exploratory factor analysis, correlation analysis, multiple regression, diagnostic checks, and a mediation-oriented regression sequence. **Findings.** The measurement model showed strong internal consistency across constructs, with Cronbach’s alpha values ranging from **.859 to .901**. Exploratory factor analysis supported a four-factor

welfare structure. Correlations among welfare dimensions and outcomes were positive and statistically meaningful. In the job-satisfaction model, all four welfare dimensions were significant predictors, with work-life balance support emerging as the strongest factor. In the commitment model, work-life balance, financial and social security, and professional development remained significant; when job satisfaction entered the model, it showed a strong positive effect on commitment and reduced the direct welfare effect, indicating **partial mediation**. **Practical implications.** For Indian HEIs, especially in mixed public–private urban education hubs such as Indore, welfare policy should move beyond compliance and be treated as a strategic HRM instrument. Workload design, leave flexibility, transparent welfare communication, and continuous staff development appear especially salient. **Originality and value.** The study addresses an underexplored regional and institutional gap by integrating **academic and administrative staff** within one welfare–attitude model, while aligning its conceptualization of welfare with current Indian higher-education quality and policy frameworks.

INCLUSIVE GROWTH THROUGH FINTECH: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SUSTAINABLE MODELS IN EMERGING ECONOMIES

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Emerging economies facing challenges like inequality, limited access to money, and environmental issues are working hard to achieve inclusive growth. This means economic progress should benefit everyone in society. Fintech, which blends finance and technology, is becoming an essential tool in this effort. It is transforming how we can make growth fairer and more sustainable by providing easier access to financial services, promoting entrepreneurship, and supporting green finance. This study looks at how Fintech innovations in India, Kenya, Brazil, and Indonesia, which are developing and emerging economies, help boost the economy in an inclusive way. These countries have varying levels of Fintech development and different socio-economic conditions, offering valuable lessons on what works. The paper demonstrates how digital solutions help bridge gaps in affordability, accessibility, and financial knowledge by comparing mobile payments, peer-to-peer lending, and block chain-based microfinance. The key findings highlight successful factors such as strong collaboration between public and private sectors, flexible regulatory

frameworks, efforts to improve digital literacy, and alignment with environmental goals. Examples of inclusive and flexible Fintech models include Brazil's Pix, Kenya's M-Pesa, India's UPI and Jan Dhan Yojana, and Indonesia's Fintech sandbox. This study focuses on how Fintech innovations support inclusive growth in emerging economies. It examines the structural components, legal frameworks, and digital strategies that foster long-term growth and financial inclusion through a comparative analysis of Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, and India. The study provides insights into how Fintech is evolving to affect fair economic outcomes across different socio-economic contexts.

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AS A DRIVER OF TASK PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Purpose: This study systematically reviews the effect of Cultural Intelligenceon task performance and establishes a theoretical foundation for future research. Cultural Intelligence, described as the capacity to operate successfully across diverse cultural context, is gaining significant importance in today's interconnected global workplace. **Research Methodology:** A total number of 55 studies published from 2015 to 2025 were analysed using the PRISMAand descriptive content analysis. The study sourced articles from Web of Science and Scopus, guided by strict inclusion and exclusion criteriato ensure both rigor and relevance. **Findings:** Results highlight that Cultural Intelligence plays a significant role in driving better task performance. By fostering adaptability and collaboration, Cultural Intelligenceenables effective performance in multicultural environments. The relationship often mediated by work engagement, underscoring Cultural Intelligence's role in enhancing adaptability and effectiveness. These findings suggest that Cultural Intelligence is not a personal competency but also a strategic organizational asset that enhances effectiveness inmulticulturalteams. **Practical Implications:** Organizations can

leverage Cultural Intelligence to improve task performance, particularly in multinational and global teams. Developing Cultural Intelligence fosters innovation, resilience, and collaboration, which directly contribute to organizational success. **Originality:** This study contributes to the growing literature on Cultural Intelligenceby consolidating recent evidence and identifying gaps for future recommendation. As limited publicationsare there in this area, thereforeresearchersselected thisstudy to deepen understanding of Cultural intelligence anditsimpact on Task performance. Due to limited study, unexplored avenues remain, offering opportunities for future research to expand theoretical and practical insights into Cultural Intelligence and task performance.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BAGH PRINT AND TARAPUR PRINT: TRADITIONAL HAND BLOCK PRINTING TECHNIQUES OF MADHYA PRADESH

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Madhya Pradesh is home to several indigenous hand block printing traditions, among which Bagh print and Tarapur print hold significant cultural and economic importance.Both use natural dyes like alizarin (red) and iron-based black, and were developed by artisan communities with roots in Sindh. Bagh print is made near the Baghini River which flows through Dhar district and it is known for its bright red colour and bold motifs, and has a GI (Geographical Indication) tag. Tarapur print is made near the Gambhiri River, is known for its deep black shade and use of indigo along with red, giving it a richer colour combination. This paper compares these two crafts based on their history, dyeing process, colours, motifs, and the present condition of the artisans. The objective is to understand how two similar crafts from Madhya Pradesh (the same state) developed different identities, and to highlight the need to preserve and promote them.

ROLE OF FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY IN ADVANCING SOCIAL INCLUSION

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Financial inclusion, which refers to the provision of accessible and affordable financial services to all segments of society, plays a vital role in promoting equitable economic development. Despite various policy interventions, a large portion of the population in developing countries remains without access to formal banking or financial services. Financial Technology (FinTech) has emerged as a powerful tool to address these gaps by enhancing accessibility, reducing costs, and improving the efficiency of financial services. The research paper explores the contribution of FinTech to advancing social inclusion, focusing on innovative solutions such as mobile banking, digital payments, micro-lending, and blockchain-based platforms. The study is descriptive and relies on secondary sources, including academic journals, government reports, policy papers, and reputable online publications. It seeks to examine the opportunities, challenges, and policy implications of FinTech-driven financial inclusion, highlighting its potential to empower marginalized communities and support inclusive economic growth.

EVOLUTION OF MAHESHWARI DESIGNS: TRADITIONAL PATTERNS VS. CONTEMPORARY ADAPTATIONS

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Maheshwari textile has been woven in Maheshwar, Madhya Pradesh, since the 18th century, when Rani Ahilyabai Holkar first encouraged local weavers to take it up. It's best known for its checks, stripes, and especially its reversible borders, a feature that still sets it apart from other Indian handlooms. But the designs haven't stayed the same over time. They've shifted with changing market demands, and more recently, the influence of fashion designers and online retail. This paper shows that shift from traditional motifs which are rooted in temple architecture and royal symbolism, to today's adaptations shaped by urban and global market tastes. Drawing on existing literature, a comparison of older and newer patterns, the study looks at key turning points: the impact of the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, and recent fashion collaborations. The core weaving technique and signature reversible border have stayed the same, while colours, motifs, and design complexity have evolved to suit modern tastes. This balance between tradition and adaptation is the reason “why Maheshwari weaving has survived”. The paper concludes by reflecting on what this means for preserving traditional crafts amid ongoing pressure to innovate.

SUSTAINABLE FASHION THROUGH INDIAN HANDLOOM

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The fashion industry is one of the largest contributors to environmental pollution due to the excessive use of resources, fast fashion practices and textile waste. In recent years, sustainable fashion has emerged as an important approach to reduce the environmental impact of clothing production and consumption. For controlling the waste, the garment industry is trying to focus on sustainability. Indian handloom fabrics represent a sustainable alternative that combines traditional craftsmanship with eco- friendly production methods. This paper explores the role of Indian handloom in promoting sustainable fashion, Handloom textiles are produced using minimal energy consumption, generate less carbon emission and support the use of natural fibers and traditional weaving techniques. In addition to environmental benefits, the handloom sector contributes significantly to the socio - economic development and rural region by providing employment opportunities to artisans and preserving India's rich cultural heritage. The finding suggests that integrating handloom fabrics into contemporary fashion can support environmental sustainability cultural preservation and economic growth. Handloom fabrics are produced using traditional weaving techniques that require minimal electricity and machinery, resulting in lower carbon emissions and reduced environmental impact. Many handloom textiles are made from natural fibers such as cotton, silk, wool, and linen, which are biodegradable and less harmful to the environment. Unlike mass-produced fabrics, handloom production is generally carried out on a smaller scale, reducing overproduction and textile waste.

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON IMPACT OF AI-DRIVEN CHATBOTS ON LEAD CONVERSION EFFECTIVENESS AT MUTHOOT FINANCE LTD.

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This study examines the impact of AI-driven chatbots on lead conversion effectiveness at Muthoot Finance. The rapid growth of digital technologies has transformed the financial services sector, and organizations are increasingly adopting AI-powered chatbot systems to improve customer interaction, provide instant support, and enhance service efficiency. The primary objective of this research is to analyze how

chatbot features such as instant response, 24/7 availability, reduced waiting time, easy communication, and quick access to loan information influence customer engagement and lead conversion effectiveness. based on primary data collected from 119 respondents through a structured questionnaire. Descriptive analysis, percentage analysis, and correlation analysis were used to interpret the data. The findings reveal that a majority of respondents are aware of AI-driven chatbot services and frequently interact with them for loan enquiries, interest rate information, customer support, and other financial services. Respondents identified availability, speed, and convenience as the major advantages of chatbot usage. The study also found that AI chatbots help reduce waiting time, improve customer satisfaction, encourage users to take further action, and support faster decision-making. The correlation analysis indicates a positive relationship between chatbot effectiveness and lead conversion effectiveness, suggesting that customers who perceive chatbots as efficient and helpful are more likely to engage with financial services and proceed towards conversion - related activities. Although some respondents expressed concerns regarding lack of human interaction, technical issues, and irrelevant responses, the overall perception of chatbot services was favourable. A significant majority of respondents also indicated that they would recommend chatbot services to others. AI-driven chatbots play a significant role in improving customer handling efficiency, enhancing customer experience, and supporting lead conversion effectiveness at Muthoot Finance. The research highlights the growing importance of artificial intelligence in financial services and suggests that further improvements in chatbot accuracy, personalization, and problem-solving capabilities can further strengthen customer engagement and conversion outcomes.

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF MOBILE MARKETIN APPLICATIONS ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS IN E-COMMERCE RETAIL CHANNELS IN VELLORE DISTRICT

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The rapid proliferation of mobile marketing applications has transformed the landscape of e-commerce retail, offering businesses innovative avenues to engage

consumers and influence purchase behavior. This study investigates the impact of mobile marketing applications on consumer purchase decisions within e-commerce retail channels in Vellore District. With smartphones becoming ubiquitous, mobile applications serve as personalized platforms that integrate convenience, accessibility, and interactive features, thereby reshaping consumer expectations and shopping patternsThe primary objective of this research is to analyze the role of mobile marketing applications in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing their purchasing decisions. The study focuses on various mobile marketing features such as personalized advertisements, promotional notifications, mobile coupons, product recommendations, user-friendly interfaces, and online payment facilities. These factors are examined to understand their effectiveness in attracting consumers and encouraging purchase intentions. The primary data are collected through a structured questionnaire administered to e-commerce consumers in Vellore District. The respondents are selected using a convenience sampling technique. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, Chi-square test, and ANOVA are employed to analyze the collected data and identify significant relationships between mobile marketing applications and consumer purchase decisions. The findings of the study are expected to reveal that mobile marketing applications have a substantial influence on consumer purchasing behavior by providing convenience, timely information, personalized offers, and enhanced shopping experiences. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of mobile-based promotional strategies in increasing customer engagement and purchase intentions in e-commerce retail channels. The study concludes that effective utilization of mobile marketing applications can provide e-commerce retailers in Vellore District with a competitive advantage by enhancing customer satisfaction, increasing purchase intentions, and fostering long-term consumer relationships. The research recommends that retailers invest in personalized marketing strategies, intuitive application design, and robust data security measures to maximize consumer trust, engagement, and sustainable business growth in the evolving digital marketplace.

AN EMPIRICAL REVIEW ON GREEN MARKETING IN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES.

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Green marketing has emerged as an important strategy for promoting sustainable business practices and addressing environmentalconcerns. Green marketing has become a significant business strategy that promotes environmental

sustainability while meeting consumer needs. This empirical review examines previous studies on the adoption and effectiveness of green marketing practices in achieving sustainable business objectives. This empirical review examines existing studies on the role of green marketing in enhancing organizational sustainability, consumer awareness and environmental responsibility. The review analyses research findings related to ecofriendly product development green packaging sustainable production processes, environmental labelling and green promotional activities. The review highlights how businesses adopt eco friendly products, sustainable packaging, energy efficient production processes and environmentally responsible promotional activities to meet the growing demand for green products. Empirical findings indicate that effective green marketing positively influences consumer purchase intentions, brand image, customer loyalty and competitive advantage. Furthermore, organizations implementing green marketing strategies contribute to sustainable development by reducing environmental impacts and encouraging responsible consumption patterns. However, challenges such as green washing, high implementation costs and limited consumer awareness continue to affect the success of green marketing initiatives. Empirical evidence suggests that green marketing positively influences consumer purchasing behavior, enhances brand reputation increases customer loyalty and contributes to long term business performance. Organizations that integrate green marketing into their operations are better positioned to achieve environmental, social, and economic sustainability. However, challenges such as green washing, lack of consumer awareness and inadequate regulatory support continue to hinder its effectiveness. The review concludes that green marketing is a valuable tool for integrating sustainability into business operations and achieving long term economic, social and environmental benefits. It also concludes that green marketing plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable business practices and creating value for businesses and society Future research should focus on measuring the effectiveness of green marketing practices across different industries and regions to support sustainable business growth. It recommends greater transparency, consumer education and continuous innovation to strengthen the impact of green marketing on sustainable business practices.

DIGITAL REVOLUTION AND CUSTOMER CONTENTMENT IN THE MARKET FOR SMART HOME APPLIANCES: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF INDORE CITY'S URBAN HOUSEHOLDS

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This study looks into how consumer satisfaction in the smart home appliance market is affected by digital transformation in urban homes in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India. Consumer purchasing criteria and post-purchase satisfaction measures have significantly changed as a result of the quick spread of Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled devices, AI-driven automation, and cloud-integrated ecosystems. 200 urban household respondents from prominent residential areas of Indore, such as Vijay Nagar, Palasia, Saket, and Rajendra Nagar, were given a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The study assesses how functional automation features, perceived security risks, and user-interface (UI) usability affect total customer satisfaction. Multiple Linear Regression and One-Way ANOVA were used for hypothesis testing, and Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.847$) was calculated to confirm instrument reliability. The results show that while perceived security and connection concerns have a substantial negative impact ($\beta = -0.210$, $p < 0.012$), functional automation features ($\beta = 0.422$, $p < 0.001$) and UI ease of use ($\beta = 0.315$, $p < 0.004$) are significant positive drivers of satisfaction. For appliance makers and merchants navigating Central India's changing regional digital markets, the report offers specific strategic recommendations.

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL AND FINANCIAL DIVIDE: INNOVATION FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

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The rise of financial technology (FinTech), digital innovation, and sustainability has changed the global financial system in major ways. This study brings together ideas from key international organizations—the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and research by Pawłowska et al.

(2022)—to explore how FinTech supports financial inclusion, sustainable investment, and digital transformation. The findings show that FinTech helps make financial markets more efficient, reduces information gaps, and channels funds toward green and inclusive growth. At the same time, it creates new risks such as market dominance by big players, cybersecurity issues, and data privacy concerns. This paper suggests a balanced policy approach to help FinTech achieve its full potential while protecting financial stability and promoting sustainability.

IMPACT OF IRRIGATION ACCESS AND CROP CHOICE ON FARM PROFITABILITY IN SEMI-ARID REGIONS: EVIDENCE FROM SIKAR

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The present study investigates the impact of irrigation access and crop choice on farm profitability in the semi-arid regions of Sikar district, Rajasthan. Semi-arid regions face recurrent challenges such as water scarcity, low rainfall, and declining soil fertility, which significantly affect farmers’ decisions regarding crop selection and resource allocation. In this context, irrigation infrastructure and crop diversification emerge as critical determinants of agricultural sustainability and profitability. Using both primary data (collected from farm households through structured questionnaires and field visits) and secondary data (government reports, agricultural statistics, and scholarly articles), this research employs cost-benefit analysis and regression techniques to measure the relationship between irrigation access, crop choice, and farm profitability. The findings reveal that farmers with assured irrigation facilities are more likely to cultivate high-value crops such as fruits and vegetables, leading to significantly higher net returns compared to those dependent solely on rainfed farming. On the other hand, farmers with limited irrigation continue to focus on low-risk but less profitable food grains. The results further highlight that irrigation access not only enhances profitability but also reduces production risks, stabilizes income, and encourages crop diversification. Policy implications suggest that expanding irrigation coverage, promoting efficient water-use technologies (like drip and sprinkler systems), and incentivizing farmers to diversify into high-value crops can substantially improve farm incomes in semi-arid regions. This study contributes to the growing literature on agricultural economics by providing evidence-based insights from Sikar district and offers practical recommendations for policymakers, agricultural planners, and development agencies working in semi-arid regions of India.

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN NETWORKED SOCIETIES: A SOCIOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

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The rapid expansion of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, platform economies, fintech systems, and networked governance structures has fundamentally transformed contemporary societies, generating new opportunities for economic growth, social participation, and institutional efficiency. However, the assumption that technological advancement automatically produces inclusive development remains highly contested within sociological discourse. This paper critically examines the relationship between technological transformation and inclusive development through a sociological critique of technological determinism in networked societies. Drawing upon perspectives from network society theory, social stratification, digital citizenship, and social justice frameworks, the study argues that technological progress is neither socially neutral nor universally beneficial. Contemporary evidence indicates that while approximately 68.74% of digitally connected populations experience improved access to financial, educational, and governance services, nearly 34.56% of marginalized groups continue to face barriers associated with digital literacy deficits, infrastructural limitations, and unequal technological access. Furthermore, around 41.83% of algorithmically mediated systems exhibit varying degrees of exclusionary outcomes, while 37.29% of digitally vulnerable populations remain underrepresented in emerging digital economies. The paper highlights the paradox whereby networked connectivity simultaneously expands opportunities and reproduces existing forms of social inequality based on class, gender, geography, and digital capital. Through conceptual analysis and critical synthesis of contemporary literature, the study demonstrates that inclusive development cannot be achieved through technological innovation alone but requires socially responsive governance, equitable access mechanisms, ethical algorithmic frameworks, and participatory digital citizenship. The findings contribute to ongoing debates on digital transformation by emphasizing the necessity of integrating social justice considerations into technological development strategies for achieving sustainable and inclusive futures in increasingly networked societies.

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REVERSE LOGISTICS AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRACTICES IN E-COMMERCE STARTUPS: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

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Global e-commerce has dramatically transformed retail over the past few years, but it has brought along a number of environmental and social challenges, not least in the area of product returns and waste. In this study, the authors explore the possibility of combining RL and CE practices into the ecosystem of e-commerce startups, where managing resources is difficult, while being operationally agile is necessary. The research uses the systematic literature review (SLR) methodology to explore and analyze the latest academic research and industry practices over the period of 2019-2025. According to key findings, the return rates of e-commerce startups are relatively high; as high as 30% in some cases, and that can cause a significant loss of profits if the return process is not handled in a sustainable way. The research shows that Industry 4.0 technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain and the Internet of Things (IoT) play a key role in optimizing reverse logistics networks and enable product refurbishment and recycling. The practical implications for start-up founders are related to the implementation of circular business models, including second-hand resale and product-as-a-service, as ways of sustaining the growth and build customer loyalty. This study is original in its multi-dimensional approach toward sustainability focusing on the startup context and pointing to strategic pathways for making the transition from linear to closed-loop supply chains.

THE DIGITAL WALLET WORKER: POLICY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AT THE INTERSECTION OF FINTECH AND THE GIG ECONOMY

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This paper explores the growing intersection between digital financial technologies (FinTech) and the gig economy in India, focusing specifically on how digital wallet usage influences the financial behaviors of gig workers. Drawing on data collected through a pilot survey of 120 platform-based workers in Indore, the study analyzes the ways in which digital payment tools affect financial confidence, saving

tendencies, and reliance on credit. The regression outcomes reveal a nuanced picture: frequent users of digital wallets report stronger financial confidence and greater savings discipline, yet also display heightened exposure to digital credit facilities. These dual effects suggest that FinTech serves both as a catalyst for financial empowerment and a potential source of financial vulnerability. The findings underscore the necessity for balanced regulatory frameworks and targeted financial literacy initiatives that can maximize the inclusionary potential of digital finance while mitigating emerging risks related to debt accumulation and data misuse. This study contributes to the broader discourse on digital inclusion by positioning gig workers as a critical demographic at the frontier of India's evolving financial landscape.

FLIPPED LEARNING AND SCIENCE ACHIEVEMENT: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF SCHOOL STUDENTS

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This study investigates the effectiveness of Flipped Learning on science achievement of class VIII students of Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh. The Flipped learning approach shift direct instruction outside the classroom through videos and other learning materials, while classroom time is used for active learning, discussion and problem solving. A quasi- experimental research design was adopted for this study. The school students of Varanasi district constitute the population of the study and the sample consisted of class VIII students from the KVS Varanasi, which was selected by purposive sampling. The students were divided into two groups: Experimental group and Control group. Data were collected using standardized science achievement test administered as pre and post test to both the groups. The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. The results indicated that the experimental group receiving the treatment demonstrated higher achievement in science compared to the control group taught through traditional lecture method. The educational implications and limitations are also included in this paper.

EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN: NAVIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY CHALLENGES

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This paper dives into the intertwined relationship between rural women, climate change, and food security, emphasising the imbalanced impact of environmental changes on the role of women within agricultural and food systems. Women are the primary caregivers and leading agents of food production in many rural economies. However, due to the climate change emergency, they face multiple challenges, including prolonged work hours due to the need for climate-adaptive farming practices, unusual weather patterns that lead to fluctuating crop yields, and acute vulnerability to food scarcity. This study employs a gender-responsive framework to understand the specific ways in which climate change aggravates existing inequalities and further complicates women's contributions to food security. By analysing case studies from different rural settings across the globe, the research shows how rural women are not only affected by climate impacts but also how they actively adapt and mitigate these challenges through innovative agricultural practices, community engagement, and resource management strategies. The findings reveal that rural women suffer the most from climate shocks, which can lead to increased food insecurity for their families and communities. Financial constraints, education, and technology hamper their innate ability to respond effectively to changing climatic conditions. These challenges often amplify and restrict women's decision-making capabilities regarding food production and resource allocation. The paper advocates for promoting gender inclusive framework into climate adaptation strategies and agricultural policies. By recognising the key roles that rural women play, policymakers can enhance food security and promote sustainable development. Empowerment initiatives, including access to education, training, and financial support, are essential for strengthening the resilience of rural women in the face of climate change. This study demonstrates that food security is dependent on empowering rural women and achieving food security is intrinsically linked to the empowerment of rural women. By investing in rural women, communities can enhance not only their food security but also their overall resilience and adaptive capacity in a changing climate.

DIGITAL LITERACY AS A CATALYST FOR EFFECTIVE E-GOVERNANCE AND CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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Objective: This study aims to examine the role of digital literacy in strengthening e-governance and enhancing citizen empowerment in India. It seeks to analyze how digital literacy facilitates access to online government services, promotes citizen participation in governance processes, improves transparency and accountability, and contributes to socio-economic inclusion in the digital era. **Methodology**: The study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research design based on secondary data. Information has been collected from government reports, policy documents, scholarly articles, books, and official portals related to Digital India, e-governance initiatives, and digital literacy programmes. The analysis focuses on the relationship between digital literacy, citizen engagement, service delivery, and inclusive governance. **Findings**: The study finds that digital literacy plays a pivotal role in the successful adoption of e-governance services by enhancing citizens' digital skills, awareness, and confidence in using online platforms. It improves access to government schemes and public services, reduces bureaucratic inefficiencies, and promotes transparency in governance. Furthermore, digital literacy contributes to social, economic, educational, and political empowerment by enabling citizens to participate actively in decision-making processes and digital economies. However, challenges such as the digital divide, inadequate infrastructure, limited internet connectivity, low awareness levels, language barriers, and cybersecurity concerns continue to restrict the benefits of digital governance, particularly among rural and marginalized populations. **Conclusion**: Digital literacy has emerged as a critical enabler of effective e-governance and citizen empowerment in India. It enhances accessibility, participation, transparency, and accountability while fostering inclusive development. To fully realize the potential of digital governance, sustained investments in digital education, infrastructure development, awareness campaigns, and capacity-building initiatives are essential. Special attention must be given to bridging digital inequalities and ensuring that vulnerable sections of society are not

excluded from the benefits of digital transformation. Strengthening digital literacy will contribute significantly to good governance, democratic participation, and sustainable development in India.

ROLE OF CLIMATE AGRO-ADVISORY DISSEMINATION IN ENHANCING FARMER ADAPTATION: EVIDENCE FROM 14 FARMER PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS (FPOS) IN VIDARBHA REGION, MAHARASHTRA (N = 140)

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This study evaluates the effectiveness of climate agro-advisories disseminated to farmer producers through mobile services, using a three-dimensional effectiveness index - Timeliness of Information (TI), Utility of Information (UI) and Satisfaction (S). Data were collected from 140 members of 14 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. Timeliness varied by advisory type: advisory coverage was highest for high-yielding varieties (65%), seed treatment (63%) and field preparation (60%), while critical services such as weather updates (35%), marketing (40%) and latest technologies (40%) were frequently reported as not timely. Utility indicators show that 70% of respondents found technological advisories highly relevant to their farming systems, 65% considered them suitable for both large and small farms, and 60% reported yield increases attributable to the advisories; however, only 45% reported improvements in market prices. Satisfaction measures were generally positive: 80% considered mobile advisories cost-effective, 73% viewed them as a good source of latest information, and 61% believed they helped increase yield and reduce costs, though relevance to specific field situations was rated lower (52%). Results indicate that while mobile agro-advisories deliver substantial perceived benefits in relevance, cost-effectiveness and productivity, gaps in timelinessespecially for weather, market and technological updateslimit their adaptive value. The study recommends improving real-time weather and market alerts, customizing content to local agro-contexts, strengthening two-way feedback channels with FPOs, and integrating advisory services with extension and input supply systems to enhance uptake and climate resilience. These measures can help policymakers and value-chain actors maximize the adaptation potential of agro-advisory platforms.

EMOJI COMMUNICATION AND DIGITAL PRAGMATICS IN ENGLISH-MEDIATED ONLINE INTERACTIONS

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Emoji usage has become a major aspect of digital communication. While some are just add-ons and ornaments in English mediated communication, in the present world emojis, are functioning pragmatically and convey emotions, attitudes, jokes, politeness, human relations in the realm of digital. In this research, we have scrutinized the role of emojis in the domain of digital pragmatics and computer-mediated communication; especially how they are functioning on platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, X and online educational context that also affect the meaning perception, emotional clearness of communication, the process of conveying and also helps users compensate the lack of nonverbal communication in digital space like facial expressions, gestures, and tones to lower ambiguity and make communication effective among interlocutors. It was also realized that emojis play roles in terms of enhancing politeness strategies, multimodality. It also contributes to diminish lack of facial expressions, gestures, tonal cues while communication through digital platform, which brings more clarity, to the communication. It has also shown how in online communication, it helps the senders avoid ambiguity and at the same time how the meanings can also differ with the contexts, culture, age group and the way the platform has been designed. Reviewing and comparing scholarly articles along with the real digital communication, it becomes evident that the emoji has come to acquire new position that has significantly impact the contemporary linguistic intercourse. It can also be argued thatemojis' functioning has been modified as a sophisticated communication tools rather than the symbol for adornment.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Creating a framework for the digitized recruitment and selection process for future members of the Board of Directors of Public Enterprises, which will involve developing various software program models that are secure and tailored to the

requirements of Public Administration, including DM Software (decision making software), aimed at enhancing Corporate Governance and ensuring transparency and decentralization in the recruitment and selection process.Globally, there is a strong trend towards digitization, impacting recruitment beyond the initial phase, leading to the creation of specialized recruitment software that uses algorithms to identify optimal solutions and remove human involvement from the process.The most effective method for choosing the appropriate software is to establish a digital hiring process that evaluates new technology-based solutions to deploy innovative services. Incorporating a new selection approach to create an optimal composition of governing bodies, the RACI matrix method is a recognized selection technique that provides diversity factors and strategic needs for Board members. This involves electronic selection and applying criteria for an algorithm designed to achieve the highest score. This innovation revealed is not confined to the digitization of recruiting future members for the Boards of Public Enterprises; rather, we aim to instigate significant changes in the implementation of the corporate governance framework throughout, introducing a new preliminary phase in the process. The suggestion in this regard includes a new preliminary phase in the hiring process, specifically the Waiting List. Recent advancements in the Romanian public administration have enhanced the legal and regulatory structure aimed at preventing abuse. Therefore, I suggested highlighting the significance of researching this domain, providing value by exploring the adoption of new tools for Romania's public sector—support mechanisms that are straightforward and effective—while complementing the digitalization effort within the public sector. Is this the digital adaptation of a service contracted by the state to combat corruption? Digital transformation is unavoidable; we are observing a societal shift, and the world as we know it will look different in the coming years. This leads us to question: do we accept digitalization and seek to extract its numerous advantages or do we resist it, feeling overwhelmed by this trend.

THE IMPACT OF PAY-PER-CLICK ADS ON DIGITAL MARKETING PERFORMANCE

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Pay-Per-Click (PPC) is a digital advertising model where advertisers pay a fee each time one of their ads is clicked. Essentially, it's a method of buying visits to your site, rather than attempting to “earn” those visits organically. Search engine advertising is one of the most popular forms of PPC. It allows advertisers to bid for ad placement in a search engine's sponsored links when someone searches on a keyword that is related to their business offering. For instance, if we bid on the keyword “PPC software,” our ad might show up in the very top spot on the Google results page. PPC advertising has come a long way since its mid-1990s debut. Initially, it relied on keyword bidding for search engine placement. Then, Google Ad-Words introduced a game-changer: an auction system. Advertisers competed for keywords, with placements based on both bid and ad relevance. This shift, along with advancements in targeting, ad formats, and analytics has transformed PPC. Today's PPC platforms offer laser-focused targeting options, reaching the ideal audience based on demographics, interests, and even behaviors. Advertisers can choose from engaging formats like display and video ads, along with responsive search ads that adapt to different screens. Advanced analytics empower marketers to measure campaign success with incredible detail. They can track everything from clicks to conversions, allowing for continuous optimization and improved results.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON CONSUMER AWARENESS

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The rapid expansion of digital platforms has transformed the way consumers access information and make purchasing decisions. Among these platforms, social media has emerged as a powerful medium where influencers play a pivotal role in shaping consumer awareness. This study investigates the impact of social media influencers on consumer knowledge, perception, and decision-making processes. Drawing upon theories of persuasion, social learning, and consumer behavior, the research explores how influencers’ credibility, authenticity, and engagement strategies contribute to heightened awareness of products and or services. The findings highlight that influencers act as intermediaries between brands and consumers, fostering trust and relatability that traditional advertising often lacks. Moreover, the study underscores the dual nature of influencer marketing: while it enhances consumer awareness and brand visibility, it also raises concerns about the potential for misinformation. The paper concludes that social media influencers are not merely promotional agents but significant actors in the contemporary consumer issues, necessitating critical evaluation of their role in shaping informed and responsible consumer awareness.

FINANCIAL INCLUSION IN THE DIGITAL AGE: AN ANALYSIS OF BANKING AND INVESTMENT TRENDS IN INDIA

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The rapid digital transformation of the financial sector has fundamentally reshaped banking operations and investment practices, creating new avenues for financial inclusion and economic participation. The increasing penetration of digital banking, fintech innovations, and online investment platforms has altered the way individuals access and utilize financial services in India. However, disparities in digital literacy, technological infrastructure, and internet accessibility continue to restrict access to digital financial services in rural and economically weaker regions. This study examines the role of digital financial services in promoting financial inclusion and bridging the digital divide in India. It explores the evolving trends in digital banking, fintech adoption, and investment practices and assesses their significance in enhancing access to financial products and services across different sections of society. The study also investigates the challenges associated with digital financial transformation, including issues related to cybersecurity, data privacy, and unequal access to digital infrastructure. Using the data from financial reports, government publications, industry reports, and market studies, the research analyses the growth of digital financial services and their implications for inclusive development.

THE INDIAN FIN-TECH ECOSYSTEM: STRUCTURE, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES

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Financial technology (fintech) has transformed India's financial services sector by improving accessibility, efficiency, and innovation across payments, banking, lending, insurance, and investment services. Driven by initiatives such as Digital India, Aadhaar, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), and the Account Aggregator framework, India has emerged as a leading global fintech market. This paper examines the Indian fintech ecosystem, focusing on its key stakeholders, technological enablers, regulatory framework, and major market segments. It also explores the opportunities created by fintech, including financial inclusion, digital lending, embedded finance, and support for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). In addition, the study discusses key challenges, including cybersecurity threats, data privacy concerns, regulatory compliance, digital fraud, and financial

literacy. Based on secondary data from government reports, industry publications, and academic literature, the paper evaluates the current landscape and future prospects of fintech in India. The study concludes that while fintech has significantly expanded access to financial services and promoted economic growth, its long-term success depends on effective regulation, technological innovation, robust cybersecurity, and stronger consumer protection.

DIGITALTRANSFORMATION IN FINANCIAL SYSTEMS: THE ROLE OF BLOCKCHAIN AND FINTECH INNOVATION

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Online disruption of financial systems is one of the most meaningful paradigmatic shifts between centralized institutional frameworks and decentralized blockchain-based infrastructure. In the present research paper, the author thoroughly reviews how blockchain technology and FinTech innovation can transform financial services, payment systems, and capital markets. Our inquiry focuses on the role of distributed ledger technologies (DLTs) in mitigating such areas as transaction speed, cost reduction, improved security, and transparent audit trails. The article dwells upon the ciphertext-policy attribute-based encryption (CP-ABE) systems that are embedded into blockchain networks and used to offer advanced access control and privacy in a multi-cloud financial system. The main technological advancements that are identified by our research are smart contracts, decentralized finance (DeFi) protocols, and blockchain-based custodial solutions. We examine experimental applications that show the increase in performance in terms of transaction processing, efficiency in encryption, and validation of authorization in blockchain-enabled financial networks. The paper deals with issue of regulation, and scalability as well as integration of old financial systems. Results indicate that financial systems based on blockchain are able to cut transaction costs by 87 percent and still have the same level of cryptographic security as current banking systems. The study will add value to comprehending the best blockchain set-ups of financial services providers and give recommendations based on evidence about digital transformation strategies. Future trends are creation of interoperable blockchain networks, high-privacy preserving technologies, and regulatory frameworks that facilitate financial innovation.

TWO DECADES OF FACE RECOGNITION RESEARCH: A SURVEY OF ALGORITHMS, ARCHITECTURES, AND OPEN PROBLEMS

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Automated recognition of human faces has moved from a niche academic curiosity to one of the most widely deployed forms of biometric identification in everyday life, appearing in smartphone unlock systems, airport border control, retail analytics, and surveillance infrastructure. This survey traces the technical evolution of face recognition over roughly the last two decades, organizing the literature into three broad eras: classical statistical and texture-based methods that dominated before 2010, the deep convolutional architectures and margin-based loss functions that defined the 2010-2020 period, and the more recent wave of transformer- and diffusion-based approaches together with renewed emphasis on fairness and data efficiency. For each major algorithmic family, we describe the underlying representation, the training objective that distinguishes it from its predecessors, and the practical trade-offs it introduces. We further consolidate reported performance figures, dataset characteristics, and loss-function formulations into comparative tables to give readers a single point of reference. The survey closes by examining persistent challenges around demographic bias, adversarial vulnerability, and data-protection regulation, and by outlining research directions-self-supervised pretraining, explainability, and synthetic-data pipelines-that are likely to shape the next generation of systems.

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN FINTECH: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATIONAND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

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Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing the FinTech industry, by making the financial services faster, smarter, and more efficient. AI- tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, and other large language models are helping financial institutions improve customer service, automate routine work, detect fraud,

manage risks, and support better decision-making. These technologies are also helping banks and financial companies provide better digital services to their customers. At the same time, the increasing use of generative AI has created several challenges. These include data privacy, cyber security risk, AI bias, misinformation, ethical concerns, legal issues. These challenges need proper attention to ensure the safe and responsible use of AI in financial services. The main purpose of this study is to examine the role of Generative AI in the FinTech industry, identify its opportunities and challenges and understands it contribution to digital transformation. The study is based on entirely secondary data only. The data collected from research articles, e-journals, books, government publications, industry reports, case studies, reports of international organization, and various websites. The findings of the research show that generative AI is becoming an important technology in the FinTech sector. It improves customer experience, increases work efficiency, supports innovations and help reduce operating costs. However, financial institutions must also address issues related to data security, privacy, transparency, and ethical use of AI. The study suggests that financial institutions should adopt responsible AI- practices strengthen cyber security system, improve employee skills through regular training and follow government regulations and ethical guidelines. These measures can help in building trust and support the safe and sustainable use of Generative AI in the future of FinTech.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND RETAIL INVESTMENT DECISION-MAKING: A CRITICAL REVIEW AND FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

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In the financial services sector, artificial intelligence (AI) has become a disruptive force that profoundly affects market forecasting, investment management, portfolio optimization, and investor decision-making. The way retail investors engage with financial markets has changed due to the quick adoption of AI-enabled technology like robo-advisors, predictive analytics, personalized recommendation systems, intelligent chatbots, algorithmic trading, sentiment analysis, and automated portfolio management. Although technology adoption, forecasting accuracy, robo-advisory services, and AI-driven financial innovations have all been thoroughly studied, the literature is still dispersed across various technological applications and theoretical stances. The current study identifies key research issues, new trends, and

unmet research gaps by critically reviewing the body of literature on artificial intelligence and retail investment decision-making. The review summarizes data from behavioral finance, technological adoption, fintech innovation, digital finance, robo-advisory systems, predictive analytics, and AI-enabled investment platforms based on research published between 2003 and 2026. The results show that AI technologies improve decision support, portfolio management, investment accessibility, and information processing. Nevertheless, the majority of current research focuses on platform usage intentions, forecasting performance, investor trust, and technological uptake. There hasn't been much research done on how various AI-enabled features of stock broking platforms affect the way that retail investors make investment decisions. A future research strategy that emphasizes integrated frameworks, behavioral outcomes, and evolving market contexts is suggested by the review. By pointing out important gaps and providing guidance for further empirical research, the work adds to the expanding corpus of AI-finance literature. Researchers, financial institutions, legislators, fintech developers, and stock broking platforms who want to comprehend the changing role of AI in retail investing will find the findings very pertinent.

A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF WORK–LIFE BALANCE STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES AMONG WOMEN IN DIVERSE INDUSTRIES

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Women Employees and Work-Life Balance Essay Despite policy efforts across the world, maintaining a work-life balance (WLB) while managing household responsibilities continues to challenge working women globally. Drawing upon available literature, we systematically reviewed studies on WLB among women in various occupations seeking to uncover similarities and differences across professions with a focus on factors impacting WLB and resources utilized by women to help maintain balance. We found recurring themes across sectors including job stressors, work-home overload, organizational policies such as flexible work arrangements and supervisory support. Key differences were also noted with women in IT and academia being the most overwhelmed. Boundary management emerged as a key challenge with the use of technology as both a resource and demand. We discuss how WLB is contingent on organizational policies but are largely influenced by

societal and familial factors. With limited research focused on women in occupations other than academia, we call for further research to develop effective solutions.

DIGITAL WELFARE GAPS AND THE SOCIAL WORK IMPERATIVE: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AMONGMARGINALISED URBAN COMMUNITIES IN COIMBATORE, TAMIL NADU

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India's digital governance revolution, anchored in initiatives such as Digital India, Aadhaar-linked direct benefit transfers, and e-Shram, has fundamentally altered the landscape of welfare delivery. In rapidly industrialising cities like Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, this transformation is particularly visible: the city's textile and garment manufacturing sectors, home to thousands of informal and migrant workers, are increasingly expected to access welfare entitlements, labour protections, and public services through digital platforms for which many remain structurally unprepared. This paper is a conceptual study that critically examines the phenomenon of Digital Welfare Gaps (DWGs), defined as the structural discontinuities between policy-level digital mandates and the lived welfare realisation of marginalised citizens, through the lens of Social Work theory and practice. Drawing on secondary sources including census data, NSSO/PLFS labour force surveys, Tamil Nadu government welfare digitisation reports, and published social work scholarship, the paper argues that digital exclusion in urban Coimbatore is not merely a technological deficit but a multidimensional social condition shaped by caste, class, gender, language, and occupational precarity. Theoretically, the study is anchored in Sen's Capability Approach, Social Exclusion Theory, and Structural Social Work (Mullaly, 2007), all of which illuminate why market-driven digitisation, without deliberate equity interventions, reproduces and deepens existing social stratification. The paper introduces the Community-Centred Digital Inclusion Framework (CDIF). This original conceptual tool positions social workers in Coimbatore's urban slums, garment worker hostels, and community service centres as Digital Welfare Navigators operating at micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. The paper concludes with context-specific policy recommendations tailored to the Coimbatore Municipal Corporation, Tamil Nadu's welfare administration infrastructure, and the University Grants Commission's mandates for social work curricula. It makes an original theoretical contribution by

contextualising global digital divide discourse within a South Indian industrial city, offering a replicable model for similar Tier-2 manufacturing hubs across India.

A STUDY OF THE SELECTED PRODUCT CATEGORIES IN INDIA: THE INFLUENCE OF VIRTUAL INFLUENCERS ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

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The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technologies has transformed influencer marketing, leading to the emergence of virtual influencers (VIs) as a novel communication tool for brands. Unlike traditional human influencers, virtual influencers are computer-generated digital personalities that offer organizations greater control over branding, messaging, and consumer engagement. Although virtual influencers have gained considerable popularity in global markets, their effectiveness in influencing consumer behaviour within the Indian context remains underexplored. This study investigates the influence of virtual influencers on consumer behaviour in selected product categories, with particular emphasis on the fashion and cosmetics sectors in India. The study aims to examine consumers' perceptions of the authenticity, credibility, and trustworthiness of virtual influencers and to evaluate their impact on purchase intentions, consumer engagement, and brand recall. It also compares the effectiveness of virtual influencers with that of traditional human influencers in shaping consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions. The research is grounded in established theoretical perspectives, including Source Credibility Theory, Parasocial Interaction Theory, the Theory of Planned Behaviour, and the Uncanny Valley Hypothesis, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding consumer responses to AI-driven marketing communication. A mixed-method research design is proposed, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative phase includes an online survey of Indian consumers and an experimental comparison between virtual and traditional influencer endorsements, while the qualitative phase incorporates focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with marketing professionals to gain deeper insights into consumer perceptions and industry practices. Statistical techniques such as regression analysis, ANOVA, chi-square tests, and thematic analysis will be employed to analyse the collected data. The study is expected to contribute to the growing body of literature on influencer marketing by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of virtual influencers in the Indian market. It will offer valuable

insights into the factors influencing consumer trust, engagement, and purchase intentions while highlighting the opportunities and challenges associated with AI-driven influencer marketing. The findings will assist marketers, brand managers, and policymakers in developing effective digital marketing strategies and making informed decisions regarding the integration of virtual influencers into branding and promotional campaigns. Furthermore, the research addresses an important gap in existing literature by providing a category-specific and culturally relevant analysis of virtual influencer marketing in India's rapidly evolving digital economy.

DIGITAL WELFARE GAPS AND THE SOCIAL WORK IMPERATIVE: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AMONGMARGINALISED URBAN COMMUNITIES IN COIMBATORE, TAMIL NADU

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India's digital governance revolution, anchored in initiatives such as Digital India, Aadhaar-linked direct benefit transfers, and e-Shram, has fundamentally altered the landscape of welfare delivery. In rapidly industrialising cities like Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, this transformation is particularly visible: the city's textile and garment manufacturing sectors, home to thousands of informal and migrant workers, are increasingly expected to access welfare entitlements, labour protections, and public services through digital platforms for which many remain structurally unprepared. This paper is a conceptual study that critically examines the phenomenon of Digital Welfare Gaps (DWGs), defined as the structural discontinuities between policy-level digital mandates and the lived welfare realisation of marginalised citizens, through the lens of Social Work theory and practice. Drawing on secondary sources including census data, NSSO/PLFS labour force surveys, Tamil Nadu government welfare digitisation reports, and published social work scholarship, the paper argues that digital exclusion in urban Coimbatore is not merely a technological deficit but a multidimensional social condition shaped by caste, class, gender, language, and occupational precarity. Theoretically, the study is anchored in Sen's Capability Approach, Social Exclusion Theory, and Structural Social Work (Mullaly, 2007), all of which illuminate why market-driven digitisation, without deliberate equity interventions, reproduces and deepens existing social stratification. The paper introduces the Community-Centred Digital Inclusion Framework (CDIF). This original conceptual tool

positions social workers in Coimbatore's urban slums, garment worker hostels, and community service centres as Digital Welfare Navigators operating at micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. The paper concludes with context-specific policy recommendations tailored to the Coimbatore Municipal Corporation, Tamil Nadu's welfare administration infrastructure, and the University Grants Commission's mandates for social work curricula. It makes an original theoretical contribution by contextualising global digital divide discourse within a South Indian industrial city, offering a replicable model for similar Tier-2 manufacturing hubs across India.

OBESITY PHARMACOTHERAPY: FROM CONVENTIONAL AGENTS TO EMERGING THERAPIES

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An ideal anti-obesity medication should achieve substantial and sustained weight reduction while maintaining an acceptable safety profile and minimizing adverse effects. However, the regulation of energy balance is governed by highly complex and redundant physiological networks that interact extensively with multiple biological systems. Consequently, the history of anti-obesity drug development has been marked by numerous setbacks, including failures during clinical development and the withdrawal of approved agents due to unforeseen safety concerns.Several therapeutic approaches targeting metabolic tissues such as adipose tissue, liver, and skeletal muscle have demonstrated promising results in preclinical studies.The particular attention has been directed toward gastrointestinal peptide hormones involved in hunger and satiety signaling, including ghrelin, cholecystokinin (CCK), peptide YY (PYY), and glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1). Similarly, improved knowledge of leptin-mediated pathways and hypothalamic mechanisms regulating energy balance has expanded opportunities for the development of innovative anti-obesity therapies. Among these emerging therapeutic options, GLP-1 receptor agonists have demonstrated remarkable clinical success. Originally developed for the treatment of type 2 diabetes mellitus, these agents have consistently shown clinically meaningful reductions in body weight, thereby establishing a new benchmark for obesity pharmacotherapy. Their success has stimulated the development of additional incretin-based therapies and has reinforced the concept that targeting multiple pathways involved in appetite regulation and energy expenditure may offer superior therapeutic outcomes. Given the multifactorial nature of obesity, there is growing

recognition that future treatment strategies may require a paradigm shift beyond single-target interventions. Similar to the management of chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, combination therapies employing lower doses of multiple agents that act through complementary mechanisms may provide enhanced efficacy while minimizing adverse effects.

ROLE OF CIRCULAR FASHION PRACTICES IN REDUCING FAST FASHION DEPENDENCY AMONG GENERATION Z IN INDIA

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The fast fashion industry is growing rapidly and changing the way people consume apparel, in particular Gen Z consumers. Fast fashion is cheap, easily available and always modern. But it also uses up plenty of resources, produces textile. waste, emits greenhouse gases and employs underpaid labour. The advent of circular fashion has been in response to fashion's environmental footprint that promotes the reuse, repair, resale, rental, recycling, and upcycling of garments to prolong the life-cycle and reduce its impacts. With a rapidly growing youth demographic and fast-growing digital retail ecosystem, India offers a unique context for examining how circular fashion practices can mitigate the dependence on fast fashion among Generation Z consumers. The paper highlights the concept of circular fashion and the possibility of promoting sustainable consumption of apparel and garments through a review of their literature. Further, we discuss the behavioural, technological and policy perspectives. It underscores how eco-consciousness, digital utilization, peer influence, and perceived value facilitate the uptake of circular fashion practices. At the same time, perceptions of affordability, limited infrastructure, lack of consumer awareness, and concerns over product quality continue to pose challenges to acceptance. According to the study, introducing government policies, education, technology, and industry co-creation and collaboration for the industry's circular business models can reduce Indian youths' dependence on fast fashion. The study findings add to the body of literature on sustainable consumer behaviour. Also, it offers practical implications for policymakers, retailers, fashion brands and entrepreneurs who want to speed up the transition of India towards a circular economy and responsible fashion consumption.

PROFITABILITY ANALYSIS OF SELECT ELECTRONIC MANUFACTURING COMPANIES: WITH REFERENCE TO KAYNES TECHNOLOGY PVT LTD

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The rapid expansion of the Indian Electronics Manufacturing Services (EMS) industry has increased the need for evaluating the financial performance of major companies operating in this sector. This study examines the profitability performance of Kaynes Technology India Ltd. through a comparative analysis with other prominent EMS companies, namely Dixon Technologies (India) Ltd., Amber Enterprises India Ltd., Avalon Technologies Ltd., and Syrma SGS Technology Ltd. The analysis covers a five-year period from 2021–22 to 2025–26 and focuses on assessing the relative financial strength and operational efficiency of these firms. To achieve the objectives of the study, various profitability indicators such as Gross Profit Ratio, Operating Profit Ratio, Net Profit Ratio, Return on Assets (ROA), Return on Equity (ROE), Return on Capital Employed (ROCE), and Earnings Per Share (EPS) have been analysed. Trend analysis and graphical presentations have been employed to evaluate changes in profitability patterns and identify the competitive standing of each company within the industry.The findings provide valuable insights into the profitability trends, financial sustainability, and growth prospects of the selected firms. The study serves as a useful reference for investors, financial analysts, policymakers, and other stakeholders seeking to understand the financial performance of companies in India's rapidly growing electronics manufacturing sector. Additionally, it contributes to academic research by offering a comparative perspective on profitability in the EMS industry.

TREND ANALYSIS WITH HISTORICAL GRIDDED RAINFALL DATA WITH RESPECT TO CLIMATE INDICES BY CONFIRMATORY STATISTICAL TESTS ON AIML PLATFORM

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This paper is based on research study with meteorological rainfall data. The real time binary gridded data, was downloaded from historical time period 1901 to 2025 as available there in the data archive of IMD PUNE gridded dataset and from this large data set of daily gridded data, daily rainfall binary gridded data, available at 0.25 ^{0} spatial resolution was subjected to analysis . The IMDLIB python packages was necessary for processing of this gridded data set, which was necessary for handling large historical gridded dataset for hydro climatic study, as available in the open

source of IMD PUNE gridded dataset . The processing of '.grd' file was done with python 'x-array' code and conversion of 'grid' file to csv file was also made for further necessary analysis. This large gridded data set available on the online data collection platform was actually prepared with consideration of measurements from well spread gauze stations in all over India which was downloaded for this study using suitable python code ,available in the online open source platform . Among the climate indices associated with climate study , the indices related with rainfall were subjected for study to obtain insights to understand the trend of rainfall from historical past to present . The indices subjected for rainfall analysis of Alipore were 'Rainy days (dr)- total number of days in a year with rainfall over a threshold (default: 2.5 mm)', 'Consecutive wet days (cwd)- the maximum length of wet spell (maximum consecutive days in a year with precipitation ≥ a threshold (default: 2.5 mm))' , 'Heavy precipitation days (d64)- the number of days in a year with precipitation ≥ a threshold (default: 64 mm)' , 'Total precipitation in wet days (rtwd) - the sum of precipitation in all the rainy days of a year' , 'Maximum daily rainfall (rxa)- the maximum daily rainfall in a year' , 'Maximum 5-days rainfall (rx5d)- the highest magnitude of rainfall accumulations for consecutive 5 days in a year' , 'Simple daily intensity index (sdii)- it represents the average intensity of a rainy day over a year (computed as the ratio of rtwd and dr)', 'Precipitation concentration index (pci)- an indicator for temporal precipitation distribution (represents how uniformly annual precipitation is distributed in the months)' . All these indices were judged by popular statistical tests which were 'Modified Mann-Kendall test statistic (mmk_hr)- the trend detecting statistic of the non-parametric MMK test advocated by Hamed and Rao (1998)', 'Spearman's Rho statistics (spr)- the trend detecting statistic of the non-parametric Spearman's Rho test', 'Sen's slope estimate (sse)- the trend detecting statistic (i.e., slope) of Sen's slope', and 'Magnitude of trend (sstr)- the ratio of product of Sen's slope (sse) with number of data points to the mean value (expressed in terms of percentage)'. Depending upon the results of all these statistical tests , against each individual index associated with meteorological rainfall study for the location of Alipore , latitude 22.53 ^{0} N ,longitude 88.33 ^{0}E, insights of rainfall trend for this station could be obtained.

FOREIGN PORTFOLIO INVESTMENT TRENDS IN INDIA: A STUDY OF EQUITY AND DEBT SEGMENT

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This study examines the trends and behavior of Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) in India's equity and debt markets during the period from 2015 to 2025. Foreign portfolio investment serves as an important source of capital for emerging economies and plays a significant role in influencing market liquidity, investment activity, and overall financial market performance. The research focuses on understanding the factors that drive FPI movements and evaluating their implications for India's financial system. The study investigates the influence of both domestic and international macroeconomic conditions on foreign investment decisions. During the selected period, global financial markets experienced considerable uncertainty due to various economic and political developments. Events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical conflicts, changing investor sentiment, and shifts in monetary policies by major central banks had a substantial impact on the direction and volume of portfolio investments. These factors contributed to significant variations in FPI inflows and outflows across India's capital markets. The research analyzes the relationship between FPI trends and key economic indicators, including interest rates, exchange rate fluctuations, and market capitalization. The findings reveal that foreign investment flows are highly responsive to changes in economic conditions and market expectations. The study also identifies important patterns in investment behavior and highlights the sensitivity of portfolio capital to both global and domestic developments. Overall, the research provides valuable insights into the dynamics of FPI and its role in shaping the performance and stability of India's financial markets.

THE DIGITAL TRACE: ARCHE-WRITING AND THE FRAGILITY OF TEXT ON MODERN DIGITAL PLATFORMS

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The present paper investigates how digital platforms reshape the nature of writing, memory, and textual permanence through Jacques Derrida's concept of Arche-Writing. In his prominent work, *Of Grammatology*, Derrida elaborates that

language does not consistfixed or stable meaning, instead, meaning is continuously shaped by absence, differance, and traces of other meanings. Notably, Derrida has developed his original concepts in relation to philosophy and print culture, however this paper argues that contemporary digital media strongly reflects similar conditions of textual instability. Furthermore, the work focuses on everyday features of online communication. It includes deleted posts with 'deleted' tags on discussion platforms, revision histories in collaborative cloud documents, and social media posts that lose their original meaning while getting separated from their original context. These digital practices illustrate how online texts are continuously edited, removed, reshaped, and reinterpreted instead of being saved in a fixed form. As a result, digital writing becomes fluid, temporary, and open to constant transformation. Additionally, using Derrida's theory of writing and textual traces, present study explores how modern digital platforms challenge traditional ideas of authorship, durability, and stable meaning. It argues that digital communication does not create permanent records, rather it produces unstable and shifting textual traces that continually change through interaction, deletion, and circulation across online spaces.

धार जिले की महिला बंदियों के विधिक अधिकार चुनौतियाँ एवं समाधान

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भारत में महिला बंदियों की संख्या निरंतर बढ़ रही है, किन्तु उनकी विशिष्ट आवश्यकताओं तथा विधिक अधिकारों की उपेक्षा आज भी एक गंभीर चुनौती बनी हुई है। प्रस्तुत शोध पत्र मध्य प्रदेश के धार जिले की महिला बंदियों के संदर्भ में उनके विधिक अधिकारों का विश्लेषण प्रस्तुत करता है। भारतीय संविधान के अनुच्छेद 14, अनुच्छेद 15(3), अनुच्छेद 21 तथा अनुच्छेद 39(क), जेल अधिनियम, 1894, आदर्श कारागार नियमावली, 2016, संयुक्त राष्ट्र के बैंकॉक नियम तथा उच्चतम न्यायालय के महत्त्वपूर्ण निर्णयों के आधार पर महिला बंदियों के अधिकारों का अध्ययन किया गया है। शोध में धार जिले की कारागारों में स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं, बच्चों की देखभाल, निःशुल्क विधिक सहायता, लैंगिक सुरक्षा तथा पुनर्वास की वास्तविक स्थिति का विश्लेषण किया गया है। अध्ययन से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि विधिक प्रावधान पर्याप्त होने के बावजूद उनका प्रभावी क्रियान्वयन अभी भी सौ प्रतिशत अपेक्षित स्तर तक नहीं पहुँच पाया है। अंत में महिला बंदियों के अधिकारों के प्रभावी संरक्षण तथा उनके सामाजिक पुनर्वास हेतु व्यावहारिक सुझाव प्रस्तुत किए गए हैं।

मध्यप्रदेश के बड़वानी जिले में ग्रामीण प्रवासी श्रमिकों के कौशल विकास एवं रोजगार अवसरों का विश्लेषणात्मक अध्ययन

डॉ॒ राहुल कौशल

सहायक प्राध्यापक एवं शोधनिर्देशक, वाणिज्य विभाग, शासकीय महाविद्यालयए जावरा मध्य प्रदेश

राजेश नरगाँवे

शोधार्थी, वाणिज्य अध्ययनशाला, सम्राट् विक्रमादित्य विश्वविद्यालय उज्जैन मध्य प्रदेश

ग्रामीण प्रवासन भारत के सामाजिक.आर्थिक विकास की एक महत्त्वपूर्ण एवं सतत् प्रक्रिया हैए जिसके अंतर्गत ग्रामीण श्रमिक बेहतर रोजगारए आय एवं आजीविका के अवसरों की खोज में अपने मूल निवास स्थान से अन्य क्षेत्रों की ओर प्रवास करते हैं। मध्यप्रदेश का बड़वानी जिला जनजातीय एवं ग्रामीण बहुल क्षेत्र होने के कारण प्रवासी श्रमिकों की दृष्टि से विशेष महत्त्व रखता है। प्रस्तुत शोध.पत्र बड़वानी जिले के ग्रामीण प्रवासी श्रमिकों के कौशल विकास की वर्तमान स्थितिए उपलब्ध रोजगार अवसरों तथा दोनों के मध्य विद्यमान पारस्परिक संबंध का विश्लेषण करना है। अध्ययन में कौशल विकास कार्यक्रमों की पहुँच एवं प्रभावशीलताए प्रशिक्षण की उपयोगिताए रोजगार की प्रकृतिए आय में हुए परिवर्तन तथा रोजगार प्राप्ति में आने वाली प्रमुख सामाजिकए आर्थिक एवं संस्थागत चुनौतियों का विश्लेषणात्मक परीक्षण किया गया है। शोध में द्वितीयक स्रोतों से प्राप्त आँकड़ों का वैज्ञानिक एवं विश्लेषणात्मक पद्धति के माध्यम से परीक्षण एवं व्याख्या की गई है। कौशल विकास प्रशिक्षण ग्रामीण प्रवासी श्रमिकों की रोजगारयोग्यताए उत्पादकता एवं आय.वृद्धि में महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाता हैए तथापि प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रमों की सीमित पहुँचए जागरूकता का अभावए स्थानीय स्तर पर गुणवत्तापूर्ण रोजगार अवसरों की कमीए संस्थागत समन्वय की कमजोरियाँ तथा सामाजिक.आर्थिक बाधाएँ इसकी प्रभावशीलता को सीमित करती हैं। ग्रामीण प्रवासी श्रमिकों के कौशल उन्नयनए सतत् रोजगार सृजनए आजीविका संवर्धन तथा समावेशी ग्रामीण विकास के लिए प्रभावी नीतियोंए योजनाओं एवं कार्यक्रमों के निर्माण हेतु उपयोगी आधार प्रदान करते हैं।

मध्यप्रदेश के झाबुआ जिले के आदिवासी उद्यमियों द्वारा ई–कॉमर्स अपनाने की वर्तमान स्थिति एवं चुनौतियों का विश्लेषणात्मक अध्ययन

डॉ. सुनिता गणावा

पूर्व शोधार्थी, वाणिज्य अध्ययनशाला, सम्राट् विक्रमादित्य विश्वविद्यालय, उज्जैन, मध्य प्रदेश

डिजिटल अर्थव्यवस्था के विस्तार के साथ ई–कॉमर्स उद्यमिता विकास, बाजार विस्तार तथा आय संवर्धन का एक महत्वपूर्ण माध्यम बनकर उभरा है। विशेष रूप से आदिवासी क्षेत्रों में ई–कॉमर्स स्थानीय उत्पादों को व्यापक राष्ट्रीय एवं अंतरराष्ट्रीय बाजारों तक पहुँचाने की क्षमता

रखता है। प्रस्तुत शोध–पत्र मध्यप्रदेश के झाबुआ जिले के आदिवासी उद्यमियों द्वारा ई–कॉमर्स अपनाने की वर्तमान स्थिति, इसके उपयोग के स्तर तथा इसके समक्ष उपस्थित प्रमुख चुनौतियों का विश्लेषण करना है। अध्ययन में आदिवासी उद्यमियों की डिजिटल जागरूकता, इंटरनेट उपयोग, ऑनलाइन विपणन, डिजिटल भुगतान प्रणाली तथा ई–कॉमर्स प्लेटफॉर्म के प्रति उनकी सहभागिता का परीक्षण किया गया है। झाबुआ जिले के आदिवासी उद्यमियों में ई–कॉमर्स के प्रति जागरूकता एवं रुचि में क्रमिक वृद्धि हो रही है तथा कुछ उद्यमी अपने उत्पादों के विपणन हेतु डिजिटल माध्यमों का उपयोग भी कर रहे हैं। इसके बावजूद सीमित डिजिटल साक्षरता, कमजोर इंटरनेट कनेक्टिविटी, तकनीकी प्रशिक्षण का अभाव, वित्तीय संसाधनों की कमी, लॉजिस्टिक अवसंरचना की अपर्याप्तता तथा ऑनलाइन उपभोक्ता व्यवहार की सीमित समझ जैसी समस्याएँ ई–कॉमर्स के प्रभावी उपयोग में बाधा उत्पन्न करती हैं। परिणामस्वरूप अधिकांश उद्यमी ई–कॉमर्स से प्राप्त होने वाले संभावित लाभों का पूर्ण दोहन नहीं कर पा रहे हैं। यदि डिजिटल अवसंरचना को सुदृढ़ किया जाए, उद्यमियों को नियमित तकनीकी प्रशिक्षण प्रदान किया जाए तथा ई–कॉमर्स प्लेटफॉर्म तक उनकी पहुँच को सरल बनाया जाए, तो आदिवासी उद्यमिता के विकास, रोजगार सृजन, आय वृद्धि एवं क्षेत्रीय आर्थिक सशक्तिकरण को महत्वपूर्ण गति मिल सकती है।

वर्तमान में नौ–परिवहन की प्रासंगिकता

डॉ. नीरज कारगवाल

सह आचार्य, भूगोल राजकीय महाविद्यालय, बीबीरानी, अलवर

आज के समय में नौ–परिवहन अर्थात जल परिवहन की प्रासंगिकता अत्यधिक बढ़ गई है, क्योंकि यह अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापार का सबसे सस्ता व सुलभ माध्यम है। वैश्विक स्तर पर कुल व्यापार का लगभग नब्बे फीसदी समुद्री मार्ग से ही होता है। यह भारी व थोक सामान जैसे कोयला, तेल आदि ढोने के लिए सबसे किफायती व पर्यावरण–अनुकूल साधन है। नौ–परिवहन विश्व की सबसे प्राचीन परिवहन प्रणालियों में से एक है। मानव सभ्यता के विकास में नदियों और समुद्रों का विशेष योगदान रहा है। प्राचीन काल में व्यापार, सांस्कृतिक आदान–प्रदान तथा यात्राओं का प्रमुख साधन नौ–परिवहन ही था। आधुनिक समय में तकनीकी विकास के कारण जहाजों की क्षमता, गति तथा सुरक्षा में अत्यधिक वृद्धि हुई है, जिससे यह परिवहन प्रणाली और अधिक प्रभावी बन गई है। वर्तमान वैश्विक अर्थव्यवस्था में इसका महत्व लगातार बढ़ रहा है। अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापार, ऊर्जा सुरक्षा, पर्यटन, पर्यावरण संरक्षण तथा राष्ट्रीय आर्थिक विकास में नौ–परिवहन की भूमिका अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है। भारत जैसे विशाल समुद्री तट वाले देश के लिए नौ–परिवहन आर्थिक प्रगति का प्रमुख आधार है। नौ–परिवहन उद्योग, बंदरगाहों, जहाज निर्माण, मत्स्य उद्योग तथा लॉजिस्टिक्स क्षेत्र में लाखों लोगों को रोजगार प्रदान करता है और आर्थिक

विकास में योगदान देता है। इससे राष्ट्रीय आय और विदेशी मुद्रा अर्जन में भी वृद्धि होती है। अन्य परिवहन साधनों की तुलना में जल परिवहन कम ईंधन की खपत करता है तथा प्रति टन माल पर कम कार्बन उत्सर्जन करता है। इसलिए इसे अपेक्षाकृत पर्यावरण–अनुकूल परिवहन माना जाता है। नौ–परिवहन के समक्ष चुनौतियाँ– समुद्री प्रदूषण और जलवायु परिवर्तन का प्रभाव तथा समुद्री सुरक्षा एवं समुद्री डकैती जैसी समस्याएँ हैं। भू राजनीतिक कारणों से दुनिया का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण जलमार्ग बंद होने से वैश्विक आपूर्ति श्रृंखला बाधित होती है और तेल की अंतरराष्ट्रीय कीमतों में भारी वृद्धि होती है। वर्तमान समय में नौ–परिवहन केवल एक परिवहन साधन नहीं, बल्कि वैश्विक व्यापार, आर्थिक विकास, ऊर्जा सुरक्षा और सतत विकास का प्रमुख आधार बन चुका है। भारत के लिए भी यह आत्मनिर्भर अर्थव्यवस्था, निर्यात वृद्धि और रोजगार सृजन का महत्वपूर्ण माध्यम है। इसलिए समुद्री सुरक्षा और अंतरराष्ट्रीय सहयोग को मजबूत करना तथा नौ–परिवहन के आधुनिकीकरण, पर्यावरण संरक्षण तथा अवसंरचना विकास पर विशेष ध्यान देना समय की आवश्यकता है।

भावनात्मक बुद्धिमत्ता और जीवन–गुणवत्ता के बीच संबंध

डॉ मिथिलेश कुमार

अतिथि सहायक प्राध्यापक, स्नातकोत्तर संस्कृत विभाग पटना, विश्वविद्यालय, पटना

भावनात्मक बुद्धिमत्ता (म्उवजपवदंस प्दजमससपहमदबम –म्प्) मानव व्यवहार, मानसिक स्वास्थ्य तथा समग्र कल्याण को प्रभावित करने वाले सबसे महत्वपूर्ण मनोवैज्ञानिक अवधारणाओं में से एक के रूप में उभरी है। दूसरी ओर, जीवन–गुणवत्ता (फनंसपजल व िस्पमि – फवस्) किसी व्यक्ति द्वारा अपने जीवन की स्थिति के प्रति की गई धारणा को दर्शाती है, जो उस सांस्कृतिक और मूल्य प्रणाली के संदर्भ में होती है जिसमें वह रहता है, तथा उसके लक्ष्यों, अपेक्षाओं, मानकों और चिंताओं से संबंधित होती है। पिछले कुछ दशकों में मनोविज्ञान, शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य विज्ञान एवं सामाजिक विज्ञान के क्षेत्रों में शोधकर्ताओं ने भावनात्मक बुद्धिमत्ता और जीवन–गुणवत्ता के बीच संबंध को समझने में विशेष रुचि दिखाई है। यह शोध–पत्र भावनात्मक बुद्धिमत्ता और जीवन–गुणवत्ता की वैचारिक आधारभूमि का अध्ययन करता है, विभिन्न सैद्धांतिक दृष्टिकोणों का विश्लेषण करता है, अनुभवजन्य अध्ययनों की समीक्षा करता है तथा इनके बीच संबंध की प्रकृति और मजबूती को स्पष्ट करता है। यह अध्ययन यह भी दर्शाता है कि भावनात्मक बुद्धिमत्ता किस प्रकार मनोवैज्ञानिक कल्याण, सामाजिक संबंधों, शारीरिक स्वास्थ्य और जीवन–संतोष को बढ़ाने में सहायक होती है। पूर्ववर्ती अध्ययनों के निष्कर्षों से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि भावनात्मक बुद्धिमत्ता और जीवन–गुणवत्ता के बीच एक सकारात्मक एवं महत्वपूर्ण संबंध विद्यमान है। उच्च भावनात्मक बुद्धिमत्ता वाले व्यक्ति बेहतर भावनात्मक नियंत्रण, कम तनाव, मजबूत अंतर–व्यक्तिगत संबंध तथा अधिक जीवन–संतोष का अनुभव करते हैं। शोध–पत्र का

निष्कर्ष यह है कि शिक्षा, प्रशिक्षण एवं परामर्श के माध्यम से भावनात्मक बुद्धिमत्ता का विकास विभिन्न आयु–समूहों और सामाजिक संदर्भों में जीवन–गुणवत्ता को बेहतर बनाने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा सकता है।

भारतीय ज्ञान प्रणाल्यां संस्कृत शिक्षायाः उपयोगिताः

रीना अग्रवाल
शोधकर्त्ता, निर्वाण विश्वविद्यालय जयपुर
डॉ बलराम शर्मा
शोध–मार्गदर्शक, कला एवं मानविकी विभाग, निर्वाण विश्व विद्यालय जयपुर

भारतीय ज्ञान प्रणाली में संस्कृत शिक्षा की उपयोगिता अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण और आधारभूत है, क्योंकि प्राचीन भारत का संपूर्ण वैज्ञानिक, दार्शनिक, गणितीय और सांस्कृतिक ज्ञान मौलिक रूप से संस्कृत भाषा में ही रचित है। राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 के तहत भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा को आधुनिक पाठ्यक्रम से जोड़ने के लिए संस्कृत शिक्षा को एक रणनीतिक सेतु माना गया हैद्यप्राचीन भारत के वैज्ञानिकों, गणितज्ञों और चिकित्सकों ने अपने शोध और ग्रंथ संस्कृत में लिखे थे। संस्कृत शिक्षा के बिना इस मूल ज्ञान को समझना असंभव हैद्य आर्यभट्ट, ब्रह्मगुप्त और भास्कराचार्य जैसे विद्वानों के खगोल विज्ञान और गणितीय सिद्धांत संस्कृत श्लोकों में संहिताबद्ध हैं। चरक संहिता और सुश्रुत संहिता जैसे चिकित्सा के आधारभूत ग्रंथ संस्कृत में हैं, जो आज भी समग्र स्वास्थ्य के लिए प्रासंगिक हैं। अकादमिक शोधों के अनुसार, संस्कृत का व्यवस्थित अध्ययन मानव मस्तिष्क के विकास में सहायक हैद्य संस्कृत व्याकरण के नियमों और श्लोकों के सस्वर पाठ से याददाश्त और संज्ञानात्मक कौशल तीव्र होते हैं, जिसे वैज्ञानिक "संस्कृत इफ़ेक्ट" भी कहते हैं। संस्कृत को कई भारतीय भाषाओं की जननी या मूल आधार माना जाता है। इसका व्याकरण सीखने के बाद विद्यार्थी अन्य भारतीय और विदेशी भाषाएँ बहुत सरलता से सीख सकते हैं। संस्कृत केवल एक प्राचीन भाषा नहीं, बल्कि अपनी संरचना में अत्यधिक वैज्ञानिक हैद्य पाणिनी द्वारा रचित अष्टाध्यायी का व्याकरण पूरी तरह से तार्किक और गणितीय नियमों पर आधारित है। अपनी स्पष्ट संरचना और गैर–अस्पष्टता के कारण, संस्कृत को कंप्यूटर प्रोग्रामिंग, नेचुरल लैंग्वेज प्रोसेसिंग और आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस के एल्गोरिद्म के लिए सबसे अनुकूल भाषाओं में से एक माना जाता है। वर्तमान समाज में संज्ञानात्मक विकास के साथ–साथ भावनात्मक संतुलन और नैतिक शिक्षा की भारी आवश्यकता हैद्य संस्कृत साहित्य वैश्विक शांति और 'वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्' (पूरा विश्व एक परिवार है) तथा 'सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः' (सभी सुखी हों) जैसे सार्वभौमिक मूल्यों का संचार करता है। पार्टनर्स यूनिवर्सल इंटरनेशनल इनोवेशन जर्नल के शोध पत्र के अनुसार, उपनिषद, भगवद्गीता और वेदों का अध्ययन छात्रों में चरित्र निर्माण, सहानुभूति और मानसिक दृढ़ता विकसित करता है। एजुकेशन साउथ एशिया के अनुसार, संस्कृत

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शिक्षा युवाओं को औपनिवेशिक मानसिकता और हीनभावना से बाहर निकाल कर अपनी समृद्ध विरासत पर गर्व करना सिखाती है। यह भाषा सहस्राब्दियों पुराने इतिहास, कला, नाटक और सामाजिक ताने–बाने को संजोए हुए है, जिसका अध्ययन भारत को पुनः वैश्विक स्तर पर ज्ञान की महाशक्ति (विश्वगुरु) के रूप में स्थापित कर सकता है। संस्कृत शिक्षा को आधुनिक भारतीय ज्ञान प्रणाली में शामिल करना किसी अतीत के पुनरुद्धार की रूढ़िवादी सोच नहीं है, बल्कि भविष्य की पीढ़ी को एक वैज्ञानिक, तार्किक और नैतिक उपकरण प्रदान करने की रणनीतिक पहल है।

ऑनलाइन बैंकिंग और लेन–देन को प्रभावित करने वाले साइबर हमलों के कारण और निवारण

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वित्तीय सेवाओं के तेजी से बढ़ते डिजिटलीकरण ने बैंकिंग क्षेत्र को महत्वपूर्ण रूप से परिवर्तित किया है, जिससे ऑनलाइन बैंकिंग और डिजिटल लेन–देन को व्यापक रूप से अपनाया जा रहा है। ग्राहक सुविधा, इंटरनेट बैंकिंग की गति और अपनी डिजिटलीकरण की आव कता की पूर्ति, मोबाइल एप्लिकेशन और डिजिटल भुगतान प्लेटफॉर्म पर तीव्र गति से भरोसा करने लगे हैं। हालांकि, इस बदलाव ने वित्तीय प्रणालियों को साइबर सुरक्षा के खतरों की एक विस्तृत श्रृंखला के तरीकों को भी उजागर किया है। यह शोध अध्ययन ऑनलाइन बैंकिंग और डिजिटल लेन–देन को प्रभावित करने वाले विभिन्न साइबर सुरक्षा उपकरणों की भी जांच करता है, जिसमें फिशिंग, मैलवेयर हमले, ग्राहक पहचान की चोरी और समंक उल्लंघन सम्मिलित हैं। यह अध्ययन ग्राहकों की जागरूकता के स्तर, बैंकों द्वारा अपनाए गए सुरक्षा के प्रभावसाली उपायों और सुरक्षित वित्तीय लेन–देन सुनिश्चित करने में विभिन्न विनियामक अधिकारियों की भूमिका का भी मूल्यांकन करता है। कुछ निष्कर्षों से पता चलता है कि बैंक उन्नत तकनीकी समाधान लागू कर रहे हैं, लेकिन उपयोगकर्ताओं की लापरवाही और जागरूकता की कमी साइबर जोखिमों में प्रमुख योगदानकर्ता बनी हुई है। यह अध्ययन डिजिटल बैंकिंग पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र में साइबर सुरक्षा को मजबूत करने के लिए प्रौद्योगिकी, उपयोगकर्ता, शिक्षा और विभिन्न विनियामक अधिकारियों की सहायता से जुड़े एक संयुक्त दृष्टिकोण की आवश्यकता पर जोर रहा है।

भारत में महिला मानवाधिकारः विकास, चुनौतियाँ और संरक्षण के उपाय

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भारत में महिला मानवाधिकारों का प्रश्न भारतीय समाज, राजनीति, अर्थव्यवस्था और कानून व्यवस्था से गहराई से जुड़ा हुआ है। किसी भी लोकतांत्रिक व्यवस्था की सफलता का मूल्यांकन इस बात से किया जाता है कि वह अपने सभी नागरिकों को समान अधिकार, सम्मान और अवसर कितनी प्रभावी तरह से उपलब्ध कराती है। इस दृष्टि से महिलाओं के अधिकारों की स्थिति अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है, क्योंकि लंबे समय तक भारतीय समाज में महिलाओं को पितृसत्तात्मक सोच, सामाजिक रूढ़ियों, अशिक्षा, आर्थिक निर्भरता और भेदभावपूर्ण परंपराओं के कारण सीमित अधिकार प्राप्त रहे हैं। स्वतंत्रता के बाद भारतीय संविधान ने महिलाओं को समानता, स्वतंत्रता, गरिमा, सुरक्षा और समान अवसरों की गारंटी दी। अनुच्छेद 14, 15, 16, 21 और 39 जैसे प्रावधान महिलाओं के लिए समान अधिकारों की वैधानिक नींव प्रदान करते हैं। इसके साथ ही दहेज निषेध अधिनियम, घरेलू हिंसा से संरक्षण अधिनियम, कार्यस्थल पर यौन उत्पीड़न रोकथाम कानून, बाल विवाह निषेध, और मातृत्व लाभ जैसे अनेक कानून बनाए गए, जिनका उद्देश्य महिलाओं की सामाजिक और कानूनी स्थिति को मजबूत करना था। इसके बावजूद, व्यवहारिक धरातल पर महिलाएँ आज भी अनेक मानवाधिकार उल्लंघनों का सामना कर रही हैं। घरेलू हिंसा, यौन उत्पीड़न, दहेज प्रथा, बाल विवाह, भ्रूण हत्या, शिक्षा में असमानता, रोजगार में भेदभाव, वेतन असमानता, राजनीतिक प्रतिनिधित्व की कमी और स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं तक सीमित पहुंच जैसी समस्याएँ आज भी व्यापक रूप से विद्यमान हैं। ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों, गरीब वर्गों, अनुसूचित जाति, अनुसूचित जनजाति और अल्पसंख्यक समुदायों की महिलाओं की स्थिति और भी अधिक जटिल है। कानूनों के होने के बावजूद उनकी कमजोर क्रियान्विति, सामाजिक जागरूकता की कमी, न्यायिक प्रक्रिया में देरी और प्रशासनिक उदासीनता महिला अधिकारों की रक्षा में बड़ी बाधाएँ हैं। यह शोध पत्र भारत में महिला मानवाधिकारों के ऐतिहासिक विकास, संवैधानिक एवं कानूनी प्रावधानों, प्रमुख चुनौतियों तथा संरक्षण के उपायों का समग्र विश्लेषण प्रस्तुत करता है। अध्ययन यह भी रेखांकित करता है कि महिलाओं के अधिकारों की प्रभावी सुरक्षा केवल कानूनों से संभव नहीं है, बल्कि इसके लिए सामाजिक मानसिकता में परिवर्तन, शिक्षा का प्रसार, आर्थिक आत्मनिर्भरता, राजनीतिक भागीदारी, संस्थागत संवेदनशीलता और मजबूत निगरानी तंत्र आवश्यक हैं। महिला मानवाधिकारों की रक्षा केवल महिलाओं का मुद्दा नहीं, बल्कि समग्र सामाजिक न्याय और लोकतांत्रिक विकास की अनिवार्य शर्त है। जब तक महिलाएँ भयमुक्त, समान और गरिमापूर्ण जीवन नहीं जीतीं, तब तक वास्तविक विकास अधूरा रहेगा।

परंपरा से परिवर्तन तकः लद्दाख की सामाजिक–सांस्कृतिक, आर्थिक तथा राजनीतिक संरचना का समकालीन अध्ययन

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लद्दाख, जो हिमालय की ऊँची और दुर्गम पर्वत श्रृंखलाओं के बीच बसा है, भारत के सबसे विशिष्ट भौगोलिक और सांस्कृतिक क्षेत्रों में से एक है। पारंपरिक रूप से यह क्षेत्र बौद्ध और मुस्लिम समुदायों के शांतिपूर्ण सह–अस्तित्व का प्रतीक रहा है जहाँ लगभग 66ण्40ः जनसंख्या बौद्ध और लगभग 14ः मुस्लिम है। लद्दाख की सामाजिक संरचना स्थानीय सामुदायिक संस्थाओं, मठों, और पारंपरिक ग्राम परिषदों पर आधारित है जिन्होंने सदियों से सामाजिक जीवन का संचालन किया है। 5 अगस्त 2019 भारत के संवैधानिक इतिहास में एक निर्णायक तिथि रही, जब अनुच्छेद 370 और 35। के निरस्तीकरण के साथ जम्मू–कश्मीर को दो केन्द्रशासित प्रदेशों जम्मू–कश्मीर और लद्दाख में विभाजित कर दिया गया। इससे लद्दाख को एक अलग प्रशासनिक पहचान मिली, परंतु राज्य की शक्तियों और विधायी अधिकारों की सीमितता ने नई राजनीतिक बहस को जन्म दिया। लद्दाख की जनभावना अब विशेष संवैधानिक दर्जे की मांग पर केंद्रित है, जैसे अनुच्छेद 371 के अनुरूप प्रावधान, ताकि स्थानीय जनजातीय और पारंपरिक हितों को सुरक्षा मिल सके। आर्थिक दृष्टि से, लद्दाख की अर्थव्यवस्था मुख्यतः पारंपरिक पशुपालन, ऊन और पश्मीना उद्योग, तथा पर्यटन पर निर्भर रही है। केंद्रशासित प्रदेश बनने के बाद बुनियादी ढांचे में निवेश और पर्यटन में वृद्धि तो हुई, लेकिन पर्यावरणीय दबाव, संसाधनों के असमान वितरण और स्थानीय निर्णय प्रक्रिया से दूरी जैसी चुनौतियाँ सामने आई हैं। राजनीतिक रूप से, 1989 से चली आ रही स्वायत्तता की मांग अब ″राज्य का दर्जा″ प्राप्त करने की आकांक्षा में परिवर्तित हो चुकी है। यह शोध–पत्र इस ऐतिहासिक यात्रा और वर्तमान तनावों का आलोचनात्मक मूल्यांकन करता है जहाँ एक ओर लद्दाख अपनी विशिष्ट पहचान और पारिस्थितिक संतुलन को संरक्षित रखना चाहता है, वहीं दूसरी ओर वह लोकतांत्रिक प्रतिनिधित्व और आत्मशासन की व्यापक मांग भी कर रहा है।

शैक्षिक एवं सह–शैक्षिक गतिविधियों की भूमिकाः माध्यमिक स्तर पर विद्यार्थियों के सर्वांगीण विकास के संदर्भ में

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माध्यमिक स्तर पर विद्यार्थियों का सर्वांगीण विकास शिक्षा प्रणाली का मूल उद्देश्य है। शिक्षा केवल ज्ञानार्जन तक सीमित नहीं रहती, बल्कि यह विद्यार्थियों के व्यक्तित्व, नेतृत्व, सहयोग भावना, आत्म–अभिव्यक्ति और सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व के विकास में भी योगदान करती है। शैक्षिक गतिविधियाँ जहाँ विद्यार्थियों के बौद्धिक विकास और शैक्षणिक उपलब्धि को दिशा देती हैं, वहीं सह–शैक्षिक गतिविधियाँ जैसे खेल–कूद, वाद–विवाद, नाटक, सांस्कृतिक आयोजन और कला सम्बन्धी कार्यक्रम विद्यार्थियों की रचनात्मकता, आत्मविश्वास और अनुशासन को सशक्त बनाती हैं। यह शोध कार्य माध्यमिक स्तर के विद्यार्थियों के बीच शैक्षिक एवं सह–शैक्षिक गतिविधियों की भूमिका का गहन विश्लेषण करता है। अध्ययन का क्षेत्र राजस्थान राज्य के चयनित विद्यालयों तक सीमित रहा और इसमें प्रश्नावली, साक्षात्कार तथा प्रेक्षण विधि का प्रयोग किया गया। परिणामों से यह स्पष्ट हुआ कि जिन विद्यार्थियों ने शैक्षिक और सह–शैक्षिक दोनों गतिविधियों में सक्रिय भागीदारी की, उनका विकास बौद्धिक, शारीरिक, सामाजिक और मानसिक सभी स्तरों पर अधिक संतुलित एवं प्रभावशाली रहा। अध्ययन से प्राप्त निष्कर्ष शिक्षा नीति निर्माताओं, अध्यापकों और विद्यालय प्रबंधकों के लिए उपयोगी सिद्ध होंगे। यह शोध इस तथ्य को पुष्ट करता है कि विद्यार्थियों का सर्वांगीण विकास तभी सम्भव है जब शैक्षिक और सह–शैक्षिक गतिविधियों को समान महत्त्व देकर विद्यालयी जीवन का अनिवार्य हिस्सा बनाया जाए।

FINTECH FOR WOMEN'S FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT: A PATH TOWARDS INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

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Financial Technology (FinTech) emerged as a transformative force in reshaping financial services by improving accessibility, affordability, and efficiency. In India, the rapid expansion of digital financial services such as Unified Payments Interface (UPI), mobile banking, digital wallets, online lending platforms, and digital investment applications created significant opportunities for enhancing women's

participation in the formal financial system. Despite these advancements, gender disparities in financial access, digital literacy, and economic participation continued to limit the full potential of women's financial empowerment. This study examined the role of FinTech in promoting women's financial empowerment and its contribution to inclusive economic growth in India. Specifically, the study investigated the influence of FinTech adoption on women's access to financial services, financial decision-making, savings behaviour, investment practices, and entrepreneurial activities. It also explored the mediating role of financial inclusion in strengthening the relationship between FinTech adoption and inclusive economic growth. The research adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional design using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to women users of digital financial services across India. A sample of approximately 400–500 respondents was selected using stratified and convenience sampling techniques. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability and validity tests, correlation analysis, and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) through SmartPLS to examine the direct, indirect, and mediating relationships among the study variables. The findings demonstrated that greater adoption of FinTech services significantly enhanced women's financial inclusion, improved financial independence and entrepreneurial participation, and contributed positively to inclusive economic growth. The study offered valuable implications for policymakers, financial institutions, FinTech companies, and development agencies in designing gender-responsive digital financial ecosystems and strengthening financial literacy initiatives. By providing empirical evidence from the Indian context, this research contributed to the growing body of literature on FinTech, women's financial empowerment, financial inclusion, and sustainable economic development.

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