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DR. A.K. TALUKDER

Executive Editor
DR. RANJIT PAUL

**A YEARLY REFEREED RESEARCH JOURNAL OF PUBLIC COLLEGE
DIMAPUR : NAGALAND**

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EDITOR'S DIARY

It gives me immense pleasure to present this issue of our journal, which brings together a diverse collection of research studies addressing some of the most significant economic, social, organisational and technological issues confronting contemporary India. The contributions in this issue reflect the growing importance of research that connects academic inquiry with practical realities and societal needs.

*Closely related to this theme is the issue of “**Unemployment in India: A Growing Economic Concern.**” Employment remains an important indicator of economic well-being and social stability. Unemployment has implications not only for household income but also for human capital utilisation, living standards and inclusive economic development. Research on the changing nature of employment and unemployment can contribute to a better understanding of the challenges facing India's labour market*

*The transformative role of digital technology in business is further explored through “**Social Media Marketing: A Game Changer in Indian Commerce.**” Social media has altered the ways in which businesses communicate with consumers, build brands and promote products and services. It has particularly created new opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs to reach wider markets. At the same time, effective digital marketing requires an understanding of changing consumer behaviour, credibility, engagement and responsible communication*

*The next study, “**A Study on Job Satisfaction of Employees Working in Departmental Stores,**” draws attention to the human dimension of the retail sector. Employee satisfaction is closely associated with motivation, productivity, organisational commitment and the quality of customer service. Understanding the factors that influence job satisfaction can help organisations develop better workplace practices and create a more productive and engaged workforce.*

*Entrepreneurship and innovation form another major theme of this issue through “**A Study on Startups in India.**” Startups have become an important part of India's entrepreneurial ecosystem, creating new business models and contributing to innovation and employment. However, the startup environment also presents challenges relating to finance, market access, competition, technology, regulation and sustainability. Continued academic research can help deepen our understanding of the opportunities and constraints within India's evolving startup landscape.*

*Sustainability and responsible business practices receive attention through the study “**Repositioning Luxury through Sustainability: A Case Study of Green Marketing Strategies at Taj Hotels.**” The luxury hospitality industry is increasingly required to reconcile premium experiences with environmental responsibility. Green marketing, resource conservation and sustainable operational practices provide an interesting area for understanding how luxury brands can respond to changing consumer expectations while addressing environmental concerns.*

The issue examines the **“Role of Youth Welfare Programmes in Employment Generation in India.”** India’s young population represents an important economic and social resource. Youth-oriented welfare, skill-development and employment programmes can contribute to improving employability and facilitating participation in productive economic activities. The study highlights the importance of examining how such programmes can be strengthened and better connected with emerging employment opportunities.

The changing nature of urban transportation and consumer services is reflected in **“A Study on Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality of Two-Wheeler Taxi Service.”** App-based and two-wheeler taxi services have introduced new dimensions to urban mobility. Examining customer satisfaction and perceived service quality can provide useful insights into reliability, convenience, affordability, safety and responsiveness—factors that are central to the development of consumer-oriented transportation services.

The digital transformation of society is another important area represented in this issue. The study **“Impact of Social Media Usage on Mental Health and Academic Performance of College Students”** explores an increasingly relevant dimension of student life. Social media has become an integral part of communication, learning and social interaction. At the same time, patterns of usage may have implications for students’ well-being, concentration and academic engagement. Evidence-based research in this area is essential for encouraging responsible and constructive use of digital platforms.

Another important contribution, **“The Price Puzzle: How Price Shapes the Economy and the Role of Government,”** examines the central role of prices in shaping economic decisions, resource allocation and consumer behaviour. Prices influence production, consumption, investment and the distribution of resources across the economy. At the same time, excessive price fluctuations and inflation can affect household purchasing power and economic stability. The article therefore draws attention to the role of government in maintaining an appropriate balance between market forces, consumer interests and broader economic objectives through suitable economic policies and regulatory measure

The issue also examines, **“Organisational Governance and Educational Empowerment through NGO Intervention”** which brings the discussion towards the role of civil society in social development. Non-governmental organisations can play an important role in extending educational opportunities and addressing social and institutional gaps. Effective governance, accountability, transparency and community participation are essential for ensuring that such interventions achieve sustainable outcomes.

The final article, **“Life Skills: Making the Life of Slow Learners SIMPLE,”** highlights the importance of equipping slow learners with essential skills for independent and meaningful living. The SIMPLE framework—Self-awareness, Interpersonal skills, Managing emotions, Problem-solving ability, Leading ability, and Empathy—offers a practical approach to nurturing their overall development. It reminds us that education should go beyond academic achievement and foster confidence, emotional well-being, social adjustment, and responsible

decision-making. The article makes a valuable contribution to the discussion on inclusive and holistic education.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate the breadth of contemporary academic inquiry. They move from the workplace to the labour market, from youth development to entrepreneurship, from sustainability to digital transformation, and from consumer services to educational empowerment. Although the subjects are diverse, they share a common objective: to understand changing realities and generate knowledge that can contribute to better decisions and improved social and economic outcomes.

As a journal, we believe that academic research should not remain confined to theoretical discussion. It should encourage dialogue among researchers, educators, practitioners, policymakers and members of society. The studies presented in this issue exemplify this approach by addressing issues that are both academically relevant and socially meaningful.

I sincerely congratulate all the authors for their valuable contributions and appreciate the efforts of the reviewers, editorial team and academic community who have supported the publication of this issue. I hope that the articles will stimulate further research, constructive discussion and practical initiatives in their respective fields.

Research becomes truly meaningful when knowledge is transformed into understanding, and understanding contributes to positive change.

With this vision, I welcome our readers to this issue and look forward to continued scholarly engagement and collaboration.

With warm regards,

Dr. Ranjit Paul

Executive Editor

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UNEMPLOYMENT IN INDIA: A GROWING ECONOMIC CONCERN

Dr. A.K.Talukder¹

Abstract

Unemployment remains one of the most significant economic challenges facing India. Despite rapid economic growth, technological advancement, and various government initiatives, a substantial proportion of the workforce remains unemployed or underemployed. The issue is particularly severe among educated youth, women, and rural populations. Unemployment not only reduces individual income and living standards but also hinders national economic development by limiting productive utilization of human resources. This study examines the causes, consequences, and trends of unemployment in India and evaluates the effectiveness of existing policy measures. The findings indicate that population growth, skill mismatch, slow industrial expansion, and technological changes are major contributors to unemployment. The paper concludes by suggesting policy interventions aimed at promoting employment generation and sustainable economic growth.

Keywords: Unemployment, Economic Growth, Youth Unemployment, Labour Market, India, Employment Generation.

Introduction

Employment is a crucial indicator of economic development and social well-being. A nation's prosperity largely depends on its ability to provide productive employment opportunities to its population. In India, unemployment has emerged as a persistent economic concern despite significant progress in various sectors of the economy. The country's large and growing population creates immense pressure on the labour market, making employment generation a challenging task.

Unemployment refers to a situation in which individuals who are willing and able to work at prevailing wage rates are unable to find suitable employment. The issue affects not only economic productivity but also social stability, leading to poverty, inequality, and reduced living

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standards. Therefore, understanding the nature and causes of unemployment is essential for formulating effective policies.

Background of the Study

India possesses one of the world's largest labour forces. Every year, millions of young individuals enter the job market seeking employment opportunities. However, the pace of job creation has often failed to match the increasing labour supply. Economic reforms initiated in 1991 accelerated growth but did not always translate into proportional employment generation, leading to concerns regarding "jobless growth."

The COVID-19 pandemic further aggravated unemployment by disrupting economic activities and causing job losses across sectors. Additionally, automation, digitalization, and changing industrial structures have transformed labour demand patterns, creating challenges for workers lacking appropriate skills.

Given the significance of employment in economic development, it is important to analyze the current unemployment situation in India and identify measures to address this growing concern.

Literature Review

Several researchers and institutions have studied unemployment in India from different perspectives.

Keynes (1936) emphasized the role of aggregate demand in determining employment levels and argued that government intervention is necessary during periods of high unemployment.

Lewis (1954), in his dual-sector model, explained labour transfer from traditional agriculture to modern industry as a pathway for economic development and employment generation.

Bhalla (2017) observed that India's labour market faces structural challenges, including inadequate skill development and low female labour force participation.

Mehrotra and Parida (2019) highlighted rising youth unemployment despite increasing educational attainment, indicating a mismatch between education and market requirements.

Reports by NITI Aayog, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) have consistently pointed to issues such as underemployment, informal employment, and regional disparities in employment opportunities.

The literature suggests that unemployment in India is influenced by both structural and cyclical factors and requires comprehensive policy responses.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to:

- Examine the current status of unemployment in India.
- Identify the major causes of unemployment.
- Analyze the economic and social consequences of unemployment.
- Evaluate existing government initiatives for employment generation.
- Suggest policy measures to reduce unemployment and promote inclusive growth.

Statement of the Problem

India is home to one of the largest labour forces in the world, yet a significant proportion of its population remains unemployed or underemployed. The problem is particularly acute among educated youth, women, and workers in rural areas. Despite economic growth and various employment-generation schemes, the rate of job creation has not been sufficient to absorb the increasing number of job seekers entering the labour market each year.

The persistence of unemployment has serious economic and social implications, including poverty, income inequality, reduced purchasing power, social unrest, and wastage of human resources. Furthermore, the growing mismatch between educational qualifications and industry requirements has intensified the challenge. Therefore, there is a need to examine the causes, consequences, and possible solutions to unemployment in India in order to formulate effective policies for sustainable employment generation and economic development.

Methodology

The study is based on secondary data collected from various sources, including:

- Government publications and reports.

- Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) reports.
- Economic Survey of India.
- Research articles and academic journals.
- Reports from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and World Bank.
- Descriptive and analytical methods have been used to interpret the available data and examine trends in unemployment.

Limitations of the Study

The study relies entirely on secondary data.

- Variations in unemployment estimates across different surveys may affect comparability.
- Rapid changes in labour market conditions may not be fully reflected in available data.
- Regional and sector-specific differences could not be examined in extensive detail.
- Informal employment and disguised unemployment are difficult to measure accurately.

Findings

The study reveals several important findings:

1. Rising Youth Unemployment

Educated youth face higher unemployment rates than less educated workers. Many graduates struggle to find jobs matching their qualifications and expectations.

2. Skill Mismatch

A significant gap exists between the skills possessed by job seekers and those demanded by employers. This mismatch contributes substantially to unemployment.

3. Dependence on Agriculture

A large portion of India's workforce remains dependent on agriculture, where disguised unemployment is widespread. Many workers contribute little to productivity due to excess labour.

4. Slow Employment Generation

Economic growth has not always translated into adequate job creation. Certain sectors have experienced growth without proportionate increases in employment opportunities.

5. Low Female Labour Force Participation

Women's participation in the labour market remains relatively low due to social, educational, and economic barriers, limiting overall employment potential.

6. Impact of Technology

Automation and digital transformation have reduced demand for certain low-skilled jobs while increasing demand for specialized skills.

7. Regional Disparities

Employment opportunities are unevenly distributed across states, leading to migration from economically weaker regions to urban centres.

8. Growth of Informal Employment

Many workers are employed in the informal sector, characterized by low wages, job insecurity, and lack of social protection.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are proposed to address unemployment in India:

1. Strengthen Skill Development Programs: Educational institutions and training centres should focus on industry-oriented skills. Programs such as Skill India should be expanded to improve employability among youth.

2. Promote Labour-Intensive Industries: Sectors such as textiles, agriculture-based industries, food processing, tourism, and handicrafts should be encouraged as they have high employment-generation potential.

3. Encourage Entrepreneurship: The government should provide financial assistance, training, and mentorship to aspiring entrepreneurs through initiatives such as Startup India and Mudra Yojana.

4. Improve Quality of Education: The education system should be aligned with labour market requirements to reduce the gap between academic qualifications and practical skills.

5. Increase Investment in Infrastructure: Large-scale infrastructure projects can generate direct and indirect employment opportunities while promoting economic growth.

6. Support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs): SMEs are major employment generators. Easier access to credit, technology, and markets can help them expand and create more jobs.

7. Enhance Women's Employment Opportunities: Policies promoting workplace safety, flexible work arrangements, and equal employment opportunities can increase female labour force participation.

8. Develop Rural Employment Opportunities: Rural industrialization and strengthening employment schemes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) can reduce rural unemployment and migration.

9. Encourage Foreign and Domestic Investment: A favourable business environment can attract investment, leading to expansion of industries and employment creation.

10. Strengthen Labour Market Information Systems: Regular collection and dissemination of labour market data can help policymakers identify employment trends and design appropriate interventions.

Conclusion

Unemployment continues to be a major economic concern in India. Although the country has achieved impressive economic growth over the past decades, employment generation has not kept pace with the expanding labour force. Youth unemployment, skill mismatch, underemployment, and regional disparities remain significant challenges.

Addressing unemployment requires a multi-dimensional approach involving skill development, industrial expansion, entrepreneurship promotion, labour-intensive manufacturing, and improved

educational quality. Government initiatives such as Skill India, Startup India, Make in India, and employment guarantee programmes have contributed positively, but further efforts are needed to create sustainable and productive employment opportunities.

A comprehensive employment strategy focusing on inclusive growth, technological adaptation, and human capital development will be essential for transforming India's demographic advantage into long-term economic prosperity.

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SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: A GAME CHANGER IN INDIAN COMMERCE

Dr. Ranjit Paul¹

Abstract

Social media marketing has emerged as one of the most influential tools in the modern business environment. In India, the rapid growth of internet connectivity, smartphone usage, and digital literacy has transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers. Social media platforms provide organizations with cost-effective methods to promote products, engage with customers, and build brand awareness. This article examines the role of social media marketing in Indian commerce, highlighting its impact on market reach, customer engagement, e-commerce growth, and entrepreneurial development. It also discusses the challenges associated with digital marketing and explores future opportunities in the evolving digital economy. The study concludes that social media marketing has significantly reshaped Indian commerce and continues to be a driving force behind business growth and innovation.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Digital Marketing, E-commerce, Consumer Engagement, Indian Commerce, Online Advertising.

Introduction

The rapid growth of the internet and smartphone usage has transformed the way businesses interact with consumers. Among the most influential developments in the digital era is social media marketing, which has emerged as a powerful tool for promoting products, services, and brands. In India, where millions of people actively use social networking platforms every day, social media marketing has become a game changer in commerce. It has revolutionized traditional business practices, created new opportunities for entrepreneurs, and enabled companies of all sizes to reach customers more effectively.

Review of Literature

A review of literature provides an overview of previous studies and scholarly contributions related to social media marketing and its impact on commerce.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as a group of internet-based applications that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Their study highlighted the growing importance of social media as a communication and marketing tool for businesses. They argued that organizations must actively engage with consumers on digital platforms to remain competitive.

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Mangold and Faulds (2009) examined the role of social media in the promotion mix and concluded that it has become a hybrid element of marketing communication. According to the authors, social media enables direct interaction between companies and consumers, influencing purchasing decisions and brand perception.

Tiago and Veríssimo (2014) explored the significance of digital marketing in the modern business environment. Their findings indicated that businesses increasingly rely on social media platforms to enhance customer relationships, improve brand visibility, and achieve marketing objectives more effectively than traditional methods.

Kapoor et al. (2018) reviewed the evolution of social media research and emphasized its growing influence on consumer behavior and business performance. The study found that social media facilitates information sharing, customer engagement, and online brand communities, thereby contributing to organizational success.

Dwivedi et al. (2021) analyzed the future of digital and social media marketing research. The authors highlighted the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and personalization in improving the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies.

Tuten and Solomon (2023) emphasized that social media marketing has transformed the relationship between businesses and consumers by creating interactive communication channels. Their work demonstrated how organizations use social media to build brand awareness, generate leads, and increase customer loyalty.

Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022) discussed the integration of digital marketing strategies with social media platforms. They found that social media marketing contributes significantly to customer acquisition, retention, and business growth through targeted advertising and content marketing.

In the Indian context, reports published by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and DataReportal indicate a rapid increase in social media users due to affordable internet access and smartphone penetration. These reports suggest that social media has become a vital platform for businesses, especially small and medium enterprises, to reach broader markets and enhance customer engagement.

Research Gap

Although numerous studies have examined social media marketing globally, limited research has focused specifically on its transformative impact on Indian commerce, particularly in relation to small businesses, digital entrepreneurship, and the evolving consumer behavior in India's diverse market. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze how social media marketing has emerged as a game changer in Indian commerce and its implications for future business growth.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the concept and importance of social media marketing.
- To examine the growth of social media usage in India.
- To analyze the impact of social media marketing on Indian commerce.
- To assess the role of social media in enhancing customer engagement and brand awareness.
- To identify the opportunities and challenges associated with social media marketing.
- To explore the future prospects of social media marketing in the Indian business environment.

Methodology

Research Design: The study is based on a descriptive research design. It aims to examine the role and impact of social media marketing on Indian commerce by analyzing existing literature, reports, and secondary data sources.

Sources of Data: The study relies primarily on secondary data collected from various reliable sources, including:

- Books on marketing and digital marketing.
- Research articles published in academic journals.
- Government reports and publications.
- Industry reports from organizations such as IAMAI and DataReportal.
- Websites, online databases, and business publications related to social media marketing and e-commerce.

Data Collection Method: Relevant information was gathered through a systematic review of published literature, industry reports, and online resources. Data concerning social media usage, digital marketing trends, consumer behavior, and e-commerce growth in India were analyzed to understand the influence of social media marketing on commercial activities.

Scope of the Study: The study focuses on the Indian business environment and examines how social media marketing has transformed marketing practices, customer engagement, brand promotion, and e-commerce activities. The analysis covers major social media platforms and their contribution to commercial growth in India.

Data Analysis Technique: The collected information was analyzed using a qualitative and descriptive approach. Facts, trends, and findings from various sources were compared and interpreted to draw meaningful conclusions regarding the effectiveness and significance of social media marketing in Indian commerce.

Limitations of the Study

- The study is based entirely on secondary data and does not include primary survey responses.
- Findings depend on the accuracy and availability of published sources.
- The rapidly changing nature of social media platforms may affect the long-term applicability of some observations.
- The study focuses mainly on the Indian context and may not fully represent global trends.

Understanding Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing refers to the use of social networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and X to promote products, services, and brands. Businesses use these platforms to create content, engage with customers, run advertisements, and build brand awareness. Unlike traditional marketing methods, social media marketing allows direct interaction between businesses and consumers, making communication more personalized and effective.

Growth of Social Media in India

India is one of the largest digital markets in the world. The increasing availability of affordable smartphones and low-cost internet services has significantly expanded social media usage. People from urban as well as rural areas are now actively connected through digital platforms. This widespread adoption has encouraged businesses to shift their marketing strategies from conventional media to social media channels.

The rise of digital literacy and online shopping has further accelerated the importance of social media marketing. Consumers increasingly rely on online reviews, influencer recommendations, and social media advertisements before making purchasing decisions.

Impact on Indian Commerce

1. Enhanced Market Reach

One of the greatest advantages of social media marketing is its ability to reach a large audience. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which previously struggled to compete with large corporations, can now market their products nationwide with minimal investment. Businesses can target specific demographics based on age, location, interests, and purchasing behavior.

2. Cost-Effective Promotion

Traditional advertising through television, newspapers, and billboards often requires substantial financial resources. Social media marketing offers a more affordable alternative. Even startups with limited budgets can create engaging campaigns and reach potential customers effectively. This has encouraged entrepreneurship and innovation across India.

3. Improved Customer Engagement

Social media platforms facilitate real-time interaction between businesses and customers. Companies can respond to inquiries, address complaints, and gather feedback instantly. This direct communication helps build trust, strengthen customer relationships, and improve brand loyalty.

4. Growth of E-Commerce

The success of e-commerce in India is closely linked to social media marketing. Online retailers use social platforms to showcase products, offer discounts, and attract buyers. Features such as live streaming, influencer collaborations, and integrated shopping options have simplified the purchasing process and enhanced consumer convenience.

5. Influencer Marketing Revolution

Influencer marketing has become a major trend in Indian commerce. Social media influencers, who have large and loyal followings, promote products and services to their audiences. Their recommendations often carry greater credibility than traditional advertisements, influencing consumer choices and boosting sales.

Challenges of Social Media Marketing

Despite its numerous benefits, social media marketing also presents certain challenges. Intense competition for audience attention, the spread of misinformation, privacy concerns, and negative online reviews can affect business reputation. Additionally, companies must continuously adapt to changing algorithms and consumer preferences to remain relevant in the digital marketplace.

Future Prospects

The future of social media marketing in India appears highly promising. Advancements in artificial intelligence, data analytics, and personalized advertising are expected to make marketing campaigns even more effective. The increasing popularity of short-form video content, social commerce, and digital payment systems will further strengthen the role of social media in business growth.

As internet penetration continues to expand into rural areas, businesses will gain access to new customer segments. This will contribute to economic development and create a more inclusive digital economy.

Findings of the Study

Based on the review of literature and analysis of secondary data, the following findings were observed:

- **Social media marketing has significantly transformed Indian commerce** by providing businesses with a direct and interactive channel to communicate with consumers.
- **The increasing penetration of smartphones and affordable internet services** has contributed to the rapid growth of social media usage across urban and rural India.
- **Social media platforms have become effective marketing tools** for businesses of all sizes, enabling them to promote products and services at a lower cost compared to traditional advertising methods.
- **Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and startups have particularly benefited** from social media marketing, as it allows them to reach a larger audience without substantial financial investment.
- **Customer engagement has improved considerably** through features such as comments, reviews, direct messaging, and live interactions, helping businesses build stronger relationships with consumers.
- **Social media marketing positively influences consumer purchasing decisions**, as customers often rely on online reviews, recommendations, and influencer endorsements before making purchases.
- **The growth of e-commerce in India is closely linked to social media marketing**, with businesses increasingly using social platforms to drive traffic, generate leads, and increase sales.
- **Influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful promotional strategy**, particularly among younger consumers, contributing to increased brand awareness and customer trust.
- **Data analytics and targeted advertising capabilities** available on social media platforms enable businesses to identify and reach specific customer segments more effectively.
- **Brand visibility and recognition have improved significantly** for businesses that maintain an active and engaging presence on social media platforms.
- **Despite its advantages, social media marketing presents challenges**, including privacy concerns, negative customer feedback, misinformation, and intense competition among brands for consumer attention.
- **The future of social media marketing in India appears highly promising**, driven by technological advancements, increasing internet accessibility, artificial intelligence, and the continued expansion of digital commerce.

Conclusion

Social media marketing has undeniably transformed Indian commerce by changing the way businesses connect with consumers. Its ability to provide cost-effective promotion, wider market reach, enhanced customer engagement, and support for e-commerce has made it an indispensable marketing tool. While challenges remain, the opportunities offered by social media far outweigh the risks. As technology continues to evolve, social media marketing will play an even greater role in shaping the future of Indian commerce, making it a true game changer in the modern business landscape.

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A STUDY ON JOB SATISFACTION OF EMPLOYEES WORKING IN DEPARTMENTAL STORES IN DIMAPUR

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Abstract

The present study examines the level of job satisfaction among the employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur town of Nagaland. The study primarily focuses on job satisfaction with respect to salary, gender differences and marital status of the employees. Expansion of organised retail sector in the town is one of the major sources of employment and hence employees' satisfaction is important as it influences productivity, service quality and organisational performance. The present study focuses on the factors influencing job satisfaction, and to identify the differences in job satisfaction based on gender and marital status of employees. It is a descriptive research based on primary data collected through well structured questionnaire using a five point Likert scale and relevant secondary research.

The collected data were analysed using percentage, mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, correlation and t-test. The study revealed a moderate positive and significant relationship between salary and job satisfaction. Gender has a significant influence, whereas marital status does not. The study suggests improving salary structures, incentives and promotion policies and employee welfare measures, along with maintaining a supportive work environment.

To conclude, employees in departmental stores in Dimapur are generally satisfied, but improvements in financial and career aspects are needed to enhance overall satisfaction.

Keywords: Departmental Stores, Job Satisfaction, Gender Difference, Marital Status, Salary, Job Security, Working Environment and Management Support.

Introduction

Job satisfaction is an important aspect of human resource management, as it influences employees' motivation, productivity, organisational commitment, and service quality. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are generally more committed to their organisations, provide better customer service, and contribute to improved organisational performance. In labour-intensive sectors such as departmental retailing, where employees interact directly with customers, maintaining a satisfied workforce is essential for ensuring operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

In recent years, the organised retail sector in India has witnessed significant growth, and Dimapur, the commercial hub of Nagaland, has experienced a rapid expansion of

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departmental stores. These stores have created employment opportunities for local youth in areas such as sales, billing, inventory management, customer service, and store operations. Despite this growth, limited empirical research has examined the level of job satisfaction among employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur. The present study seeks to bridge this gap by examining employees' job satisfaction, analysing the relationship between salary and job satisfaction, and assessing whether job satisfaction differs based on gender and marital status. The findings are expected to provide useful insights for retail managers and contribute to the existing literature on employee job satisfaction in the context of organised retail in Nagaland.

Statement of the Problem

In Dimapur town though the number of departmental stores are increasing, yet there is deficiency of empirical research examining the job satisfaction of employees working there. Furthermore, the issues related to gender-based facilities and social security provisions remain underexplored. Therefore, this study seeks to address this **research gap** by analyzing the level of job satisfaction among departmental store employees in Dimapur and examining the relationship between salary and job satisfaction, as well as differences based on gender and marital status. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for improving employee welfare and enhancing organizational effectiveness in the retail sector.

Need and Significance of the Study

The need for the present study arises from the increasing growth of departmental stores in Dimapur and the absence of adequate empirical research focusing on employees' job satisfaction in this sector. The present study is significant due to the following reasons

- i. It helps in identifying factors influencing employees satisfaction
- ii. It provides insights for management to improve HR policies
- iii. It Contributes to academic literature in the context of Nagaland
- iv. It assists retail managers in reducing turnover and improving productivity

Review of Related Literature

Several studies have been undertaken by the academicians on job satisfaction of employees. A study on the past literature on the topic provides a strong theoretical and empirical base for the present research.

- i. Sailaaja and Ravi (2022), in "*A Study on Level of Job Satisfaction among Employees of Dmart Shopping Stores in Hyderabad, Telangana State,*" observed that employees job satisfaction was mainly influenced by welfare facilities, job security, managerial behaviour, and working conditions. The study revealed that employees were satisfied with organisational stability, but they expressed concerns about long working hours and poor communication from supervisors. The study highlighted key factors affecting job satisfaction in organised retail malls.

- ii. Kirve (2018) in 'Job satisfaction of workers working at organised retail stores in Pune city, found that job satisfaction was mainly influenced by interpersonal relationships, fair remuneration and working condition. However, shift timings, job stress, limited career growth and customer pressure reduced overall satisfaction. The study recommended structured training and better career advancement opportunities to improve employee motivation and retention.
- iii. **Patra (2022)**, in the study '*A Study on Employee Job Satisfaction in Organized Retail Stores, Bhubaneswar*', found that employees were moderately satisfied with their work environment and colleagues but dissatisfied with salary, recognition, and welfare facilities. The study recommended better reward systems, training, and managerial communication to improve job satisfaction.
- iv. **Deshmukh (2022)** found that training, work environment, supervisory support, and interpersonal relationships positively influenced employee satisfaction in organized retail stores in Nagpur. However, dissatisfaction was observed regarding salary, work pressure, and job security. The study emphasized supportive management and employee engagement to improve performance and retention.
- v. **Indhumathy and Anas (2023)** found that employee satisfaction improved productivity, teamwork, and customer service in retail stores in Coimbatore. Dissatisfaction was mainly related to salary, workload, and limited promotion opportunities. The study highlighted the importance of welfare measures, training, and supportive management.
- vi. **Baliyan and Fatima (2020)** in "*A study on employee job satisfaction boosting productivity and increased sales in retail sector of Bangalore*" found that effective training, fair compensation, employee benefits, and a positive work environment significantly enhanced job satisfaction and productivity among retail employees in Bangalore. Long working hours, low salary, and limited career growth were the main causes of dissatisfaction.

Research Gap

The reviewed literature shows that job satisfaction of employees in service sector is influenced by several factors such as salary, working condition, welfare schemes, career growth etc. However, most of the studies were conducted in the metropolitan cities with limited focus on departmental stores. Very few studies have examined the job satisfaction among the employees of north-eastern states of India particularly Nagaland. Therefore, there is a need for research on job satisfaction of employees in the state. The present study attempts to fill this gap by analysing job satisfaction among employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur town of Nagaland.

Objectives of the Study

The present study is based on the following principal objectives

- i. To examine the salary structure of employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur town.

- ii. To analyze the relationship between salary level and job satisfaction of employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur town.
- iii. To examine the gender composition of employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur town.
- iv. To analyze whether there is a significant difference in job satisfaction between male and female employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur town.
- v. To examine the marital status distribution of employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur town.
- vi. To analyze whether there is a significant difference in job satisfaction between married and unmarried employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur town.

Research Methodology

Research design: The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research designed to examine the level of job satisfaction and its association with selected demographic and employment related variables.

Sample size: The present research is based on a sample size of 88 employees working in different departmental stores in Dimapur town.

Sampling Technique: The present study is based on random sampling method. The respondents were selected based on their willingness to participate and their accessibility to the researcher.

Data sources: The research is based on both secondary and primary data. Primary data were collected directly through personal interview of the respondents with the help of well structured questionnaire. Secondary data were collected from related research publications. **Tools for Data Analysis** includes Microsoft excel, percentage analysis, graphical presentation, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, correlation analysis, t-test for the significance of Pearson's correlation coefficient and independent sample t-test

Period of the study: The field survey for data collection was conducted personally by the researcher using a well-structured questionnaire during the month of February 2026.

Hypotheses of the Study

The study is based on the following hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no a significant relationship between salary and job satisfaction of departmental employees

H_{a1}: There exists a significant relationship between salary and job satisfaction of departmental employees

Ho2: There exist no significant differences in level of satisfaction of male and female employees

Ha2: There exist significant differences in level of satisfaction of male and female employees

Ho3: There exists no significant difference in level of satisfaction of married and unmarried employees

Ha3: There exists significant difference in level of satisfaction of marriage and unmarried employees

Results and Discussions

Demographic profile of respondents:

In order to ensure adequate representation a sample of 88 respondents were randomly selected from seven departmental stores located at Dimapur town including city kart, V2 retail Ltd, Mumuso, Vishal Mega Mart, Trends, Westside and Zudio. Out of the total respondents 40(45.45%) were male and 48 (54.55) were female out of which 44% were graduates and above and the remaining 56% were undergraduate. in regards to age composition around 95.47% of them were in the age group of 18-35 years and the remaining 4.53% were above 35 years. Furthermore, 18.18% of the employees were married and 81.82 were unmarried. Out of the total respondents around 87% have experience less than five years and the remaining 13% have more than five year of experience.

Descriptive statistics

In order to examine job satisfaction of employees' eighteen questions were asked to the respondents using Likert scale. The collected data were analysed using different statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation in order to assess the level of job satisfaction among the respondents as highlighted in table 1.

In order to assess the level of consistency of employee's satisfaction the mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation were used. Higher mean values indicate higher satisfaction, while lower coefficient of variation indicates greater consistency in employees' responses.

Among the eighteen factors, treatment of colleagues records the highest satisfaction (Mean = 4.13; CV = 19.03%), followed by facility for women (Mean = 3.90) and working environment (Mean = 3.88). This indicates that employees are highly satisfied with interpersonal relationships and workplace conditions. In contrast, incentives (Mean = 2.64), increments (Mean = 2.66), promotion prospects (Mean = 2.80), working hours (Mean = 2.88), and workload (Mean = 2.93) show comparatively lower satisfaction. Higher coefficients of variation for incentives and increments indicate greater differences in employees' opinions.

Table showing mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation of satisfaction from different factors influencing satisfaction (Likert Scale coding 0 – 4)						
S. No	Satisfaction Factor	Mean Score	Rank	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of variation (in %)	Level of satisfaction based on mean
1	Salary	3.06	13th	0.94	30.72 %	High
2	Increments	2.66	17th	0.96	36.01 %	Moderate
3	Incentives	2.64	18 th	1.15	43.49 %	Moderate
4	Timely payment	3.47	7 th	1.14	33.01 %	High
5	Workload	2.93	14th	0.94	32.21 %	Moderate
6	Working hours	2.88	15 th	1.01	35.30 %	Moderate
7	Work Environment	3.88	3rd	1.04	26.77 %	High
8	Treatment of Supervisors	3.69	4th	0.96	26.08 %	High
9	Treatment of Colleagues	4.13	1st	0.79	19.03 %	Very High
10	Safety at work place	3.64	5 th	1.10	30.12 %	High
11	Facility for female staff	3.90	2nd	0.86	22.02 %	High
12	Job security	3.33	9 th	0.98	29.41 %	High
13	Recognition for work	3.10	12 th	0.99	32.06 %	High
14	Promotion prospects	2.80	16 th	0.97	34.80 %	Moderate
15	Welfare schemes	3.39	8 th	0.85	25.10 %	High
16	Social security schemes	3.18	11 th	1.10	34.54 %	High
17	Leave facility	3.31	10 th	0.94	28.40 %	High
18	Overall	3.51	6 th	0.87	24.80 %	High

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: Relationship between Salary and Job Satisfaction

- **H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between salary and job satisfaction of departmental store employees.
- **H_{a1}:** There is a significant relationship between salary and job satisfaction.

In order to examine the relationship between salary and job satisfaction, Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated. The estimated correlation coefficient ($r = 0.54$) indicates a moderate positive relationship, suggesting that employees with higher salaries

generally report higher job satisfaction. However, salary is not the only factor affecting satisfaction, as other aspects such as working conditions, management support, and organizational environment also play important roles. To check whether the observed relationship between salary and employee satisfaction is significant, a **t-test for the correlation coefficient** was conducted to verify whether the association is genuine or occurred by chance using the following formula

$$t = \frac{r \times \sqrt{n-2}}{\sqrt{1-r^2}}$$

for $n = 88$, $r = 0.54$, $t = 5.99$. Since the calculated t-value ($t = 5.99$) is greater than the critical t-value (1.987) at 5% level of significance the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that salary has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction among employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur.

Hypothesis 2: Difference in Job Satisfaction between Male and Female Employees

- **H₀₂:** There is no significant difference in job satisfaction between male and female employees.
- **H_{a2}:** There is a significant difference in job satisfaction between male and female employees.

The mean job satisfaction score of 40 male employees was 61.9 which were higher than that of 48 female employees mean score of 57.44. Male employees also showed more consistent responses, with a lower standard deviation and coefficient of variation. Thereafter, to test the consistency of job satisfaction, **independent samples t-test was conducted, yielding a calculated t-value of 2.06 at 5% level of significance. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical value (1.99), the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant difference in job satisfaction between male and female employees, with male employees reporting relatively higher satisfaction.**

Hypothesis 3: Difference in Job Satisfaction between Married and Unmarried Employees

- **H₀₃:** There is no significant difference in job satisfaction between married and unmarried employees.
- **H_{a3}:** There is a significant difference in job satisfaction between married and unmarried employees.

The descriptive statistics showed that unmarried employees (Mean = 59.75) had slightly higher job satisfaction than married employees (Mean = 58.19). However, the difference was minimal. To examine whether there exists any significant difference in job satisfaction between married and unmarried employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur, an **independent samples t-test** was applied. **The independent samples t-test produced a calculated t-value of 0.45, which was lower than the critical value at the 5% significance level.** Therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected. It is concluded

that marital status does not have a significant influence on the job satisfaction of employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur.

Major Findings of the Study

- i. The study reveals that the overall level of job satisfaction among employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur is relatively high, with an Employee Satisfaction Index (ESI) of **3.36**, indicating that employees are generally satisfied with their jobs.
- ii. Among the various dimensions of job satisfaction, **treatment of colleagues** recorded the highest satisfaction level (Mean = **4.13**), followed by **facilities for female employees** and the **working environment**, indicating a positive and supportive workplace culture.
- iii. Employees also expressed high satisfaction with **supervisory support, workplace safety, and job security**, suggesting that organisational relationships and working conditions contribute positively to overall job satisfaction.
- iv. Comparatively lower satisfaction was observed with **salary, increments, incentives, promotion opportunities, workload, and working hours**, indicating the need for improvements in financial rewards and career advancement.
- v. Employees reported only moderate satisfaction with **recognition for good performance, welfare measures, social security benefits, and leave facilities**, highlighting the need to strengthen employee welfare policies.
- vi. Correlation analysis revealed a **moderate positive and statistically significant relationship ($r = 0.54$)** between salary and job satisfaction, indicating that employees receiving higher salaries tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction.
- vii. The independent sample **t-test** revealed a significant difference in job satisfaction between **male and female employees**, with male employees reporting relatively higher satisfaction. However, no significant difference was found between **married and unmarried employees**.
- viii. The study further revealed that **52.27%** of the respondents intend to continue working in their present organisations, while **42.04%** remain uncertain, indicating the need for effective employee retention and career development strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance job satisfaction among employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur:

- i. The employers should introduce competitive salaries, regular increments, and performance-based incentives to improve employee satisfaction.
- ii. There is a need to establish transparent promotion policies and regular training programmes to encourage career development.
- iii. Organizations should recognize and reward employees for good performance through appreciation and incentive schemes.

- iv. There is need to maintain a positive work environment by providing supportive supervision, teamwork, workplace safety, and healthy interpersonal relationships.
- v. Significant improvement need to be undertaken for employee welfare measures including leave facilities, and social security benefits to increase job security.
- vi. Organisations need to ensure equal opportunities, supportive policies, and adequate facilities for both male and female employees.
- vii. There is need to conduct regular feedback sessions and employee satisfaction surveys to address workplace concerns.
- viii. Proper importance need to be given on career development, skill enhancement, and fair compensation to reduce employee turnover.

Limitations of the Study

Every research study is subject to certain limitations that may influence the interpretation and generalisation of its findings. In the present study several practical and methodological limitations were encountered as listed below

- i. **Geographical Limitation:** The study is restricted to departmental stores in Dimapur city of Nagaland; hence, the findings may not be applicable to other regions.
- ii. **Smaller sample size:** The study is based on a relatively small number of respondents, which may not fully represent the entire population
- iii. **Time Constraint:** The research was conducted within a limited time period, which restricted an in-depth analysis of job satisfaction.
- iv. **Response Bias:** Data was collected through questionnaires, and responses may be affected by personal bias, hesitation, or inaccurate reporting by respondents.
- v. **Limited variables:** The present research is based on limited variables
- vi. **Data reliability issues:** The accuracy of the finding depends on the honesty and understanding of the respondents, which may not always be perfect.
- vii. **Dynamic nature of job satisfaction:** Job satisfaction is not static and may change over time, but the study captures it only at a particular point of time that may change in another point of time.

Conclusion

The study concludes that employees working in departmental stores in Dimapur are generally satisfied with their jobs, particularly with respect to their working environment, relationships with colleagues, and supervisory support. However, comparatively lower satisfaction was observed in areas such as salary, incentives, increments, and promotion opportunities. The findings also reveal a significant positive relationship between salary and job satisfaction, while gender shows a significant difference in satisfaction levels and marital status does not. Therefore, departmental stores should focus on improving financial rewards, career advancement opportunities, and employee welfare measures while

maintaining a supportive work environment to enhance overall job satisfaction and organisational performance.

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A STUDY ON STARTUPS IN INDIA

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Abstract

Startup India is flagship initiative by the Government of India designed to catalyze entrepreneurship and foster a culture of innovation. Through this initiative, the Government plans to empower startup ventures to boost entrepreneurship, economic growth and employment across India. Launched in 2016, the initiative aimed to build a robust startup ecosystem by providing policy support, easing regulatory barriers, improving access to funding, and promoting a culture of innovation across the country. This research paper offers a comprehensive overview of the growth of startups in India in the 21st century, evaluates the significance of government intervention in nurturing entrepreneurship. Further, it aims to discover opportunities, and challenges that Startups face during their stages of operation. Finally, the paper outlines benefits and strategic recommendations aimed at further strengthening India's burgeoning startup ecosystem.

Keywords: Startup India, Entrepreneurship, Startup Ecosystem, Startups Innovations,

Introduction

Startup India is a Government of India initiative aimed at nurturing entrepreneurship and promoting innovation by creating an ecosystem that is favorable to the Startups growth and development. The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, announced the launch of "Startup India, Standup India" initiative on 15th August 2015. The Initiative aims at fostering entrepreneurship and promoting innovation by creating an ecosystem that is conducive to growth of Startups. Further to this, an Action Plan for Startup India Initiative was unveiled by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on 16th January 2016. The initiative strives to provide a long-due impetus to the entrepreneurial setup in economic landscape of India. It has been established globally that startups are driving the economic growth of nations, creating employment, and fostering a culture of innovation. It is therefore incumbent on the Government of India to nurture emerging talent and entrepreneurship as part of the larger goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat. The objective is to make India a nation of job creators instead of just job seekers. The Government of India has been making efforts towards making the vision of the Startup India initiative a reality.

Meaning of Startup

Startup venture is defined as new businesses that are in their initial stages of operation, striving to grow and are typically financed by individual investors or capitalists. According to DPIIT (Department for promotion of industry and internal trade), 'An entity will be recognized as a startup

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- i. Upto a period of ten years from the date of incorporation/ registration, if it is incorporated as a private limited company (as defined in the Companies Act, 2013) or registered as a partnership firm (registered under section 59 of the Partnership Act, 1932) or a limited liability partnership (under the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008) in India.
- ii. Turnover of the entity for any of the financial years since incorporation/ registration has not exceeded one hundred crore rupees.
- iii. Entity is working towards innovation, development or improvement of products or processes or services, or if it is a scalable business model with a high potential of employment generation or wealth creation. Provided that an entity formed by splitting up or reconstruction of an existing business shall not be considered a 'Startup'

Review of Literature

Baporikar, (2014) in her research paper "Youth entrepreneurship in Indian scenario" discusses about the role of youth entrepreneurship with a focus on Indian scenario by integrating it to several other factors such as business models for Youth Entrepreneurship, barriers affecting Youth Entrepreneurship and its impact on reducing unemployment.

Kshetri & Kshetri, (2016) in their research article "Fostering startup ecosystem in India" have mentioned out the factors and consequences responsible for fostering the growth of startup ecosystem in India. The research paper explains the determinants of entrepreneurship factors that affect entrepreneurial performance in terms of a) Regulatory framework, b) Values, culture and skills, c) Access to finance, market, R&D and technology.

Manshani & Dubey (2017) have conducted the research study on Women entrepreneurs in India and have concluded several factors that promote & encourage women empowerment in entrepreneurial development.

Jha (2018) in her research article "Entrepreneurial ecosystem in India- Taking stock and looking ahead" had stated the role of education & training and other socio-cultural issues responsible for building the startup ecosystem in India.

Suresh Babu.G & Sridevi.K (2019), in their research article 'A study on issues and challenges of startups in India' discuss few issues and challenges that an Indian startup has to face and the opportunities that the country can provide in the current eco-system.

Chillakuri et al (2020) in their research article 'Linking sustainable development to startup ecosystem in India - a conceptual framework' have provided the conceptual framework for linking the startup ecosystem to environmental sustainability. They have stated that sustainability is not just about reducing carbon emissions, but is a fundamental principle that guides the organization and society.

Garg & Gupta (2021) in their research work titled as ‘startups and the growing entrepreneurial ecosystem’ have discussed about the role of startups in enhancing the economic growth, role of incubators in developing these startups and the importance of Intellectual Property(IP) protection and different stages of series funding for startups.

Gupta, Seema (2025), in her research paper it attempted to find out the dynamic changes that Startup India campaign has brought to the country. Further, it aims to discover opportunities, gaps & challenges that Startups face during their stages of operation. Focusing on this notion, the paper tries to find out the opportunities and challenges that startups are facing in the present scenario.

Significance of the study

Startups have played and continue to play significant roles in the growth, development and industrialization of economies all over the world. Startup India is a flagship initiative of the Government of India aimed at building a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and entrepreneurship. The initiative seeks to promote sustainable economic growth and generate large scale employment opportunities and reduce unemployment. This study is significant as it helps in understanding the contribution of startups to economic development and opportunities and challenges faced by the startup India ecosystem.

Statement of the problem

The emergence of startup wave in India is a relatively a new phenomenon. Today India is undergoing a fundamental transformation, with entrepreneurship and innovation acting as primary catalyst for job creation and solving everyday problems. A decade ago, there were only a handful of successful startups such as Make My Trip.com and Naukari.com. However, with the success of companies like Flipkart, Quicker, Practo, Zomato and Jimboi, the Indian startup ecosystem has grown significantly and has come a long way. Despite this progress, startups continue to face challenges related to funding, revenue generation, market competition, and sustainability. Therefore, it is important to study the growth, opportunities, and challenges of the Startup India ecosystem.

Research Methodology

This research study is purely based on secondary data. Secondary data sources comprises of data collected from journals, magazines, news articles, authenticated websites, newsletter and annual reports from Ministry of commerce & industry, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and from other sources found suitable. The study is descriptive and conceptual in nature.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the growth and opportunities of startups

2. To identify various government initiatives for the development of startups.
3. To identify the issues and challenges relating to startups in India.
4. To highlight the benefits and Strategies to Strengthen India's Startup Ecosystem

Growth of Startups In India

The Startup India initiative continues to demonstrate strong momentum, with the Government recognizing over 55,200 startups in 2025-26, the highest ever in a single year since its launch. The total number of recognized startups has now crossed 2.23 lakhs as of March 31, 2026, generating more than 23.36 lakhs direct jobs across the country. Nearly 48% of these startups, over 1.07 lakh, have at least one-woman director or partner, highlighting growing inclusivity in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Year-on-year growth has remained robust, with startup recognition rising by 51.6% and job creation increasing by 36.1% in 2025-26 compared to the previous year. Startups are now present across all States and Union Territories, with Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Gujarat emerging as leading hubs for innovation and employment generation.

The Government has further strengthened financial and institutional support through key schemes such as the Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS), Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS), and Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS). Under FFS, more than Rs. 7,000 crore (US\$ 754.38 million) has been disbursed to over 135 Alternative Investment Funds, which have invested over Rs. 26,900 crore (US\$ 2.90 billion) in more than 1,420 startups. Additionally, a new fund allocation of Rs. 10,000 crore (US\$ 1.08 billion) has been approved under Fund of Funds 2.0. The CGSS has also been expanded, with over 410 loans worth more than Rs. 1,250 crore (US\$ 134.71 million) guaranteed. Meanwhile, under SISFS, Rs. 945 crore (US\$ 101.84 million) has been committed, supporting over 3,400 startups. Increased patent filings (over 4,480 in 2025-26) and growing participation on Government e-Marketplace (GeM) further underline the strengthening innovation and procurement ecosystem.

Opportunities for Startups

Startup opportunities in India are booming, particularly in AI, fintech, healthtech, and renewable energy, supported by government initiatives like DPIIT recognition, tax benefits, and funding schemes. Key sectors include AI-powered solutions, rural digital infrastructure, AgriTech, SaaS, and E-commerce/D2C brands. Below is a list of a few key opportunities available to startups.

1. India's Large Population: The population of India is a huge asset for the country. By 2030, it is expected that the working age population would surpass the non-working population. This unique demographic advantage will offer a great opportunity to any startup. Various infrastructure issues and the bottom- of- the- pyramid market would provide huge opportunities for the startups. This opens up the doors for the startup adventures which can concentrate on pulling in gigantic number of buyers in India.

2. Changing of mindsets: These days, the vast majority of the individuals have surrendered the customary attitude of winning just through occupations. Numerous youngsters have begun indicating enthusiasm for going into business with the assistance of most recent innovation and developments. This has brought about the improvement of various startup adventures in the nation.

3. Huge Investments in Startups: Huge investment in Indian startups from foreign and Indian investors is taking place. In 2015, more than 300 deals were done by 300+ angels and venture capital/ private equity players with around \$6.5-billion (Rs 42,300Cr) investments making India the most sought-after destination for investments. Some of the active players are New York based Tiger Global Management, Russian company- DST Global, Japanese telecom giant Softbank, Kalaari Capital.

4. Increasing initiatives by the Government: The Government of India has implemented different measures and approaches for empowering and building up the new businesses in the nation. For example, the Government has presented the MUDRA Yojna, E – Biz Portal, SETU finance and numerous others for helping startup adventures.

5. Collaboration and Partnerships: In order to take advantage of complementary resources and skills, startups might work with other businesses, academic organizations, and research centers. These collaborations have the potential to spur economic expansion and create fresh avenues for creativity.

6. Talent Magnet: By providing chances for influence, ownership, and growth that may be absent in larger companies, startups can draw in top people. Ambitious professionals are drawn to them because they frequently offer a vibrant and innovative work atmosphere.

Government Initiative-Startup Action Plan

In order to meet the objectives of the initiative, Government of India Action Plan that addresses all aspects of the Startup ecosystem has been announced. With this Action Plan, the Government hopes to accelerate spreading of the Startup movement:

- From digital/technology sector to a wide array of sectors including agriculture, manufacturing, social sector, healthcare, education, etc.. and
- From existing tier 1 cities to tier 2 and tier 3 cities including semi-urban and rural areas..

The Startup India Action Plan is structured across three core pillars to create a robust ecosystem for nurturing innovation and driving economic growth. The Action Plan is divided across the following areas:

- Simplification and Handholding
- Funding Support and Incentives

- Industry-Academia Partnership and Incubation

1. Simplification and Handholding

This pillar focuses on making it easier for entrepreneurs to start, manage, and (if necessary) close a business by eliminating complex regulatory hurdles.

- **Self-Certification:** Startups can self-certify compliance for labor and environmental laws, reducing the burden of inspections.
- **Startup India Hub:** A single point of contact for the entire startup ecosystem to enable knowledge exchange and access to funding.
- **Fast-Track IPR & Patent Support:** Startups receive up to an 80% rebate on patent filings and access to fast-track examination to protect their intellectual property quickly.
- **Relaxed Public Procurement Norms:** Exemption from criteria like "prior experience" or "prior turnover" to allow startups to bid on government tenders.
- **Faster Exit:** A streamlined winding-up process allows failed startups to exit and close operations within 90 days.

2. Funding Support and Incentives

Recognizing that lack of capital is a major barrier for early-stage ventures, this pillar provides direct and indirect financial lifelines.

- **Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS):** A massive ₹10,000 crore corpus managed by SIDBI. It doesn't invest in startups directly but puts money into venture capital funds that back startups.
- **SAMRIDH Scheme (2021):** Aimed at supporting 300 software startups over four years with a ₹99 crore outlay, providing up to ₹40 lakh per startup to scale their operations.
- **Credit Guarantee Fund:** Helps startups access collateral-free debt and venture loans from formal banking channels.
- **Tax Exemptions:** Eligible startups receive an income tax holiday for 3 consecutive years. Capital gains invested into regulated fund-of-funds are also exempt from taxes to encourage wealthy individuals to invest.

3. Industry-Academia Partnership and Incubation

This pillar bridges the gap between educational research and commercial market needs, providing the physical infrastructure to grow.

- **Incubators & Research Parks:** Setting up physical spaces and technology business incubators at premier institutes (like IITs, NITs, and IIMs) to provide startups with R&D facilities and active guidance.
- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):** Fosters a culture of innovation from schools (via Atal Tinkering Labs) to higher education and industry levels.
- **Annual Grand Challenges & Fests:** Events to connect entrepreneurs with mentors, corporate giants, and investors, providing them with immense visibility.

Issues and Challenges of Startups

Despite the rapid growth of startups in India, they face several challenges that affect their success and sustainability. Understanding these challenges is essential for developing a stronger and more supportive startup ecosystem. The major issues and challenges are discussed below:

1. Availability of finance: Availability of finance is critical for the startups and is always a problem to get sufficient amounts. A number of finance options ranging from family members, friends, loans, grants, angel funding, venture capitalists, crowd funding etc are available. The requirement starts increasing as the business progresses. Proper finance management is critical for the successful of startups in India. A recent report paints a gloomy picture with 85% of new company's reportedly underfunded indicating potential failure (Iwasiuk, 2016).

2. Supporting infrastructure There are a number of support mechanisms that play a significant role in the lifecycle of startups which include incubators, science and technology parks, business development centers etc. Lack of access to such support mechanisms increases the risk of failure.

3. Revenue generation: Several startups fail due to poor revenue generation as the business grows. As the operations increase, expenses grow with reduced revenues forcing startups to concentrate on the funding aspect, thus, diluting the focus on the fundamentals of business. Hence, revenue generation is critical, requiring efficient management of burn rate at which startups spend money in the initial stages. The challenge is not to generate enough capital but also to expand and sustain the growth.

4. Regulations: Starting a business requires a number of permissions from government agencies. Although there is a perceptible change, it is still a challenge to register a company. Regulations pertaining to labor laws, intellectual property rights, dispute resolution etc. are rigorous in India.

6. Lack of mentorship & guidance: Many Startups lack access to experienced mentors and industry experts who can provide the adequate guidance and support. The absence of a robust mentorship ecosystem can make it challenging for Startups to survive at early stages

7. Lack of infrastructure: The absence of infrastructural systems is another test which is looked by the Indian new companies. There is a lack of different systems like business improvement focuses, innovation parks, and so forth in India. This eventually prompts the disappointment of numerous new businesses.

Benefits of India Startup Ecosystem

India's startup ecosystem offers several benefits, including tax exemptions, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) support, fast-track exit mechanisms, self-certification and funding assistance. It also provides access to various government schemes and programs that support entrepreneurship and innovation. The major benefits of the Startup India Ecosystem are as follows:-

- 1. Tax Exemptions:** India's Startup Ecosystem supports eligible startups. They are exempt from income tax for three years and can get exemptions on capital gains. But they have to be approved by the Startup India portal.
- 2. Funding and Grants:** India's Startup Ecosystem provides access to the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme, Fund of Funds and Credit Guarantee Scheme for non-collateral loans. These grants are provided to support entrepreneurs for their business ventures.
- 3. Patent and IPR Benefits:** India's Startup Ecosystem provides patent and IPR benefits. It offers 80% rebate on patent filing costs and expedited examination of intellectual property applications. Facilitators provide services such as advisory, drafting, filing at no cost to the startup.
- 4. Future Visions for Startup India:** As Startup India enters its second decade, the focus shifts from rapid growth to sustainable, deep-tech innovation aiming to position India as a global leader in AI, manufacturing, and sustainability by 2030, while advancing **Viksit Bharat 2047**, strengthening local manufacturing, and promoting rural entrepreneurship.
- 5. Self Certification:** India's Startup Ecosystem provides the facility of self certification. The Indian government allows DPIIT-recognized startups to self certify their compliance with 9 labor and 3 environmental laws, avoiding routine inspections for several years.
- 6. Fast Track Exit:** In the Indian startup ecosystem, 'fast track exit' refers to legal mechanisms that allow startups to wind up their operations faster than traditional companies. They can wind up operations within 90 days.

Strategies to Strengthen India's Startup Ecosystem

India's startup ecosystem has witnessed significant growth in recent years. However, to ensure sustainable development and global competitiveness, it is essential to adopt effective strategies that support innovation, improve access to finance, and create a conducive business environment. The following strategies can help strengthen India's startup ecosystem:

- 1. Boost Deep-Tech Innovation:** Support AI, biotech, smart manufacturing, and clean energy startups through initiatives like the Bharat Innovation Fund.
- 2. Enhance Access to Capital:** Expand government-backed funding, improve venture capital accessibility, and leverage the abolition of angel tax.
- 3. Simplify Regulations:** Implement single-window clearance and reduce bureaucratic hurdles to foster ease of doing business.
- 4. Invest in Skill Development:** Bridge the industry-academia gap in AI, data science, and product development through PPP models & Centers of Excellence.
- 5. Develop Regional Startup Hubs:** Strengthen tier-2 & tier-3 city ecosystems with incubators and accelerators to promote balanced growth.
- 6. Ensure Governance & Transparency:** Strengthen mentorship, financial discipline, and ethical conduct in startups to prevent corporate mismanagement.

7. Improve Infrastructure: Enhance urban planning in key startup hubs like Bengaluru & Chennai to address congestion and resource challenges.

8. Leverage Global Talent: Attract Indian diaspora professionals to bring global expertise and innovation back to India.

Limitations of this Study

The limitation of this study is that it is a detailed conceptual analysis about startup India ecosystem based on secondary data. Further research can be done by using primary data and other statistical tools for more accurate and comprehensive results. Additionally, the study may not fully capture recent developments and dynamic changes in the startup ecosystem. The findings are also limited by the availability and reliability of secondary sources. Future studies can include empirical analysis and comparative studies to enhance the depth and validity of the research.

Conclusion

The 'Startup India' program has made significant strides across the length and breadth of the country in nurturing entrepreneurship and innovation in India since its launch in 2016. Notably, the Startup ecosystem is well integrated, connecting startups with fund houses and various stakeholders. The networking, training, and mentorship facilities provided by the Start-up India hub have been instrumental in supporting startups across the country. However, there are crucial gaps and challenges that need to be addressed. The fund of funds for start-ups (FFS) has been found to be inefficient and insufficient in meeting the funding needs of the start-up ecosystem. By focusing on providing adequate funding, addressing regional disparities, and promoting inclusivity, the initiative can further accelerate the growth of the Indian start-up ecosystem and contribute significantly to the country's economic development.

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REPOSITIONING LUXURY THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY: A CASE STUDY OF GREEN MARKETING STRATEGIES AT TAJ HOTELS

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Abstract

Amid a time where concerns for planet Earth and ethical consumerism rethinking business landscapes, the luxury sector in hospitality is incorporating sustainability into its value offering. This paper aims to look how the Taj Group of Hotels, one of India's most prestigious and finest hotel company is repositioning itself in using sustainable green practices as an approach towards their marketing strategies. The environmental certifications and resource management, community partnerships implemented by Taj Hotels are part of its various sustainability initiatives in response to the changing consumer expectations towards eco-responsibility. These categories studied covered plastic reduction, renewable energy transition, water consumption and how sustainable the meeting is together with some certification benchmarks. The data were collected from secondary sources of the existing literature, corporate sustainability reports and hospitality industry databases. Results indicate that Taj Hotels' luxury green marketing tactics, such as its collaborative ventures with partners like the Forest Essentials biodegradable amenity program, the Innergise Green Meetings strategy and overarching sustainability targets outlined through a tripartite ESG+ "Paathya" program, signal a valuable alignment of luxury with environmental conservation. Shifting luxury toward sustainability improves reputation while boosting real gains for nature and communities. What stands out is how eco-conscious luxury sets hotels apart, building staying power over time. At its heart lies the need to weave strong green standards deeply into company operations. For players in high-end travel, embracing these efforts opens doors to stronger guest trust, lower costs, better performance worldwide.

Keywords: Green Marketing; Luxury Hospitality; Sustainability Luxury; Corporate sustainability; Hospitality Industry

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“True hospitality is about caring—for guests, for communities, and for the planet.”

— Ratan Tata (*attributed in leadership addresses*)

Introduction

During the last several years, the hospitality industry has seen a radical transformation of its focus on the environment with the help of sustainable operations. One of the leading reasons is the climate issue, shortage of resources, and the change in customers' demands. Luxury hotel chains, once blamed for overusing resources and being indifferent to the environment, have realized that sustainability is not only a matter of ethics but also a strategy that they can use to get an edge over their competitors.

Green marketing, often advertising of businesses' green operations, environmentally friendly products and services, has become one of the main ways that luxury hospitality brands differentiate themselves in the fiercely competitive worldwide market. Among them, Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces of India, which belongs to the Tata Group, is a real front runner in embedding sustainability into its service portfolio. The green Going Green campaign by Taj Hotels is a step towards making luxury hospitality and sustainability compatible by deeply embedding environmental care in all areas of operations.

Luxury hospitality is a sector that has been, and still is, equated with aspects like lavishness, exclusivity, and top notch service standards. The present worldwide problems which include climate change and resource depletion and increasing demands for ethical consumption have transformed the definition of luxury to include environmental protection and social responsibility beyond its previous state which relied on expensive materials. The evolution of consumer preferences has led luxury hotel companies to implement sustainable business operations that match their current customer requirements. Taj Hotels, the main brand of Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), shows how to redesign luxury through sustainable practices which demonstrate the brand's heritage and premium service offerings. Luxury is being redefined in terms of environmental responsibility and social impact.

Luxury consumers today have a higher level of ethical discernment and environmental consciousness as compared to the past generations. They are looking for brands that not only provide them with experiential excellence but at the same time should mirror outdoor values such as ecological responsibility and social stewardship. It is quite a challenge for luxury hospitality brands to incorporate sustainability in a way that is consistent with brand heritage, historical identity, service quality, and operational excellence and premium market image without undermining its unique status, while at the same time not losing the sense of exclusivity.

This article studies how Taj Hotels showcases its green initiatives as part of its luxury concept. Green marketing means here the advertisement of environmentally friendly products, services, or corporate practices that appeal to environmentally conscious customers. The paper questions the contributions that eco, friendly actions can make towards a brand by using the case of Indian Hotel Company Limited (IHCL). The work of Taj Hotels in this respect has been beyond doubt as it largely integrates environmental concerns and the company has declared that sustainability is at the core of its business strategy.

The 'Going Green' initiative demonstrates how Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces operates as a legacy brand which undertakes environmental sustainability through its operations. The launch of Going Green as a complete sustainability plan used to create environmentally sustainable operations throughout all facets of its work which includes community outreach and customer service. The Indian Hotels Company Limited which operates the Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces system has established sustainability practices through its ESG+ framework which it named Paathya to meet current market requirements.

IHCL uses Paathya as its responsible hospitality strategy which incorporates all aspects of environmental protection social duty corporate governance heritage protection and sustainable development throughout its operations. The framework establishes multiple demanding objectives which must be completed by 2030 to reach its goals which include total removal of single-use plastics and complete wastewater treatment and global sustainability certification for all hotels and substantial energy transition targets through increased clean energy usage in all facilities. The programme requires all business meetings and conferences to follow green practices which the Innergise - Green Meetings initiative established thereby making sustainability an essential requirement for operations instead of a secondary feature.

The Paathya program at IHCL shows its success through multiple accomplishments which include the complete elimination of plastic straws and dry amenity wrappers and they replaced single-use plastic bottles with reusable glass bottles and bottling plants and they achieved advanced wastewater recycling through their wastewater treatment systems which exceed their temporary operational targets and their team installed renewable energy systems at various locations and their hotels now operate hundreds of electric vehicle charging stations. The Taj Mahal Palace Mumbai which serves as one of IHCL's main hotel properties now generates all of its energy needs through renewable sources while implementing water conservation practices and waste reduction strategies that follow Paathya requirements to show how sustainable practices operate throughout all levels of the organization's operations.

The Paathya initiative reflects IHCL's long-held belief that sustainability and luxury are complementary rather than opposing pursuits, a perspective that aligns with its century-old legacy of responsible business rooted in the Tata Group's corporate philosophy. The Paathya program establishes sustainable practices as a fundamental component of Taj brand identity through its integration into all business activities which include operational planning and brand communications and strategic growth planning.

Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To analyze the sustainability practices that were put into effect by Taj Hotels as a green marketing strategy.
2. To investigate the means through which these strategies, rebrand the luxury hospitality sector.
3. The research study will evaluate how these green initiatives create environmental and social effects.
4. The research study will discover both operational difficulties and potential advantages which luxury hotels encounter when they attempt to implement sustainability practices.
5. The study aims to present recommendations which will improve sustainable luxury practices used in the hospitality industry.

Scope of the Study

The research examines how Taj Hotels has implemented its sustainability programs during the last three years to create brand identity through its corporate strategy. The research examines property-level initiatives which include energy management and waste reduction and corporate partnerships which include certification programs and partnerships. The research focuses on Taj Hotels operations in India while using worldwide hospitality trends as a basis for comparison. The research uses secondary data sources which include corporate reports and marketing materials and industry research and scholarly articles to study how sustainability is presented and used by brands to build their reputation and market advantage. The Taj context study produces specific results which provide value to all luxury hotel markets through their generalizable findings.

Literature Review

Luxury branding has traditionally centered on three main factors which include exclusive access to products and their exceptional quality and their worth as status symbols. The rising environmental consciousness together with ethical consumer behavior has created a new market for sustainable

luxury businesses which merge traditional luxury attributes with environmental protection and social accountability (Kapferer&Michaut-Denizeau, 2014). Sustainable luxury transforms indulgence into a responsible practice which preserves authentic traditions while developing new methods (Athwal et al., 2019).

Sustainable luxury operates in the hospitality industry through its implementation of environmentally friendly business practices together with responsible material procurement and its dedication to preserving cultural heritage and its commitment to serving local communities while delivering exceptional customer service (Jones et al., 2016). The research demonstrates that sustainability efforts in luxury hotels increase brand trustworthiness and innovative image while maintaining exclusive status (De Grosbois, 2012). This finding breaks the traditional belief which maintains that luxury goods and sustainable practices cannot exist together.

Green marketing plays a central role in this repositioning process. Green marketing establishes product and service promotion through environmental responsibility (Polonsky, 1994). Green marketing in hospitality includes sustainable facility design and waste management practices and using renewable energy and creating responsible advertising (Peattie& Crane, 2005). Green brand positioning helps businesses to build customer trust which leads to customers making purchasing decisions (Chen, 2010). However, businesses must establish genuine green practices to prevent customers from thinking they use greenwashing methods (Delmas&Burbano, 2011). The resource-intensive hospitality sector now considers sustainability as an essential business strategy which creates cost savings and improves public image and increases stakeholder satisfaction.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design based on secondary data analysis. The study uses secondary data sources which include sustainability reports and news articles and corporate press releases and hospitality industry publications to examine sustainable luxury hospitality through Taj Hotels sustainability practices and green marketing efforts which are implemented through the IHCL Paathya initiatives. The study used exploratory research methods which required researchers to avoid gathering primary data through interviews or surveys.

Case Study Analysis and Data Interpretation: Taj Hotels' Sustainability Initiatives

The secondary data collected from various sources about Taj Hotels demonstrates that the sustainability measures implemented by the hotel have achieved complete environmental protection and social responsibility implementation throughout its entire operational activities.

1. ESG+ Framework and Corporate Sustainability Goals

Taj Hotels implements its sustainability programs through IHCL's ESG+ framework which uses its Paathya system to create its sustainability programs that include waste water reuse and renewable energy implementation and elimination of single-use plastic waste.

2. Plastic Reduction and Eco-Friendly Amenities

The company implements its most prominent sustainability program through its partnership with Forest Essentials which replaces single-use plastic bathroom amenities with biodegradable ceramic dispensers that customers can refill and thus reduces plastic waste across its locations by 61 percent.

3. Sustainable Meetings: Innergise Green Meetings

Taj Hotels developed Innergise Green Meetings as its corporate event framework, which requires to use local food products and environmentally friendly materials through its digital event organization system, which operates without paper and maintains energy-saving operations while minimizing environmental effects.

4. Energy and Water Management

The Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai operates entirely on renewable energy while implementing systems for water conservation and waste reduction and providing electric vehicle charging stations and low-flow water fixtures.

5. Certifications and Benchmarks

A significant number of Taj Hotels have earned EarthCheck Gold certifications, which verify their dedication to both environmental protection and ongoing development of their hotel operations.

6. Community and Social Initiatives

Taj Hotels implements community development programs together with its environmental protection program

Findings and Interpretation

The case analysis results show that Taj Hotels uses sustainability as a fundamental business strategy which affects their brand development, their business processes, and their customer service operations. The data analysis shows that environmental programs help luxury hotels establish their unique market identity while improving their business operations and securing their future competitive edge.

Repositioning Luxury through Sustainability

The brand uses sustainability practices as its core brand display for Taj Hotels. The brand creates new value through its environmental operations which connect with its premium customer

experience design. The partnership for biodegradable amenities and the green meetings framework demonstrates how luxury hotels can showcase their environmental dedication while delivering exceptional service standards to their customers. The Taj Hotels initiatives enable the hotel chain to meet eco-friendly customer expectations while maintaining its image as an exclusive innovative brand.

Operational Efficiency and Cost-Benefit

The operational results from sustainability projects which include renewable energy use and water recycling demonstrate their ability to decrease costs while improving business results. The organization achieves financial sustainability through energy and water management systems which produce long-term cost savings and reduce waste disposal expenses.

Challenges

However, several challenges remain in fully institutionalizing sustainability across all properties under the Taj Hotels portfolio. The hotel chain must navigate the sheer geographical dispersion related environmental standard implementation challenges, as its hotels operate in different urban and semi-urban and international territory locations. The different ways that local areas develop their infrastructure and create regulations and establish supplier networks and allocate resources result in different levels of renewable energy use and waste management and water recycling methods between different locations. Organizations need to execute continuous monitoring and staff training and capital investment to preserve their sustainability standards while delivering their service at required quality levels.

The second major obstacle organizations face involves establishing a method to transform their environmental achievements into relevant consumer preferences which generate actual financial benefits. The challenge of measuring direct effects which sustainability brings to brand image requires determination of how it affects customer behavior towards hotel occupancy and return visits and their willingness to pay higher rates. Eco-friendly practices attract luxury consumers who base their buying choices on various elements including product location and brand historical background and product delivery and brand reputation. Researchers encounter both research and business difficulties when they attempt to use sustainability as their main focus for understanding consumer behavior.

Future research studies that use primary data through surveys or interviews can establish consumer understanding of sustainable luxury and their willingness to spend on eco-friendly hotel services, which will strengthen the connection between sustainability methods and financial outcomes.

Recommendations

Enhanced Consumer Engagement: The Taj Hotels need to conduct organized guest surveys together with feedback systems to assess how sustainability initiatives impact customer satisfaction and loyalty and their decision to return to the hotel. The research will create primary data which shows how environmental practices affect consumer behavior.

Transparent Reporting: The organization should publish complete annual sustainability reports which include specific targets and performance indicators and measurable outcomes to improve accountability and build trust with stakeholders. The luxury segment market benefits from transparent disclosure because it strengthens brand credibility.

Employee Training: Long, term educational programs should be geared towards ensuring the application of green practices at all the establishments. Knowledgeable workers will have the potential to very well communicate the implemented environmental projects to the guests thereby improving the experience.

Digital Marketing: The marketing plan needs to use targeted digital advertising campaigns to showcase the company's renewable energy projects and waste reduction initiatives and its environmentally sustainable facilities. The strategy will create better customer awareness of the brand which will help the company establish its unique brand identity.

Benchmark Expansion: The organization needs to achieve LEED certification because it will help establish its international sustainability credentials while providing a competitive business advantage.

Conclusion

“Luxury is not about excess anymore; it is about excellence with responsibility.”

~ Jean-Noël Kapferer

This study seeks to establish that Taj Hotels is actively repositioning its luxury brand through sustainability and green marketing strategies. The research shows Taj Hotels is shifting its high-end brand image through eco-friendly business practices and environmentally friendly marketing methods. The organization uses sustainable development methods to fulfill its present-day and future customer needs while creating a competitive edge and supporting environmental preservation objectives. Taj Hotels demonstrates its ability to combine luxury with environmental protection through its sustainable practices which include plastic waste reduction and renewable energy implementation and eco-friendly event services and environmental certifications. The ability of luxury brands to remain relevant depends on their ability to implement environmental practices which consumers perceive as genuine and transparent.

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ROLE OF YOUTH WELFARE PROGRAMMES IN EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

Youth is one of the most valuable human resources for socio-economic development of India. The Government of India, recognising the potential of the youth, has initiated several youth welfare programmes aimed at improving employability, entrepreneurship, and skill development among the youth. These include the National Youth Policy (2014), Skill India Mission, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Startup India, and the National Service Scheme (NSS). The present study attempts to analyse the impact of these programmes on employment generation in India using secondary data collected from government reports, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, National Statistical Office (NSO), Labour Bureau and other published sources. The study uses a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the relationship between youth welfare initiatives and employment outcomes. It evaluates the programme's performance in terms of skill development, job creation, entrepreneurial growth and youth participation in the labour market. The findings indicate that youth welfare programmes play a significant role in enhancing employability, fostering self-employment and encouraging innovation among the youth. Challenges such as skills mismatch, unequal regional access, limited awareness and implementation gaps, however, continue to affect the effectiveness of the programme. The study concludes that the effectiveness of the youth welfare programmes can be improved and sustainable employment generation and inclusive economic growth can be contributed in India by strengthening the industry-institution collaboration, expanding the digital skill training, improving the monitoring mechanisms and ensuring inclusive access.

Keywords: Youth Welfare Programmes, Employment Generation, Skill India Mission, Employability, Youth Empowerment and Entrepreneurship

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Introduction

India with a large proportion of its workforce in the age group of 15-29 years has one of the largest youth populations in the world. This demographic dividend has immense potential for economic growth and social development provided that young people are equipped with proper education, skills, employment opportunities and entrepreneurial support. Government of India has realised this potential and launched a number of youth welfare programmes to enhance employability, promote skill development, encourage entrepreneurship and facilitate sustainable livelihoods. Major initiatives such as the Skill India Mission, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Startup India, National Youth Policy (2014), National Service Scheme (NSS), and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) have been rolled out to improve the socio-economic position of youth through vocational training, financial assistance, innovation support, and employment creation. These programmes aim to bridge the gap between education and industry requirements, addressing issues of unemployment, under-employment and skill mismatches. Self-employment, rural development and entrepreneurship are also highlighted as important drivers of inclusive economic growth in government employment-generation schemes. Youth unemployment remains a major concern in India despite massive investments and policy interventions. Issues like technological transformation, lack of industry-ready skills, regional divide and lack of awareness of government schemes continue to impact job outcomes. Assessment of impact of youth welfare programmes is thus critical to understanding their role in employment creation as well as to identifying scope for policy improvement. The present study attempts to study the effect of youth welfare programmes on employment generation in India by using secondary data collected from government reports, policy documents, and official statistical publications. “The results are expected to give insight into the effectiveness of these programmes to improve employability, foster entrepreneurship and support sustainable economic development. The study also offers policy suggestions to bolster youth welfare efforts and enhance their contribution to India’s demographic dividend.

Review of Literature

Even with the demographic dividend of a huge youth population, there is a stiff challenge in their being made employable finally leaving behind Ongoing Youth Unemployment, as socio-boost problems In India. This phenomenon is, in the literature, blamed on structural economic transformation, rapid population growth and a continued mis-alignment of educational

outputs with labour market needs. According to Sharma (2024) and Sethy (2025), higher education is focused on theoretical learning, which contributes to low graduate employability due to poor vocational training and weak linkages with industry. If rapid technological change and inadequate employment generation had not already widened the mismatch between labour supply and demand, especially for educated urban youth.

Youth unemployment has effects beyond economic losses. There would be decreased income amongst households, increased poverty incidences, greater effects of psychological distress and an increase in low self-esteem which would result to more social unrests and criminal activities (Sethy 2025; Vemuri n.d) These results harm individual welfare and block national economic progress.

In order to mitigate these issues, the Government of India has launched various welfare schemes for youth National Skill Development Mission (NSDM), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Skill India, Start-Up India, Stand-Up India & National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme [NAPS] and Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana [PMMY]. Strengthening skills, entrepreneurship support and provision of finance are the key components of these programmes to increase employability (Parkhi, 2025).

Nevertheless, there is conflicting evidence in the literature about how effective programmes are. While these schemes have enhanced technical skills and promoted entrepreneurship, they add to sustainable employment only in a very limited manner due to weak industry linkages, poor placement support, fragmented implementation and lack of awareness among beneficiaries (Sharma 2024; Sethy 2025). Hence, studies suggest that employment potential can be maximized by focusing on demand-driven skill development and further improving monitoring mechanisms, public-private partnerships along with comprehensive impact evaluations in the future to leverage India's demographic dividend.

Objectives of the Study

The present study seeks to examine the role of major youth welfare and employment generation programmes of the Government of India such as PMKVY, Skill India Mission, National Skill Development Mission, NAPS, PMMY, PMEGP, Start-Up India, Stand-Up India, DDU-GKY, JSS and National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in improving youth employability, skill acquisition and self-employment. It also seeks to evaluate the results of placements, skill mismatches, industry linkages and implementation

gaps affecting these schemes and to assess their cumulative effect on youth unemployment, labour force participation and progress towards India's demographic-dividend and Viksit Bharat @ 2047 objectives.

Research Methodology

Using an analytical secondary data research design, this study analyses the complex nature, causes and impacts of youth unemployment in India as well policy-based responses. Data will be sourced from credible existing sources such as the government publications (MoSPI, PLFS), reports by international organisations (e.g.ILO), academic literature in peer-reviewed journals and statistical databases. Designation To ensure coverage, an exhaustive search strategy is followed including specific keywords for youth, employment and skills in combination with policy responses in India. The data collection process combines an extensive literature review that is conducted along four axes. On collection, data will then be systematically reviewed for relevance and quality. The analysis will include both descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation, as well as synthesis of similar findings to identify major patterns across studies (e.g., impact of skill development programs, entrepreneurship promotion), and gaps between policy intentions and outcomes. This method lays the groundwork for strategic advice for a fair employment market.

Results and Discussion

PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kausal Vikas Yojana), Skill India and entrepreneurship initiatives such as Start-Up India have made Indian youth more employable, helped acquire skills and self-employment opportunities. Nonetheless, opportunities for sustainable employment are still limited by skill mismatches, weak industry linkages and implementation gaps. The high level of employer confidence in the candidates, created under the ambit of PMKVY, is encouraging, though more improved employment outcomes can be expected with robust integration and monitoring of policy.

1. **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):**The 'Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana' or PMKVY is a flagship skill development initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship under the Government of India for providing skill training to youth or enhancing their livelihoods through skill-based trainings. It provides short term training, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and skill certification in sectors free of charge. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) focuses on building a skilled workforce to address the skill gap, enhance

entrepreneurship and fulfil industry requirement. It also contributes to generating jobs and inclusive economic development throughout the country and promotes Skill India Mission.

2. **Skill India Mission:** Skill India Mission is a flagship mission by the Government of India initiated in 2015 with an aim to skill youth at industrial level for employability. Its goal is to build a skilled workforce with vocational training, certification, apprenticeships and entrepreneurship. The mission is aimed at creating a linkage between education and the skill industry, supporting economic growth and also contributes to inclusive development of that large section of millions of youth with skills that are most relevant for sustainable employment/self-employment.
3. **National Skill Development Mission (NSDM):** National Skill Development Mission (NSDM) is a Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship-run scheme launched by the Government of India in 2015 with the aim to co-ordinate and implement skill development initiatives across all geographic areas. It brings together a variety of ministries, state governments and training institutions to form an overall skill framework. The mission is focused on getting people to have greater employability, some skill gap reduction, and entrepreneurship talent development, and alignment of training with industry needs. NSDM supplement Skill India Mission by making the work force more productive and contributing to the economic growth, sustainable and inclusive development.
4. **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS):** Government of India, under National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), has been launching schemes to promote apprenticeship training and enrol apprentices by providing financial support to industries. Their program offers work-based training and gives youth an opportunity to learn practical skills as well as relevant industry experience and increase their employment chances. NAPS will help build up a skilled workforce, bridge the gap between industry requirements and education and enhance participation of industry in skill development. It is one that creates jobs and drives economic development in India.
5. **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY):** Pradhan Mantri mudra yojana (PMMY) is one of the flagship schemes launched by Government of India in 2015 for providing collateral free loans to micro and small non-corporate enterprises. It is designed to

support entrepreneurship, self-employment and financial inclusion, by providing loans in three categories Shishu, Kishor and Tarun dependent on the purpose of the business. Having access to institutional credit, PMMY contributes towards job creation and achieving sustainable as well as inclusive economic growth in the country by facilitating the flow of credit among first generation entrepreneurs, small businesses, startups and MSMEs.

6. **Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP):**The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) is a credit-linked subsidy scheme to promote self-employment in the context of establishment and development of micro-enterprises in rural as well as urban areas. It is initiated by khadi and village industries commission or KVIC in which financial assistance are provided to entrepreneurs in making new ventures. PMEGP focuses on enhancing the micro-enterprise sector to provide sustainable employment, promote entrepreneurship growth, generate employment opportunities in rural and backward areas, improve the skill of unemployed youth people and strengthen their self-employment activities.
7. **Start-Up India:**Start-Up India is a flagship initiative of the Government of India to catalyse easy start-up incubation and also encourages innovation, step up larger number of ventures, ease creation, and jobs launched in 2016. The programme aids in building the startup ecosystem by offering relaxation of regulations, tax benefits, funding opportunities and incubation support. If a startup is an eligible entity according to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), they can avail number of incentives available through the programme. The initiative promotes the startup ecosystem and innovation-driven enterprises and aids sustainable economic development and job creation.
8. **Stand-Up India:**Stand-up India is an initiative by the Government of India, to promote entrepreneurship amongst SC and ST and Women launched in April 2016. The scheme enables bank loans of ₹10 lakh to ₹1 crore for setting up greenfield projects in manufacturing, services, trading and allied agricultural sectors. It also does hand holding support, credit facilitation and mentoring a part of what its entrepreneurs go through. The focus of the programme is on inclusive growth, creating jobs and financial independence through entrepreneurship development.

9. **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY):** The Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) is a rural skill development programme of the Government of India, which aims to enhance the employability of rural youth aged 15–35 years from poor households. It includes free of cost skill training, certification and employment linked placement work across the industries. To reduce rural poverty by providing sustainable wage employment and career development, DDU-GKY aims to increase income opportunities for the poor while also addressing skilled labour shortages in various sectors.
10. **Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS):** Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS); it was started by the Government of India, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, through National Institute for Open Schooling. It is meant to give vocational training to non-literates, neo-literates, school drop-outs and other disadvantaged groups especially in rural and urban areas. To improve employability, self-employment and wage employment as well as gross household income, the scheme aims at inexpensive community-based and need-oriented skills training programmes to foster inclusive socio-economic growth.
11. **National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (2015):** The National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (2015) national-level holistic policy document for skill development and entrepreneurship. It is about skilling at scale while ensuring it is of good quality, done completely, at speed, sustainable and relevant to the industry and in addition large flow of jobs from innovation and self-employment. The Policy aims to address skill gaps, and enhance employability, institutional framework strengthening, and an enabling environment for entrepreneurship thus providing a supportive ecosystem for an inclusive economic growth & national competitiveness.

Out of a number of the governing body supported National youth welfare programme has been implemented for employment generation and enhancing employability. They mainly work on skill development, vocational training and entrepreneurship promotion to fill the gap between education and employment.

Table – 1 Overall Performance of PMKVY (Cumulative across Phases 1.0 to 3.0/4.0, approx. up to March 2024 / Dec 2025)

Indicator	Figures (in Lakh / Crore)	Percentage / Notes
Total Candidates Trained	1.42 – 1.63 crore	As of 2024–2025
Total Candidates Certified	1.10 – 1.13 crore	-
Candidates Placed (Tracked)	24.39 lakh	15–22% overall placement rate
Short-Term Training (STT) Certified	56.89 lakh	Placement 43% within STT component
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) & Others	Significant contribution	Higher income reported

Source: Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Table 1 shows the cumulative performance of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) in its various phases till 2024–2025. Under the scheme, 1.42 crore to 1.63 crore candidates have been trained. This demonstrates the wide reach of the scheme to improve the employability and skill base of India's workforce. Out of the total trainees, about 1.10–1.13 crore candidates were successfully certified, indicating a high certification rate and effective completion of training programs.

Placement data show that about 24.39 lakh candidates were placed, and overall placement rates are about 15–22 per cent. The placement rate is quite low in relation to the number of trainees. This indicates the difficulty of labour market absorption and the need for stronger industry linkages and post training support.

Under the Short-Term Training (STT) component, 56.89 lakh candidates were certified with a placement rate of 43 per cent which is much higher than the overall placement rate. It demonstrates that structured, job-oriented training programs under STT have been relatively successful in improving employment outcomes.

Another significant contribution has been the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) component, formally recognising skills already held by experienced workers. The evidence suggests that RPL beneficiaries reported higher incomes and better employment opportunities, indicating that skill certification is valuable even without extensive retraining.

Overall, PMKVY's aggregate performance shows a significant improvement in skill development across India. The scheme has been a success in terms of training and certifying millions of people, and improving placement rates, strengthening employer partnerships and

enhancing long-term employability are important priorities for maximising its socio-economic impact.

Table – 2 Key Labour Market and Youth Employment Indicators in India

Indicator	Value	Year/Period
Youth (15–29) unemployment rate, India	9.90%	2025
Youth (15–29) unemployment rate, India	10.20%	2023–24
Rural youth unemployment rate	8.30%	2025
Urban youth unemployment rate	13.60%	2025
Unemployment rate among graduates	13%+	2023–24
Estimated national skill gap (workforce lacking required skills)	30–40%	India Employment Report, 2024
Female LFPR, India	41.7% (up from 23.3% in 2017–18)	2023–24
Global youth unemployment rate	13.30%	2023
Youth share of India's population (15–29)	26.60%	2022–23

Source:PLFS Annual Report 2025

Table 2 shows ILO Key facts on youth employment in India Recent progress and ongoing structural challenges the unemployment rate among the youth (15-29 years) declined to 9.90% in 2025 from 10.20% in 2023-24, indicating a gradual improvement in employment opportunities due to government programs such as Skill India, PMKVY, Start-up India and other employment generation programmes. However, the unemployment situation is still uneven across regions, with urban youth unemployment (13.60%) considerably higher than rural youth unemployment (8.30%), pointing to greater competition for formal sector jobs in urban areas.

The table also indicates that graduate unemployment is still above 13% suggesting a mismatch between educational qualifications and labour market requirements. This is supported by the estimated 30-40% national skill gap, which indicates that a large percentage of the workforce does not have the skills relevant to the industry, although educational attainment is increasing. Closing this mismatch through demand-driven skill development and industry partnerships continues to be a key policy priority.

Another major trend is the sharp increase in the Female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) from 23.3 per cent in 2017-18 to 41.7 per cent in 2023-24. This indicates better participation of women in economic activities due to better education, self-employment, entrepreneurship programmes and rural employment programmes. Still, gender gaps in employment quality and wages are a policy issue.

India's youth constitute 26.6% of the total population and are one of the greatest demographic assets of the country. India's youth unemployment rate (9.9%) is below the global average of 13.3%, but the sheer size of the youth population makes the creation of productive and quality employment opportunities a key development challenge. Overall, the table shows that while labour market conditions have improved in recent years, strengthening skill development, improving employability, promoting quality jobs and reducing urban and graduate unemployment are crucial to fully leverage India's demographic dividend and achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

Table – 3 Government Schemes and Youth Job/Skill Generation

Scheme	Launch Year & Nodal Ministry	Key Data on Jobs/Skilling
Skill India Mission (SIM)	2015, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE)	Share of vocationally trained youth (15–29) rose from 7.1% (2017–18) to 26.1% (2023–24); ITIs increased from 9,776 (2014) to 14,682; National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) engaged 49.12 lakh apprentices (2016–17 to Oct 2025)
PMKVY (under Skill India)	2015, MSDE, implemented by NSDC	1.76 crore candidates enrolled and 1.64 crore trained since inception (up to Oct 2025); 1.29 crore certified; placement rate of 42.8% under earlier phases (STT); PMKVY 4.0 has trained 27+ lakh candidates across 38 sectors (2022–2025)
Startup India	2016, DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry	Recognised startups grew from ~500 (2016) to over 2.4 lakh (2026); direct jobs created rose from near-zero to 23.36 lakh (as of March 2026), a 36.1% year-on-year jump; nearly 48% of startups have a woman director/partner
National Youth Policy (NYP) 2014	2014, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports	A policy framework (not a funded scheme) covering youth aged 15–29 (27.5% of population); sets 5 objectives and 11 priority areas including "Employment and Skill Development," and works by directing convergence across schemes like Skill India, Start-up India, and NSS rather than generating jobs directly

Source: Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Table 3: Key initiatives of Government of India for improving youth employability, skill development, entrepreneurship and employment generation. Since its inception in 2015, the Skill India Mission (SIM) has been a great contributor in the development of the skill

development ecosystem of the country. Access to technical and vocational education improved with the number of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) increasing from 9,776 in 2014 to 14,682, and the proportion of vocally trained youth rising significantly from 7.1% in 2017-18 to 26.1% in 2023-24. Further, the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) has involved over 49.12 lakh apprentices till October 2025 to improve industry-oriented practical training.

Since its launch, the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) has emerged as one of the biggest skill development programmes of India, with 1.76 crore candidates enrolled, 1.64 crore trained and 1.29 crore youth certified. The 42.8% placement rate under earlier phases indicates that many trainees have been able to find jobs, but it additionally emphasises the need to develop stronger industry linkages and improve post-training placement success. PMKVY 4.0 has trained over 27 lakh candidates in 38 sectors and is a proof of the government's continued commitment towards aligning skill development with emerging industry requirements.

Startup India initiative has been hugely successful in encouraging entrepreneurship and job creation. The number of recognised start-ups surged from around 500 in 2016 to over 2.4 lakh by 2026, generating more than 23.36 lakh direct jobs. The presence of close to 48% women-led startups also indicates the increasing gender inclusiveness in India's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The National Youth Policy (NYP) 2014 is unlike the other programmes in that it is a strategic policy framework and not a direct employment scheme. It provides policy direction and convergence of major initiatives like Skill India, Startup India and the National Service Scheme (NSS) focusing on employment, skill development, education, entrepreneurship and youth empowerment.

Overall, the table indicates a shift in India's youth development strategy from standalone training programmes to a holistic ecosystem of skill development, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship promotion and policy coordination. These efforts have led to more jobs, improved human capital and greater participation of youth in economic development. However, improving the quality of training, enhancing placement rates, reducing skill mismatches and ensuring inclusive access remain essential for fully realising the demographic dividend and realising the vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

Conclusion

Youth welfare programmes have become a fundamental component of India's strategy for employment and human capital development by improving skills, promoting entrepreneurship and improving access to labour market opportunities. Programs such as Skill India Mission, PMKVY, Startup India, National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) and other initiatives targeted at the youth have equipped millions of young people with industry-relevant skills, created opportunities for apprenticeship and spurred self-employment and innovation. These programmes also contributed to the enhancement of graduate employability and the strengthening of the country's workforce. While these are achievements, skill mismatches, varying quality of training, regional disparities, poor placement outcomes and weak industry linkages continue to mar programme effectiveness. Strengthening public-private partnerships, demand-driven training, digital inclusion and a continuous tracking mechanism will help in dealing with these issues and will improve the employment outcome and ensure that youth have the skills that are in line with the emerging needs of the economy. In India, the youth welfare programmes have made a considerable contribution to employment generation and inclusive economic development in particular. Continued policy support, effective implementation and closer alignment with labour market demands will be essential to fully harness India's demographic dividend and achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

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A STUDY ON THE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND SERVICE QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF TWO-WHEELER TAXI SERVICE IN DIMAPUR

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Abstract

Rapid urbanization and increasing traffic congestion have encouraged the growth of two-wheeler taxi services as an affordable and efficient mode of transportation in Indian cities, including Dimapur, Nagaland. This study evaluates customer satisfaction and service quality of two-wheeler taxi services using the SERVQUAL framework, which measures five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Primary data were collected from 40 customers through a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing.

The findings indicate that customers are generally satisfied with the affordability, convenience, speed, and accessibility of two-wheeler taxi services. Reliability and affordability emerged as the strongest determinants of customer satisfaction, while safety, helmet availability, and booking convenience require further improvement. Statistical analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between all SERVQUAL dimensions and customer satisfaction. The study recommends strengthening safety measures, improving rider professionalism, adopting digital booking systems, and implementing effective regulatory policies to enhance service quality and ensure sustainable growth of two-wheeler taxi services in Dimapur.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality, SERVQUAL, Two-Wheeler Taxi, Urban Mobility, Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy.

Introduction

Urban transportation has experienced remarkable changes due to rapid urbanization, increasing population, and growing demand for affordable and time-efficient mobility solutions. Traffic congestion, rising fuel costs, and inadequate public transport have encouraged the emergence of alternative transport services. Among these, two-wheeler

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taxi services have become an important component of urban mobility because they offer quick, economical, and flexible transportation, particularly for short-distance travel.

In India, app-based bike taxi services have expanded rapidly in metropolitan and semi-urban areas. Their popularity is driven by reduced travel time, lower fares, and easy accessibility. In Northeast India, especially in Dimapur, two-wheeler taxis are increasingly preferred by students, office employees, and daily commuters due to frequent traffic congestion and limited public transport options.

Despite their growing importance, academic research on customer satisfaction and service quality of two-wheeler taxi services in Nagaland remains limited. Understanding customer expectations is essential for improving service standards, ensuring passenger safety, and promoting sustainable urban transportation. This study therefore evaluates customer satisfaction and service quality of two-wheeler taxi services in Dimapur using the SERVQUAL model

Significance of the Study

This research is significant for multiple stakeholders:

For Service Providers: The findings can help identify customer expectations, shortcomings in service delivery, and opportunities for improvement.

For Policymakers: Insights from the study can guide formulation of policies on licensing, safety regulations, driver training, and standardization.

For Entrepreneurs: Understanding market perceptions helps potential investors or start-ups make informed decisions.

For Academicians and Researchers: This study contributes new insights to the limited literature on mobility services in Northeast India.

For Customers: Improved service standards can enhance their overall commuting experience.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study is based on the SERVQUAL model, which assesses service quality through the following dimensions:

- **Tangibility:** Vehicle condition, cleanliness, helmet quality
- **Reliability:** Timeliness, consistency, ride availability
- **Responsiveness:** Willingness to assist, customer support
- **Assurance:** Driver's skill, safety, trust, professionalism
- **Empathy:** Personalized attention, courteous behaviour.

Customer satisfaction has long been recognised as a key indicator of service performance. Oliver (1997) defined customer satisfaction as an emotional response resulting from the comparison between customer expectations and actual service performance. Cronin and Taylor (1992) argued that perceived service performance has a stronger influence on satisfaction than expectations alone.

The SERVQUAL model proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) remains one of the most widely accepted frameworks for evaluating service quality across industries such as transportation, banking, healthcare, and hospitality. The model identifies five dimensions—tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—that significantly influence customer perceptions.

International studies also demonstrate the importance of service quality in bike taxi operations. Research conducted in Thailand found that customers prefer motorbike taxis because of their speed and accessibility, although safety concerns remain a major issue. Similar studies in Vietnam highlighted the importance of helmet use, rider professionalism, and adherence to traffic regulations in determining customer satisfaction.

Studies from Nigeria and Kenya reveal that motorcycle taxis provide employment opportunities and affordable mobility but require stronger safety regulations, rider training, and better service standards. Research conducted in Latin America similarly identifies safety, reliability, and regulatory challenges as major concerns affecting customer confidence.

In India, bike taxi services have expanded rapidly due to increasing urban congestion, digital ride-hailing platforms, and the growing gig economy. Studies conducted in cities such as Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Gurgaon, and Guwahati indicate that affordability, convenience, and reduced travel time are the primary reasons for customer preference. However, concerns regarding passenger safety, service consistency, and regulatory frameworks continue to influence customer satisfaction.

Research relating specifically to Nagaland remains scarce. Existing reports indicate that increasing youth unemployment and growing smartphone usage have contributed to the popularity of two-wheeler taxi services in Dimapur. Nevertheless, empirical studies examining customer satisfaction and service quality in the state are extremely limited. This study therefore addresses an important research gap by providing a systematic assessment of customer satisfaction using the SERVQUAL framework in the context of Dimapur.

Research Gap

A review of national and international literature reveals several gaps in existing research on two-wheeler taxi services. Most studies have focused on metropolitan cities, while very limited attention has been given to smaller cities in Northeast India. Specifically, no comprehensive study has examined customer satisfaction and service quality of two-wheeler taxi services in Dimapur. Furthermore, the application of the SERVQUAL model in the context of bike taxi services in Nagaland remains largely unexplored. Safety perception, rider professionalism, and customer experience with both informal and app-based operators have also received little academic attention. This study seeks to bridge these gaps by providing empirical evidence on customer satisfaction and service quality in Dimapur.

Statement of the Problem

Two-wheeler taxi services have become an important mode of urban transportation in Dimapur due to their affordability, convenience, and ability to navigate traffic congestion. Despite their growing popularity, concerns relating to passenger safety, service reliability, pricing, helmet availability, and driver professionalism continue to influence customer perceptions. The absence of adequate research on these issues makes it difficult for service providers and policymakers to formulate effective improvement strategies. Therefore, this study aims to assess customer satisfaction and evaluate service quality using the SERVQUAL framework

Objectives of the Study

Primary Objective

To assess the **customer satisfaction and service quality** of two-wheeler taxi services in Dimapur.

Specific Objectives

1. To evaluate customer perceptions regarding reliability, safety, pricing, and driver behaviour.
2. To measure service quality using the SERVQUAL dimensions: Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy.
3. To identify factors influencing customer overall customer satisfaction.
4. To examine challenges customers face while using two-wheeler taxi services.
5. To provide actionable recommendations for improving service quality and customer experience.

Hypotheses

1. H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Tangibility.
H₁₁: There is a significant relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Tangibility.
2. H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Reliability.
H₁₂: There is a significant relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Reliability.
3. H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Responsiveness.
H₁₃: There is a significant relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Responsiveness.
4. H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Assurance.
H₁₄: There is a significant relationship between Customer Satisfaction Assurance.
5. H₀₅: There is no significant relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Empathy.
H₁₅: There is a significant relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Empathy.

Research Methodology

Research Design: The study adopts a descriptive research design to examine customer satisfaction and service quality of two-wheeler taxi services in Dimapur. Descriptive research is appropriate because it enables the systematic collection and analysis of customer opinions and perceptions.

Population of the Study: The target population comprises individuals residing in Dimapur who use two-wheeler taxi services, including students, office employees, daily commuters, shoppers, tourists, and occasional passengers.

Sampling Design: A non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed to select respondents. A total of 40 customers participated in the survey, providing adequate data for descriptive and inferential analysis.

Sources of Data: The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

- **Primary Data:** Collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Data were gathered through field surveys and personal interaction with customers.

- **Secondary Data:** Obtained from books, research journals, government reports, online publications, transport-related studies, and previous literature on customer satisfaction and the SERVQUAL model.

Tools for Data Analysis: The collected data were analysed using appropriate statistical techniques, including:

- **Descriptive statistics** to summarise respondent characteristics and customer opinions.
- **Cronbach's Alpha** to examine the reliability of the measurement scales.
- **Pearson's Correlation Coefficient** to determine the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction.
- **t-test** to test the statistical significance of the correlation coefficients and evaluate the proposed hypotheses.

These analytical tools ensure the reliability and validity of the study and provide meaningful insights into customer satisfaction with two-wheeler taxi services in Dimapur.

Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The results indicate that all measurement scales exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming satisfactory internal consistency and reliability.:

Based		α value	Interpretation
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION		0.9012	Excellent
SERVICE QUALITY	Tangibility	0.867	Good
	Reliability	0.774	Acceptable
	Responsiveness	0.851	Good
	Assurance	0.90	Excellent
	Empathy	0.92	Excellent

The high reliability values indicate that the questionnaire was appropriate for measuring customer satisfaction and service quality.

Hypothesis Testing

The relationship between customer satisfaction and the SERVQUAL dimensions was examined using Pearson's correlation coefficient and the t-test.

Sl.NO.	VARIABLES	Correlation coefficient (r)	Degrees of Freedom	Test Statistic(t)	Tabulated value of (t)	Result
1	Customer satisfaction and tangibility	0.6862	38	5.82	2.024	Significant (Reject H ₀)
2	Customer satisfaction and reliability	0.788	38	7.98	2.024	Significant (Reject H ₀)
3	Customer satisfaction and responsiveness	0.5995	38	4.62	2.024	Significant (Reject H ₀)
4	Customer satisfaction and assurance	0.6155	38	4.83	2.024	Significant (Reject H ₀)
5	Customer satisfaction and empathy	0.7562	38	5.51	2.024	Significant (Reject H ₀)

Key Findings

Demographic Profile

- Equal participation of male and female respondents (50% each).
- The majority of respondents belong to the 21–30 years age group.
- Government and private sector employees constitute the largest user group, followed by students.
- Most respondents have a monthly income below ₹20,000, indicating that affordability strongly influences the use of two-wheeler taxi services.
- More than half of the respondents use the service regularly, reflecting its importance in daily commuting.

Service Quality

- Customers are generally satisfied with the physical condition of motorcycles and riders' appearance.
- Reliability received one of the highest ratings, particularly regarding punctuality and route knowledge.

- Responsiveness was positively rated, although booking services during peak hours remains a challenge.
- Riders were perceived as courteous and trustworthy, but further improvement in safety awareness is required.
- Empathy received moderate ratings, suggesting the need for greater attention to individual customer needs.

Customer Satisfaction

The overall customer satisfaction score was 3.71 out of 5, indicating a favourable perception of two-wheeler taxi services in Dimapur. Customers particularly appreciated:

- Affordable fares
- Faster travel time
- Easy accessibility
- Convenience for daily commuting

However, concerns remain regarding:

- Helmet availability
- Passenger safety
- Traffic rule compliance
- Booking convenience in non-digital areas

Discussion

The findings indicate that service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction. Reliability and empathy exhibit relatively stronger relationships with customer satisfaction, suggesting that customers highly value dependable and courteous service. Tangibility, responsiveness, and assurance also contribute positively to customer perceptions, highlighting the importance of maintaining vehicle condition, timely service, and rider professionalism.

Although customers expressed overall satisfaction, safety remains a major concern. Limited helmet availability, inconsistent compliance with traffic regulations, and the absence of standardized operational guidelines reduce customer confidence. The increasing demand for app-based booking systems further indicates customers' preference for technology-enabled services that improve convenience and transparency.

Overall, the results support previous studies which conclude that improvements in service quality directly enhance customer satisfaction and encourage continued use of two-wheeler taxi services.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

For Service Providers

- Ensure that every passenger is provided with a clean and standard safety helmet.
- Conduct regular rider training on road safety, customer service, and professional behaviour.
- Improve vehicle maintenance and cleanliness.
- Increase rider availability during peak hours.
- Introduce app-based booking, GPS tracking, and digital payment facilities.
- Establish customer feedback mechanisms for continuous service improvement.

For Policymakers

- Develop clear regulations governing two-wheeler taxi operations.
- Make helmet use mandatory for both riders and passengers.
- Implement licensing, registration, and regular safety inspections.
- Introduce transparent fare regulations to prevent overcharging.
- Promote road safety awareness programmes and encourage greater participation of women riders.

For Customers

- Prioritise personal safety by using helmets during every ride.
- Choose licensed and verified riders whenever possible.
- Report unsafe driving practices and provide constructive feedback to service providers.

Limitations of the Study

Despite providing useful insights into customer satisfaction and service quality of two-wheeler taxi services in Dimapur, the study has certain limitations:

1. The study is confined to Dimapur; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other regions.
2. The sample size of 40 respondents is relatively small and may not fully represent the entire customer population.
3. Convenience sampling was adopted, which may introduce sampling bias.
4. The study is based on respondents' perceptions, which may vary due to personal experiences and preferences.
5. The perspectives of riders and service providers were not included, limiting the scope of the analysis.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies may consider the following areas:

1. Conduct comparative studies between two-wheeler taxis and other modes of public transport.
2. Include the views of riders, service providers, and regulatory authorities for a more comprehensive analysis.
3. Examine the impact of app-based booking platforms and digital technologies on customer satisfaction.
4. Extend similar studies to other districts of Nagaland and Northeast India for broader comparison.
5. Employ larger sample sizes and advanced statistical techniques such as multiple regression or Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) for deeper analysis.

Conclusion

The present study assessed customer satisfaction and service quality of two-wheeler taxi services in Dimapur using the SERVQUAL framework. The findings reveal that customers generally perceive these services as affordable, convenient, reliable, and time-saving, making them an important component of urban transportation in the city.

The statistical analysis confirms that all five SERVQUAL dimensions—Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy—have a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction. Among these, reliability and empathy emerged as particularly influential in shaping customer perceptions.

However, the study also identifies important areas requiring improvement, including passenger safety, helmet availability, adherence to traffic regulations, and the adoption of digital booking systems. Addressing these issues through better rider training, stronger regulatory support, technological innovation, and customer-oriented service practices will enhance customer satisfaction and promote the sustainable growth of two-wheeler taxi services in Dimapur.

Overall, the study contributes to the limited literature on shared mobility services in Northeast India and provides practical recommendations for service providers, policymakers, and future researchers seeking to improve urban transportation services.

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IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN DIMAPUR

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of social media usage on the mental health and academic performance of college students in Dimapur. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected from 100 undergraduate students drawn from ten colleges through a structured questionnaire. Reliability analysis confirmed acceptable internal consistency of the scale. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and hypothesis testing were employed. The findings reveal that Instagram is the most widely used social media platform, followed by WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook. Most respondents spend between two and three hours daily on social media, primarily for entertainment and stress relief. Statistical analysis indicates a significant negative relationship between social media usage and both mental health and academic performance, with the effect on academic performance being comparatively stronger. The study highlights the dual nature of social media as both a learning resource and a potential source of distraction. The findings suggest that balanced and purposeful use of social media is necessary to maximize educational benefits while minimizing adverse psychological and academic consequences.

Keywords:-Social Media, Mental Health, Academic Performance, College Students

Introduction

Social media has transformed communication, learning, and social interaction among young people. Platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook have become integral parts of students' daily routines. These platforms provide opportunities for communication, collaboration, entertainment, and access to information. However, concerns have emerged regarding excessive usage and its consequences for academic performance and psychological well-being. College students are among the most active users of social media. While educational content, online communities, and collaborative learning opportunities can enhance learning, excessive use may reduce concentration, increase procrastination, and contribute to stress and anxiety. The rapid expansion of internet access has further intensified dependence on social networking platforms.

In Dimapur, social media has become deeply embedded in student life. Despite this growing influence, limited empirical research has examined the combined effect of social media usage on both mental health and academic performance in the local context. This study addresses that gap by

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examining usage patterns and evaluating their relationship with students' well-being and educational outcomes.

Literature Review

Previous studies have reported both positive and negative effects of social media.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) highlighted the role of social networking sites in maintaining social relationships.

Pempek et al. (2009) found that students use social media primarily for communication and entertainment, but excessive usage can reduce time available for academic activities.

Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) reported that frequent Facebook users often spend less time studying and achieve lower academic performance.

Junco (2012) argued that academic-oriented social media use may enhance engagement, whereas excessive non-academic use can negatively affect grades.

Al-Rahmi and Othman (2013) found that collaborative learning through social media improves communication and learning outcomes.

In contrast, Pantic (2014) reported associations between excessive social media use and stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms.

Sharma and Shukla (2016), Gupta and Bashir (2018), and Mishra and Singh (2023) concluded that while social media can support learning and connectivity, excessive use often leads to distraction, reduced academic focus, stress, and mental fatigue. Collectively, the literature suggests that outcomes depend largely on the purpose, duration, and intensity of usage.

Research Gap

Existing research has frequently examined academic performance and mental health separately. Few studies have investigated both dimensions simultaneously within the context of Dimapur. Furthermore, limited evidence is available from semi-urban regions where educational and socio-cultural conditions differ from metropolitan areas.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing use of social media among college students has created new challenges in the academic and psychological domains of student life. While social networking platforms are widely used for communication and entertainment, their growing influence on students' study habits and mental well-being has become a matter of concern. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate the nature and extent of social media usage among students of selected colleges in Dimapur and to examine its effects on their academic performance and mental health.

Scope of the Study

The present study focuses on understanding the influence of social media usage on students, particularly in relation to their academic performance, mental well-being, and daily habits. It examines how commonly used platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube are integrated into students' routines for both educational and non-educational purposes.

Need and significance of the Study

The need for this study arises from the increasing dependence of students on social media and the lack of clear understanding about its overall impact. As students spend a significant portion of their time online, it becomes important to examine whether this engagement supports their academic growth or hinders their performance. Additionally, the influence of social media on students' mental health, including stress, anxiety, and self-esteem, makes it necessary to explore this topic in a structured manner.

Limitations of the Study

The present study is based on a relatively small number of respondents, which may not fully represent the entire student population. Social media platforms and trends change quickly, so the findings of this study may not remain fully relevant over time. Moreover, Due to limited time, the study could not cover a larger sample or explore deeper aspects of social media usage.

Objectives:

1. Identify commonly used social media platforms among students in Dimapur.
2. Examine the extent of social media usage.
3. Analyse the impact of social media usage on mental health.
4. Analyse the impact of social media usage on academic performance.

Hypotheses:

H₀₁: There is no significant impact of social media usage on students' mental health.

H₀₂: There is no significant impact of social media usage on students' academic performance.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The research was conducted among undergraduate students from ten selected colleges in Dimapur. A total sample of 100 students was selected using convenience sampling. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered using Google Forms.

The questionnaire included demographic variables, social media usage patterns, mental health indicators, and academic performance measures. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized. Secondary information was obtained from books, journals, reports, and previous research

studies. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability testing through Cronbach's Alpha, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and hypothesis testing.

Area of the Study

The area of the study is confined to selected colleges of Dimapur. Dimapur was chosen because it is an important educational hub with students from diverse academic backgrounds such as Arts, Commerce, and Science.

Period of Study

The present study was conducted over a specific period to ensure systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. The entire research process, including topic selection, data collection, data analysis, and report preparation, was carried out over a period of approximately 6 months i.e. from Jan 2026 to June 2026.

Reliability Test

Table-1.1 Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test		
Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Social Media	0.707	2
Mental Health	0.802	7
Academic Performance	0.819	9
Sources: Compiled from primary Data		

As far as reliability of the scales are concerned, the Cronbach's Alpha scores of Social Media, Mental Health and Academic Performance were 0.707, 0.802, 0.819 respectively. Thus all measurement scales are found to be reliable.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Table-1.2 Gender of the Respondents		
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	69	69
Male	31	31
Total	100	100
Sources: Compiled from primary Data		

Table-1.3 Age of the Respondents		
Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 18	3	3
18-20	26	26
21-23	57	57
Above 23	14	14
Total	100	100
Sources: Compiled from primary Data		

Table-1.4 Course of the Respondents		
Course	Frequency	Percentage
Arts	36	36
Science	7	7
Commerce	52	52
B. Tech	1	1
BBA	1	1
Management	3	3
Total	100	100
Sources: Compiled from primary Data		

Table-1.5 Purpose of Using Social Media		
Purpose of the social media	Frequency	Percentage
Communication	14	14
Entertainment	37	37
Education	13	13
News	9	9
Stress Relief	20	20
Others	7	7
Total	100	100
Sources: Compiled from primary Data		

Table-1.6 Most Used Social Media App		
Most used social media app.	Frequency	Percentage
Instagram	49	49
WhatsApp	23	23
YouTube	15	15
Facebook	13	13
Total	100	100
Sources: Compiled from primary Data		

Table-1.7 Hours Spent on Social Media		
Hours spend on social media.	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	10	10
1-2 hours	24	24
2-3 hours	34	34
3-4 hours	23	23
More than 4 hours	13	13
Total	100	100
Sources: Compiled from primary Data		

Table-1.8 How Often Social Media is Used		
How often social media is used.	Frequency	Percentage
1. Rarely	14	14
2. Sometimes	22	22
3. Often	32	32
4. Very Often	28	28
5. Always	9	9
Sources: Compiled from primary Data		

From the tables 1.2 to 1.8, it reveals that 69% of respondents were female and 31% were male. Most respondents (57%) belonged to the 21–23 age group. Commerce students constituted the largest proportion of the sample (52%), followed by Arts students (36%).

Instagram emerged as the most frequently used social media platform (49%), followed by WhatsApp (23%), YouTube (15%), and Facebook (13%). Entertainment was identified as the primary purpose of usage (37%), followed by stress relief (20%), communication (14%), education (13%), news (9%), and other purposes (7%).

Regarding duration of usage, 34% of students spent 2–3 hours daily on social media, 24% spent 1–2 hours, and 23% spent 3–4 hours. A significant proportion reported using social media often or very often, demonstrating its integration into daily routines.

Table-1.9 Descriptive Statistics						
Attributes	N (Sample Size)	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
Social Media	100	1	5	2.98	0.987088362	33.12
Mental Health	100	1	5	3.22	0.658382356	20.45
Academic Performance	100	1	5	3.47	0.59905046	17.26
Sources: Compiled from primary Data						

The Table-1.9 presents the descriptive statistics of three variables- Social Media, Mental Health, and Academic Performance- based on 100 respondents. The minimum scores for all variables is 1, while the maximum score is 5. The mean score of social media is 2.98 indicates a moderate level of social media usage among the respondents. The standard deviation is 0.9871 and coefficient of variation is 33.12% showing that respondents opinion vary considerably and are less consistent. The mean score of mental health is 3.22 suggesting a moderately positive level of mental health among the participants. The standard deviation is 0.6583 and coefficient of variation is 20.45% indicate moderate variations in response. While academic performance means score is 3.47 indicating that respondents generally perceive their academic performance positively. It also has the lowest standard deviation and coefficient of variation suggesting that the responses are the most consistent among the three variables.

Correlation Analysis

Table-1.10 Comparing relationships

Relationship	Correlation	Interpretation
SM vs MH	-0.296	Low degree of negative correlation between SM and MH
SM vs AP	-0.506	Moderate degree of negative correlation between SM and AP
Sources- Compiled from primary data		

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant impact of social media usage on students' mental health.

Regression Analysis between Social Media and Mental Health

R Square = 0.0877 (8.77%) Only 8.77% of variation in mental health is explained by social media usage. Adjusted R Square = 0.0784 Confirms that the model has low explanatory power. Standard Error = 0.632 Indicates a moderate level of prediction error.

Interpretation:

The model explains a small portion of variation in mental health, suggesting that other factors also significantly influence students' mental well-being.

ANOVA (Model Significance):

F value = 9.425, the significance level of two tailed (p-value = 0.0027), which is less than 0.05, confirms that this relationship is statistically meaningful and not due to random chance. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that social media usage has significant impact on students' mental health.

H₀₂: There is no significant impact of social media usage on students' Academic Performance.

R Square = 0.2559 (25.59%) About 25.6% of variation in academic performance is explained by social media usage. Adjusted R Square = 0.2483 Confirms moderate explanatory power. Standard Error = 0.519 Social media usage explains a considerable portion of changes in academic performance compared to mental health.

Interpretation: The model is highly significant, showing a strong statistical relationship between social media usage and academic performance.

ANOVA (Model Significance):

F value = 33.709, Significance F = 7.91E-08 (< 0.05)

The regression results reveal that social media usage has a moderate and statistically significant negative effect on students' academic performance. The two tailed p-value associated with this coefficient (7.91E-08), which is far below the 0.05 level of significance, confirms that this relationship is highly statistically significant and not due to random variation. Thus, it can conclude that the null hypothesis for the study is rejected.

Conclusion

The study concludes that social media plays a significant role in shaping the academic and psychological experiences of college students in Dimapur. Instagram is the dominant platform, and entertainment remains the primary motivation for usage. Most students spend multiple hours each day on social networking platforms, making social media an important aspect of student life.

The statistical evidence suggests that excessive social media usage negatively affects both mental health and academic performance. The impact on academic performance appears stronger, highlighting concerns regarding distraction, reduced study time, and diminished concentration.

Students should adopt effective time-management practices and limit excessive recreational use. Educational institutions should conduct awareness programmes on digital well-being and encourage academic applications of social media. Faculty members can integrate social media-based learning activities in a structured manner to promote productive engagement. Future research may expand the sample size, include additional variables, and compare findings across different regions.

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THE PRICE PUZZLE: HOW PRICE SHAPES THE ECONOMY AND THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Revathy A¹

Abstract

This paper discusses about the concept of price and its role in the economy. This discusses that a price is nothing but an amount of value for something. This price is termed in different names such as consideration in contracts, premium in insurance, rent for possession in property and tax when collected by the government. The price plays a very crucial role in the demand and supply. There are also some factors that determine the demand and supply. The article then analyses the pricing paradox where prices depart from traditional theory through price stickiness, stagflation, speculative bubbles and behavioural economics. This article also studies about the government intervention in the prices in India. This includes price ceilings and floors, Minimum Support Price (MSP), the Public Distribution System (PDS), and the legal framework under the Competition Act, 2002, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, the Indian Contract Act, 1872 and the Sale of Goods Act, 1930.

Keywords: Price, Demand, Supply, Factors affecting supply and demand, Stagflations, price stickiness, speculative bubbles, Price ceilings, Price Floor, Minimum Support Price.

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Introduction:

Price is not a newly evolved term; this was present in ancient period as well. The price denotes a value of something. It states that price plays a very important role in the market because every good and service has their own value. This value is determined by many factors. There is a famous quote “human wants are unlimited but resources are limited”, this states that the market must satisfy the customers as well as earn profits with the limited resources that are available. So, here the price plays its crucial role in shaping the demands of the consumers and also helps the producers to earn profits. In a market a price is not constant at all, it changes day by day but some companies keep the price constant to attract customers. For example, when you go to buy vegetables or fruits you can see the changes of day-to-day prices but when you buy a juice that is packed the price remains constant. So, this is how the price plays a very crucial role in the economy as the fruits and vegetables are necessary goods, even if prices fluctuate people would buy it but for packed juice people have a choice over it. This can also be termed as the price puzzle. The term is used in a broad sense to describe how price solves the basic economic problems. The price also gets influenced by the factors of production that is land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship. Some of the price standards are set by the government to make the commodities available for all the people.

Concept of Price:

The word ‘Price’ has been derived from Latin word ‘pretium’ which means value. This price seems to be a single word but its role played in the economy is vast. The term ‘Price Puzzle’ has been denoted because the price solves very complex problems such as what to produce, how to produce, for whom to produce and determination the value of a product. Price does not change randomly as it reacts to the market demanded and other dynamic changes. Basically, when the demand rises, supply is constant then the prices will increase. Apart from the demand and supply of the market these price influences most economic transactions. This price is termed as consideration for making a contract which is defined in Section 2(d) of Indian Contract Act, 1872 in India, the price is termed as premium when paid to the insurance company to indemnify them for the future loss, the price is termed as rent when it is paid to take the possession of the property, the price is termed as tax when the same is collected from the people by the government and there are others. The price in the market signals the consumers as well the producers regarding the demand of the market. For example, when the

price of the tomato rises high then it signals the farmer to grow more tomato to profit from it and signals the consumer to look for the other substitute goods or asks them to buy less. So, the price plays the role itself in the market without any instruction. The market prices rise when the supply of the product reduces and the demand of the same product rises. Thus, the term price determines the value of something in return.

Price and the Balance of Demand and Supply:

The demand and supply play a very important role in the economy and determines the price. This denotes that for the satisfaction, the consumer is willing to pay to get their required product, the producer is ready to supply the goods for a price, this leads to the determination of price of goods in the market. The customer's perspective is known as demand and the producer's perspective is known as supply. The demand can be individual demand or market demand. Individual demand or household demand is where it states the quantity of good a customer is willing to purchase at a particular price during a period of time. Market demand states the quantity of commodity that all the consumers are willing to purchase during a period of time. There are some factors that determine the demand as some of them are price of commodity, taste and preference of customers, level of income of the household, price of related commodities, size of population, composition of population, weather conditions and distribution of income in the society. The supply is a concept, where the provision of goods must fulfil the needs and wants of the customer for a price. The supply can be individual supply or market supply. Individual supply refers to the quantity of goods that a supplier is willing to supply at a particular price during a period of time. Market supply refers to the quantity of goods that all the suppliers in the market are willing to sell at a price during the period of time. Some factors that determine the supply are price of the commodity, cost of production/use of technology, price of other goods, price of raw materials, tax imposed by government, number of producers in the market and natural conditions.

The question arises that how the price plays a role in demand and supply? In demand, when price increase the demand decreases as people will prefer to buy less or other substitute goods but when the prices fall then demand increases because goods become cheaper and customer can buy more at lower price. When income of a customer increases then the demand for the normal goods increases but for inferior goods the demand decreases, likewise when the income of the consumer decreases then the demand for the normal goods decreases and the

inferior goods demand increases. When the price of complementary goods increases then the demand for related goods decreases and when the price of complementary goods decreases then the related goods increase because the goods are inter-related for example pen and ink. When the price of substitute goods increase then the demand for related goods increases because the customers would prefer the related goods when there is an increase in the substitute goods and when the price of substitute goods decreases then the demand for the related goods decreases, for example of substitute goods is tea and coffee so if coffee price is increased then people would prefer to buy tea if coffee price decreases, then people's interest in tea reduces. This is the role of price in demand. In supply, when the price increases then the supply of products increases and when the price decreases then the supply of products decreases because at higher price, the factors remain constant, gives higher profit to the producer. When price of inputs such as raw materials increases the cost of production goes up so the supply of commodity decreases and when the price of inputs decreases this will increase the profit margin then the supply of the commodity increases. Thus, this is the role of price in supply of commodity.

The Pricing Paradox:

The basic understanding of price is that when demand increases then the price also increase to reduce the demand and when the demand decreases then the price falls to make the consumers buy the commodity. But there are some cases where we cannot predict the prices some of them are, prices even stay same even if demand increases, due to inflation the prices rise but does not fall after a period of time, even if demand falls commodity prices rises, companies keep prices constant even during fluctuations, Stagflations, price bubble, behavioural economics, etc so this is the puzzle, the price plays. John Maynard Keynes has introduced a theory which was termed as sticky wage theory. The term price stickiness or sticky prices were developed through later economists. It states that when price rise due to any reason or problem, then even after the problem gets solved the price will stick to the high and will not fall. This can be stated as Price stickiness where once inflated, the price does not fall back to optimal levels. So, the market does not comply with the law of demand and supply. For example, 1 kg of rice cost Rs. 100, due to flood and shortage the 1 kg of rice price was increased to Rs. 150, even after the problem got solved the price may fall slowly, or stay high even after the shortage ends so this is called as price stickiness. The other situation is where there would be high inflation, very slow economic growth and high unemployment which is termed as

stagflation. This term was first used in 1960s as Lain Macleod applied it in the context of economic issues in the UK and notable case of stagflation took place in 1970s. An example for this is that the prices of the commodity would rise, the income of an individual will remain constant and the availability of the jobs will also be less so this is stagflation.

There are also other cases, as some companies do not change the prices frequently because this causes instability and customers may not be satisfied so, they would keep a constant price even during cost fluctuations. In some cases, even when the demand falls the prices would rise, for example due to the raw material shortages and input material price rises then this would affect the cost of finished products and it would create the price of the commodity to rise even if the demand of the commodity falls. Sometimes, the higher prices of the commodity increase the demand instead of reducing it, this happens when branded or luxury goods like cars and watches are bought for a symbol of status even though they are expensive. This is called Veblen goods. In some case, the price will spike far beyond the items real value this basically happens during auction and competitive bidding. There is another concept termed as bubble in the market. Peter Garber describes bubble as “a price movement that is inexplicable based on fundamentals”. The concept of pricing bubbles is that the prices rise more than the actual value and crash suddenly even without a real change. For example, the land rate increases rapidly because more people buy them expecting that it would rise in the future, so this is bubble, but when the people realise that it had increased beyond its actual value then they would start selling this then the bubble would burst and cause the prices to fall so this is the concept of bubble. The Behavioural economics also influence the prices in the market. Behavioural economics studies the psychological, social and emotional factors of customers which affects their decision making, this influences the price. For example, Charm Pricing is a psychology of pricing as by ending with .99 as if a good is Rs. 200 then stating the price as Rs. 199 to create perception of lower price.

Prices and Government Intervention in India:

The government has a role over the price of the goods. A good government must ensure that the essential commodities are available to all the people irrespective of poor or rich because free markets may fail to produce fair outcome for consumers particularly for essential commodity during shortages. When there is no government intervention, prices are set by demand and supply and the prices of all essential commodity will rise, the wealthy people can

afford but the poor cannot this causes major problem. So, the government intervention in prices is necessary to maintain the equity standards of the economy. The government intervenes by introducing various measures, schemes, laws, regulation, etc. Maximum price limit was imposed on certain products such as medicines and essential goods to avoid high prices on such goods during shortage or emergencies were termed as Price Ceiling. For example, during COVID 19 price ceiling was imposed on essential items such as oxygen concentrators, masks, and sanitizers to make them available for all the people. Minimum price limit was imposed on the goods like agriculture product to protect the producers for their hard work this is termed as Price Floor. For the price floor to be effective it must be set above the market equilibrium price. Rent Control Acts were imposed in some places to provide the housing affordable for the tenants the example is Delhi Rent Control Act, 1958. National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) ensures the availability of essential medicines to all the people at affordable cost and it controls the price of pharmaceutical sector.

Public Distribution System (PDS) has been started to provide goods at prices below the market price for the economically weaker sections. Import duties have been imposed on foreign goods raising their price to promote the domestic industry products and protect them from competition in India. The Reserve Bank of India sets the policy repo rate to influence interest rates in the economy to control the inflation and promote the growth. The excise duty is the indirect tax that is imposed on certain goods in India, these are charged at the manufacturing stage itself, the producer has to pay the respective tax but the burden is then shifted to the consumer who buy the goods. The Minimum Support Price (MSP) is a scheme that is introduced by the government to help the farmers to earn a stable income from the crop yield for specified crops. The government predetermined the price of the crops as MSP so if the market price drops below then the government would buy from the farmers. This is to provide a guaranteed price for the farmers protecting them from market fluctuations. The stock Market is regulated by Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) which prescribes the regulatory standards and supervising the market participants it also prevents price manipulation and insider trading. Under Section 4 of Competition Act, 2002 it has been stated that a company can have a dominant position but this can be used unless this position is misused by the company to restrict competition or harm consumers. The consumer Protection Act, 2019 protects the consumers if any harm or any defect has been caused or identified in the goods that have been bought. This Act also includes misleading price representations, over charging, etc.

The Essential Commodities Act, 1955 plays a very important role in the prices of the essential commodities during shortages. This Act gives legal right to the government to regulate the production, supply and pricing of the essential commodities during the period of shortages or emergencies. The Indian Contract Act, 1872 which states that the consideration is the essential element for making a contract, if the contract is silent, if the price is not determined then the buyer must pay a reasonable price because an agreement without consideration is void under Section 25 of Indian Contract Act, 1872. Section 29 of Indian Contract Act, 1872 states that future fixation of price is also valid when it can be certain. The Sale of Goods Act, 1930 also plays a very important role in the prices. In Section 2(10) of the said Act has defined the term “price” means the money consideration for a sale of goods. Section 9 and 10 of the said Act discusses about the fixation and ascertainment of the prices, this states that it can be fixed by the contract or it can be agreed between them or it can be determined during the course of dealing. This government intervention protects the customers and producers but if the control exceeds or if it is poor then it can create shortages, black market and others. So, the government must ensure that it balances this in a constant manner.

Conclusion:

This price is not merely an amount paid this also states information about scarcity, decision of the buyers and also allocates limited resources among unlimited wants. Basically, the demand and supply determine the price but in some cases such as price stickiness, stagflation, speculative bubbles, Behavioural economics, etc also influence the prices. The state also intervenes into the concept of pricing to ensure that a reasonable price is fixed for the essential commodities so that all people can afford to it. These include Price Ceiling, Price Floor, Rent Control Acts, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), Public Distribution System (PDS), excise duty, Minimum Support Price (MSP), Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Indian Contract Act, 1872, Competition Act, 2002, Sale of Goods Act, 1930, Consumer Protection Act, 2019 and the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 etc. The government intervention and its policies must not be excessive as it must regulate and correct the failures. Therefore, price remains the cornerstone of economic activity, balancing resources, needs, and social welfare.

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ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT THROUGH NGO INTERVENTION: AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF EDUCEN IN DIMAPUR, NAGALAND

Angshik Sharma Biswas¹

Abstract

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) increasingly complement formal education systems through locally responsive interventions, particularly in underserved regions. This paper presents an institutional and programmatic analysis of EDUCEN (An Educational Organisation), a community-based educational NGO operating in Dimapur, Nagaland. Grounded in an exploratory, document-based case study methodology, this paper investigates EDUCEN's organisational governance structure, financial control mechanisms, and multi-dimensional intervention model spanning academic support, co-curricular development, community engagement, and emerging skill-development initiatives. Utilizing qualitative content analysis of the organisation's constitutional framework and programmatic records, the study examines how micro-level civil society entities establish formal institutional mechanisms to drive local human capital formation and educational empowerment. The analysis reveals a structured separation of administrative, educational, and financial responsibilities that mitigates governance risks typical of informal volunteer initiatives, alongside a subject-specific academic focus on commerce education. The study proposes an Input-Process-Output-Outcome conceptual framework for micro-NGO intervention and identifies critical imperatives for future empirical research, including quantitative impact assessment, financial performance evaluation, and longitudinal tracking of student outcomes.

Keywords: Non-Governmental Organisations, Educational Empowerment, Organisational Governance, Human Capital Formation.

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Organisational Governance and Educational Empowerment through NGO Intervention: An Exploratory Case Study of EDUCEN in Dimapur, Nagaland

1. Introduction

1.1 Context and Problem Statement

Education functions as a primary driver of human capital accumulation, social mobility, and regional economic development. However, formal public educational infrastructure in developing economies often faces structural constraints, including resource deficits, high pupil-teacher ratios, and limited capacity for individualized academic remediation. These institutional gaps are particularly pronounced in regional contexts where supplementary academic infrastructure such as private coaching is financially inaccessible to socio-economically marginalized households.

In response to these structural disparities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) have increasingly assumed the role of supplementary service providers. Beyond direct service delivery, educational NGOs operate as platforms for pedagogical innovation, grassroots community mobilization, and targeted skill acquisition. While substantial scholarly attention has focused on large-scale, national-level educational NGOs, micro-level community organisations operating at the district level remain under-researched despite their critical role in localized educational delivery.

2. Literature Review

The theoretical literature on non-governmental organisations emphasizes the dual imperatives of institutional legitimacy and operational flexibility (Anheier, 2014; Edwards & Hulme, 2002). Small-scale, locally embedded NGOs possess distinct structural advantages in identifying and addressing localized educational deficits due to low administrative overhead and proximity to target populations (Blum, 2009; Rawat&Rawat, 2024). However, micro-NGOs frequently encounter governance vulnerabilities, including reliance on informal decision-making, poor record-keeping, and financial fragility (Cornforth, 2004).

Formal governance structures characterized by clear constitutional mandates, division of administrative duties, and defined accountability channels are essential for NGO sustainability

and stakeholder trust (Ebrahim, 2003; Gaventa, 2004). In educational delivery, effective governance directly informs service quality, enabling organisations to move beyond ad-hoc charity toward structured educational empowerment (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988).

3. Research Gap and Objectives

While macro-level educational interventions in India (such as Pratham) are extensively documented in academic literature, significant research gaps exist regarding the internal governance, operational sustainability, and programmatic models of small, locally rooted educational NGOs. Specifically, there is limited empirical and institutional documentation on community-led educational interventions in the North-Eastern region of India, particularly in Nagaland.

This study addresses these gaps through an exploratory analysis of EDUCEN (An Educational Organisation), a district-level NGO operating in Dimapur, Nagaland. The objectives of this paper are:

1. To examine the formal governance framework and financial control mechanisms established by EDUCEN.
2. To analyze the structure and thematic scope of EDUCEN's academic, co-curricular, and community interventions.
3. To evaluate EDUCEN's strategic transition toward vocational skill development within the context of local human capital formation.
4. To formulate an integrative conceptual framework mapping micro-NGO inputs to developmental outcomes.

4. Theoretical Framework: Input-Process-Output-Outcome (IPOO) Model

To systematically evaluate EDUCEN's institutional architecture and programmatic scope, this study adapts the Input-Process-Output-Outcome (IPOO) framework from organizational theory:

Table :1 Input- Process-Output- Outcome framework.

INPUTS	PROCESSES	OUTPUTS	EXPECTED OUTCOMES
• Constitutional Mandate & Objectives • Organizational Governance (Administrative, Advisory, & Managing Bodies) • Financial Resources (Fees, Donations) & Internal Controls • Volunteer Teachers & Community Partners	• Institutional Governance (AGMs, Audits, Joint Financial Authorizations) • Programmatic Execution (Academic Support, Co-Curriculars, Outreach) • Strategic Planning (Curriculum Design, Skill Expansion Readiness)	• Free Academic classes & Subject based coaching (Commerce/Book-Keeping) • Educational Material Distribution • Co-curricular Competitions (Debates, Quizzes, Talent Hunts) • Community & Humanitarian Initiatives	• Enhanced Academic Performance & Reduced Drop-out Rates • Soft Skill Development & Creative Confidence • Local Human Capital Accumulation & Employability • Strengthened Community Social Capital

Source : Compiled by the author from available document collected from the office.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

This study employs an exploratory, document-based qualitative case study design. Given the lack of prior academic literature on EDUCEN, a qualitative case study methodology provides the depth necessary to examine institutional structures and operational processes within their real-world, localized context.

5.2 Data Sources and Content Analysis

The analysis relies on qualitative content analysis of primary documentary evidence and institutional artifacts, comprising:

- 1. The Constitution of EDUCEN (An Educational Organisation): Used to analyze legal nomenclature, governance design, administrative hierarchies, financial rules, and operational mandates.
- 2. Archival Programmatic Records and Activity Logs (2018-2026): Used to document and categorize educational, co-curricular, and community-service interventions.

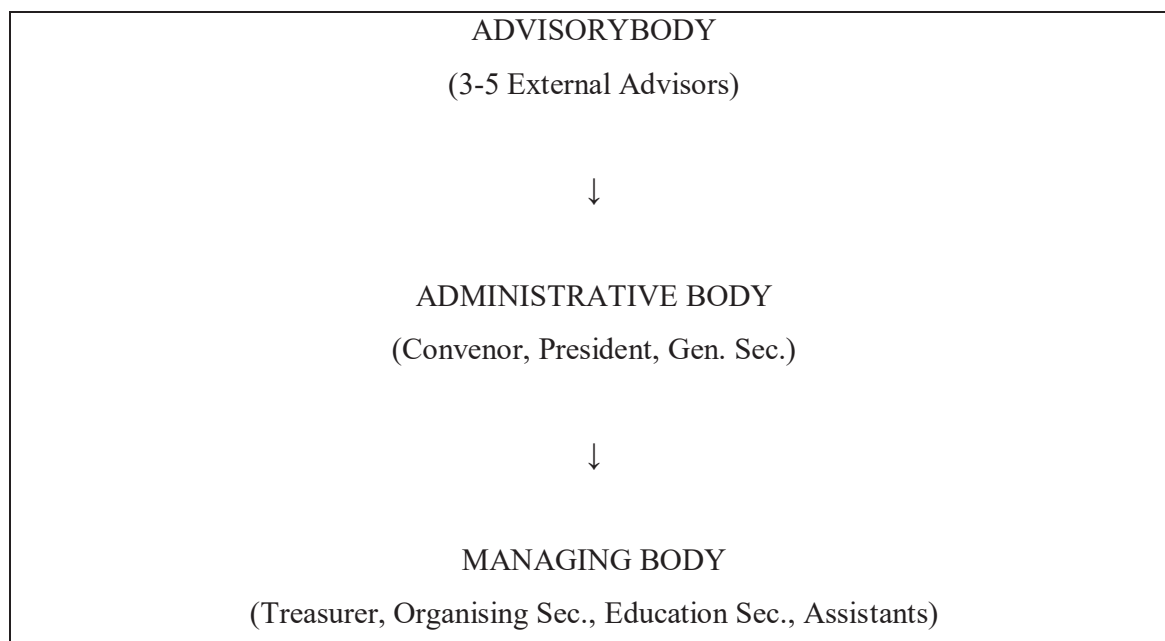
Documentary data were systematically coded and categorized across four analytical domains: Governance Architecture, Academic Interventions, Co-curricular/Talent Initiatives, and Community Outreach.

6. Institutional and Governance Structure of EDUCEN

6.1 Constitutional Framework and Administrative Division

Initiated in 2018 and fully operational from early 2019, EDUCEN operates under a formal constitutional mandate centered in Dimapur, Nagaland, under the motto "Merge with Knowledge".

To mitigate the governance vulnerabilities typical of micro-NGOs, EDUCEN's Constitution establishes a three-tier organizational hierarchy designed to segregate advisory, administrative, and executive functions:



Source: compiled by the author from organization constitution.

- Advisory Body (3-5 members): Provides non-executive oversight, strategic guidance, and institutional counsel.
- Administrative Body: Comprising the Convenor/Chairman, President, and General Secretary, this body holds executive decision-making authority and oversees strategic operations.
- Managing Body: Comprising functional secretariats including the Treasurer, Organising Secretary, Education Secretary, Assistant Organising Secretary, and Assistant Education Secretary.

This constitutional division separates operational management from financial and administrative oversight. For instance, the Education Secretary holds explicit portfolio responsibility for academic standards, examinations, and seminars, while the Organising Secretary manages event execution and record preservation.

6.2 Financial Governance and Internal Control Mechanisms

Financial sustainability and transparency represent critical challenges for community-based NGOs. EDUCEN's Constitution specifies income generation through registration fees, membership subscriptions, and public donations.

To enforce financial accountability, the constitutional framework incorporates specific internal control mechanisms:

- Dual/Triple Signatory Controls: Funds withdrawal from the organisation's institutional bank account mandates joint authorization by the President, General Secretary, and Treasurer.
- Reporting and Audit Mandates: The Treasurer is constitutionally bound to maintain balance sheets and financial ledger records. The framework prescribes dual internal and external audit mechanisms, requiring the audit committee to submit verified financial reports to the Administrative Body and subsequent Annual General Meetings (AGMs).

7. Programmatic Interventions and Development Model

EDUCEN's operational portfolio is structured across three constitutionally defined working sectors: EDUCEN Classes (formal/informal instruction), Scope of Learning (targeted remediation for underprivileged groups), and Student's Enlightenment (holistic co-curricular development).

Table :2- Development Model

Operational Dimension	Core Interventions & Target Demographic	Strategic Objective
Academic Remediation	- Free secondary tuition (Classes IX-XII) - Subject-specific Book-Keeping & Accountancy instruction - School coaching partnership	Strengthening core subject mastery, improving board examination pass rates, reducing dropout risk.
Co-Curricular & Talent	- Annual TALENT HUNT (Art, Music, Dance, Crafting) - Debate & Spell Bee competitions - Digital/Online Quizzes for district youth	Communication skill development, creative expression, confidence building, digital literacy.
Community Outreach	- Educational resource/book distribution - Humanitarian flood relief & supply drives	Social capital building, humanitarian assistance, institutional civic integration.
Strategic Horizon	- Proposed vocational skill modules - Applied financial literacy & career readiness for out-of-school youth	Enhancement of practical employability and long-term economic self-reliance.

Source : Compiled by the author from available document collected from the office.

7.1 Academic and Subject-Specific Remediation

A core component of EDUCEN's programmatic activity is supplementary academic instruction targeting students of various standards. A notable feature of this intervention is its specialized focus on Commerce education and other subjects, particularly foundational Book-Keeping and Accountancy.

By providing free, targeted instruction in various subjects, the organisation addresses a specific educational gap: access to specialized subjective coaching, which is often restricted to fee-paying private institutions. Furthermore, sustained academic partnerships such as long-term coaching programs conducted for students of several schools, indicate a transition from ad-hoc community charity toward structured supplementary education.

7.2 Co-Curricular Skill Building and Talent Development

EDUCEN incorporates structured co-curricular programs designed to build non-academic competencies. Programs such as district-level debates, Spell Bee competitions, and multi-week online quizzes focus on developing verbal communication, cognitive processing, and digital familiarity.

Additionally, the annual “TALENT HUNT” serves as a key platform for non-academic evaluation, featuring multi-disciplinary competitions in fine arts, performing arts, and traditional crafts. These activities align with contemporary educational literature highlighting the role of co-curricular engagement in building student self-efficacy and resilience.

7.3 Community Outreach and Social Capital Formation

EDUCEN extends its scope beyond classroom instruction to incorporate community development initiatives. These include educational resource drives (distributing textbooks and literature to local children's homes) and localized humanitarian relief operations (distributing food, clean drinking water, and flood assistance during regional emergencies).

From an organizational perspective, integrating community service alongside educational delivery strengthens the NGO's local legitimacy and fosters social capital within its operating district.

7.4 Strategic Horizon: Transition Toward Skill Development

An emerging dimension of EDUCEN's organizational evolution is its planned expansion into formal vocational skill development. The proposed transition reflects a strategic model mapping academic remediation to long-term economic self-reliance:

Academic Support → Co-Curricular Growth → Vocational Skill Acquisition → Employability & Self-Reliance

While these skill-development modules remain in early planning stages, integrating practical competencies such as digital literacy, applied financial management, and career readiness aligns with broader national policy directives (e.g., India's National Education Policy 2020) emphasizing vocational integration in secondary education.

8. Discussion and Institutional Implications

8.1 Governance Dynamics in Micro-NGOs

The case of EDUCEN provides key insights into how small, community-based entities establish formal administrative legitimacy. While many district-level NGOs operate informally, EDUCEN's reliance on a codified Constitution establishes clear operational guidelines. The separation of administrative oversight from functional secretariats provides a structural blueprint for micro-NGOs seeking to maintain institutional accountability with minimal capital resources.

8.2 Educational Empowerment and Local Human Capital Formation

From an economic and commercial perspective, grassroots educational interventions reduce the private cost of supplementary education for underprivileged households. By offering specialized instruction in foundational commerce, book-keeping, and general academics, micro-NGOs contribute to local human capital formation. This supplementary instruction helps lower secondary school attrition rates and prepares students for higher education or entry-level employment in the local service economy.

9. Limitations and Future Research Directions

9.1 Limitations

This study has several analytical limitations:

- 1. Documentary Reliance: The analysis is based primarily on institutional documents, constitutional texts, and self-reported programmatic records.
- 2. Absence of Quantitative Impact Metrics: Due to the lack of longitudinal baseline data, this study does not make empirical claims regarding statistically significant improvements in student test scores or long-term income outcomes.
- 3. Non-Generalizability: As a qualitative single-case study, the findings reflect the specific socio-institutional context of Dimapur, Nagaland, and cannot be generalized to all regional educational NGOs.

9.2 Scope for Future Empirical Research

To advance the literature on regional educational NGOs, future research should adopt mixed-methods empirical frameworks:

- Impact Assessments: Quantitative evaluation comparing standardized test scores and progression rates of EDUCEN-enrolled students against control groups of non-participating peers.
- Financial Performance Analysis: Independent empirical analysis of NGO expenditure efficiency, cost-per-beneficiary ratios, and resource allocation using audited financial statements.
- Stakeholder Surveys: Structured field surveys assessing student satisfaction, parental perceptions, and volunteer retention dynamics.

10. Conclusion

EDUCEN demonstrates how a locally rooted, community-based NGO can establish a structured framework for educational empowerment within a specific district context. Grounded in a constitutional architecture that separates advisory, administrative, and financial functions, the organisation delivers a multi-dimensional intervention model encompassing free academic tuition, commerce coaching, co-curricular skill development, and community assistance. While its planned expansion into vocational skill development points toward an evolving strategy for local youth employability, future empirical research remains necessary to quantitatively measure the long-term academic and socio-economic impact of its programs.

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LIFE SKILLS: MAKING THE LIFE OF SLOW LEARNERS SIMPLE

Nayan Basu¹

Abstract

This article reflects on the importance of Life Skill, which are very important for all slow learners, especially for slow learners in today's challenging life. In many studies, it has been proven that slow learners have so many problems in all three domains, i.e. cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Because of this, they face many problems related to their daily life. All these problems create obstacles for them in the future. In this article, it focuses on some Life Skills, such as self-awareness, interpersonal skills, managing emotions, problem-solving ability, leading ability, and empathy, to make their life SIMPLE and enhance their abilities to become responsible citizens of the country.

Keywords : Life Skills; Slow Learners; Self-awareness; Interpersonal Skills; Emotional Management; Problem-solving; Leadership Skills; Empathy; Social Adjustment; Teacher Support.

Introduction

Each class consists of students with different interests, abilities, potential, caliber, and ways of thinking and pace of learning. The learning speed of every child is not similar. Some students in the class remain slower in learning than their peers. Such students are called slow learners. Slow learners are also a part of regular schools. This proves that slow learners are not physically or mentally disabled, but they are only impaired in the pace of learning. The only problem with them is that they learn ideas and concepts slowly than their peers. But they do not suffer from any other type of disability. Nationwide, slow learners are not more than about 10 to 14% of children (Baucum, 1967). These are children whose learning level, style, and learning requirements are specific for various reasons, such as intellectual, psychotherapeutic, or socio-cultural diversity and differences. They have problems in all three domains: cognitive, affective and psychomotor (Gularea, 2020).

In cognitive domain, slow learners have lower mental abilities than normal children. They fail to classify, compare, and express their feelings. They lag behind other students in problem-solving, decision making, and academic performance. They lack innovation and creativity and are unable to form on problem areas. They lack appropriateness and accuracy, and fail to express their opinions logically.

In affective domain they do not understand the given tasks properly, and cannot complete the tasks at the right time. They do not understand their assignments properly. They lag behind their peers in values, hobbies, interests, and attitudes. Slow students face difficulty in

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answering questions. They cannot express their feelings to others. They have a negative attitude towards learning and school education. They fail to manage time. Logical understanding is less and they do not present their opinion on any subject, and do not understand the sequence or pattern of information or instruction.

In psychomotor domain they are afraid to participate in curricular or extracurricular activities. They face difficulty with coordination of their hands and heads. They have very poor or affected kinesthetic skills. They fail to communicate through actions and gestures, and are not able to learn better with abstract objects. They fail to perform in sports, drama, and other related motor skills. They also experience difficulty with arts and craft related works. They can also hurt themselves by using tools etc.

Objectives

- ❖ To understand the importance of Life Skills in the overall development of slow learners.
- ❖ To identify the major difficulties faced by slow learners in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.
- ❖ To examine the role of Self-awareness, Interpersonal skills, managing emotions, Problem-solving, Leadership, and Empathy in improving the lives of slow learners.
- ❖ To suggest practical strategies for developing Life Skills among slow learners.
- ❖ To explore how Life Skills can enhance the confidence, social adjustment, problem-solving ability, and responsible behaviour of slow learners.

Methodology

The article adopts a descriptive and analytical approach based on a review of relevant literature and existing sources related to slow learners and Life Skills education. It examines the difficulties experienced by slow learners in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains and analyses the importance of selected Life Skills in addressing these difficulties. The article focuses on six major Life Skills—Self-awareness, Interpersonal Skills, Managing Emotions, Problem-solving Ability, Leadership Ability, and Empathy—and discusses practical strategies that teachers can use to develop these skills among slow learners. The discussion is supported by relevant literature and references, including works by Baucum, Gularea, Rogers, and Shaw, as well as the definitions of Life Skills provided by WHO and UNICEF.

Life Skills

Slow learners face many problems related to their daily life activities such as communicating with others, managing their emotions, adapting to their environment, interacting with others, utilizing their time, etc. All these problems create obstacles for them in the future. Because of this, their confidence level gradually decreases, and they get angry very quickly. So, the need arises to devise strategies and Life Skills to eradicate problems in their lives and make their lives **SIMPLE**.

Life Skills are the skills needed to lead a better social life and to manage life situations appropriately. Life skills help learners to live life to the fullest potential and fulfill their ambitions and needs. These are human skills that are acquired through teaching and direct experience, and help the individual to face real life problems. Through Life Skills, they are

able to meet life's challenges. Life Skills enhance a person's ability to become a responsible citizen of the country.

According to WHO (1997), "the abilities for adaptive and positive that enable individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges" are called Life Skills.

According to UNICEF (2001), "Life skills-based education is behavior change or behavior development approach designed to address a balance of three areas i.e., knowledge, attitude, and skills."

Life Skills are not generally seen as a subject. But Life Skills are important in the process of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, attitudes, personal development and lifelong learning. They work to improve a person's quality of life.

It has been proven in child psychology that the learner should be at the center of the teaching and learning process. And the learner is influenced by various factors, like location, gender, ethnicity, religion, special needs, speed of learning, etc.

Let talk about some important Life Skills that make slow learners' life 'SIMPLE'.

The term SIMPLE implies

- S – Self-awareness
- I – Interpersonal skills
- M – Managing their emotions
- P – Problem-solving ability
- L – Leading ability
- E – Empathy

Self-awareness

The real meaning of self-awareness is to know oneself. Why do we feel, and why do we behave in a certain way in certain situations? In this, we have full knowledge and awareness of our identity, our character, our strengths, weaknesses, desires, likes and dislikes.

We can see the Johri window model, developed by American psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1955; it provides four basic forms of self (known self, hidden self, blind self, and unknown self).

- Known Self: Things that we know about ourselves and others also know about us.
- Hidden Self: Things that we know about ourselves but others do not know those things.
- Blind Self: Things that others know about us but we do not know ourselves.
- Unknown Self: Things that neither we nor others know about us.

It is very important that for a successful and better life, everyone should have the ability to know about themselves. Slow students are citizens of our country. Therefore, it is the duty

of teachers to try to improve the self-awareness of slow learners, so that they are aware of their own strengths and limitations.

How do develop self-awareness in slow learners:

- ❖ Develop a sense of responsibility in slow learners.
- ❖ Increase slow learner's sense of ownership.
- ❖ Help establish a sense of self-discipline.
- ❖ Help to promote self-advocacy skills.
- ❖ Provide positive feedback and incentives.
- ❖ Teach slow learners to learn from mistakes and failures.
- ❖ Help them learn how to conduct mental activities of development, from "I can't do it" to "I can do it."
- ❖ Help them identify their strengths and weaknesses.
- ❖ Develop a checklist to help learners learn how well they have completed a given task or activity.

By developing self-awareness, students recognize when they are under stress or pressure. It is the Life Skill that makes one aware of oneself. It sheds light on the emotions, behaviors, social capacities, personal abilities, performance and goals of the slow learner. It is a rudiment to effective communication and interpersonal skills.

Interpersonal Skill

Every person is a social animal. Staying in society also maintains cordial relations with others. It is very important to have good relationships with family members, friends and the community. This skill of having an interpersonal relationship helps a person to interact and behave in a positive and friendly manner with others because a friendly relationship can be very important for our mental and social welfare. Interpersonal relationship skills are based on feelings of love, solidarity, regular academic and professional interactions, and other social commitments. This skill helps to relate to other people in a friendly and cordial manner. When slow learners behave better and have better relationships with different types of people, they will be able to reconcile with the people. Therefore, it is very important to increase interpersonal skills in slow learners so that they can understand and manage their own and others' emotions.

How to develop Interpersonal skills in slow learners:

- ❖ Encourage learners to do community service.
- ❖ Divide community skills in to smaller sections, and teach these skills through communication.
- ❖ At lunch, they divide the students into small groups so that the quality of interaction is developed in them.
- ❖ Such activities should be done so that social qualities are developed in them.
- ❖ Try to develop the qualities of adjustment in students
- ❖ Students should be given opportunities to develop teamwork and leadership skills by assigning them responsibility for various classroom tasks.
- ❖ Group activities can give students the opportunity to develop community skills such as teamwork, goal setting, and responsibility.

Interpersonal skills ensure the development of social cohesion and quality. Slow learners are able to understand and manage their own and others' emotions properly when an interpersonal skill is developed.

Managing Emotions

It means understanding and recognizing feelings within ourselves and others. Also finding out how our behaviour affects emotions and be able to appropriately manage emotions. Strong emotions such as anger or sadness can negatively affect our health. We should know which emotions should be used in which types of situations.

Slow learners are more likely to have anxiety disorders and mood disorders. In other words, children with low intelligence are mainly found to have emotional problems. They cannot control their emotions in the right way. Therefore, provisions should be made to make them emotionally strong in the process of teaching.

How teachers make slow learners emotionally strong:

- Help establish positive peer relationships with slow learners.
- Teach skills to manage behaviour.
- Help slow learners to cope with stress.
- Do yoga and meditation daily to deal with depression.

These methods help in making learners emotionally stronger. If they are able to control their emotions, they may solve the problems of their daily life. And hence it increases the problem-solving ability of slow learners.

Problem-Solving Skill

The ability to solve problems helps us to deal with many problems in our daily life constructively and correctly. Many important problems that remain unsolved can cause mental stress and physical stress. Students faced many problems related to academics, sports, emotional adjustment, social relationships etc. in their lives. In order to lead a normal life, it is necessary to develop problem-solving skills in slow learners so that they can overcome obstacles in their lives.

How to enhance Problem-Solving Skills of slow learners:

- **Puzzles or Games:** To stimulate the brain of slow learners and develop problem-solving techniques, logic puzzles and other games should be practiced.
- **Participate in Yoga:** The combination of physical awareness, breathing and meditation required during yoga practice has been shown to greatly enhance cognitive ability.
- **Use Mind Maps to Help Visualize the Problem:** Mind maps can help focus on the mind, rejuvenate the brain, increase thinking ability, develop old thinking and reflection, and generate more ideas for solutions.
- **Positive Feedback:** Be sure to provide feedback to slow learners to help them develop a solution to the problem.
- **Ask Open-Ended Questions:** Try using open-ended questions and hints so that the mental capacity of slow learners is developed.
- **Use Hints:** Help students with hints; do not solve the problem, but let them solve the problem on their own.

In all these ways, the ability to solve the problem of slow learners can be increased; this increases their confidence. And this confidence develops leadership abilities in them.

Leadership Skills

Leadership skills are an important factor in making informed decisions about the work and objectives of any organization. Leadership skills include the ability to represent effectively, motivate group members, communicate effectively and solve problems appropriately. Other aspects of leadership include honesty, confidence, commitment, and professionalism.

How to enhance leadership quality in slow learners:

- **Deliver Leadership Lessons:** Provide information to students about what leadership is. And why is it valuable in their career?
- **Involve them in Extracurricular Activities too:** Extracurricular activities allow leadership in slow learners. Make small groups of students and give them small tasks so that they can develop accountability and leadership abilities. Encourage them to improve the quality of leadership.
- **Give them Space:** When students are given leadership opportunities, they learn to work independently; so, give them the freedom to struggle and work accordingly.
- **Provide some Good Examples:** Example of any leader, politician, actor, or any person who has positive leadership qualities, may develop confidence in them. Their examples should be presented to slow learners, so that they can be motivated and encouraged.
- **Give them Group Projects:** One of the best ways to teach this skill to learners is through group projects. Group projects develop leadership skills in them.

The strategies needed to develop leadership skills in slow learners are effective communication skills, enthusiasm, focus on goals, getting to know other people, identifying and accepting responsibilities, mentorship, and problem-solving ability, adopting a positive attitude, improving negative attitude. Leadership skills not only help slow learners achieve their desired academic goals, but they are also able to enhance their professional skills and sustain their lives in a proper way.

Empathy

Empathy is the capability to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within and, the ability to put oneself in the position of other. A successful relationship with each person and society is necessary for cognition. Without empathy, our interactions with others will be like walking in a straight line. In this we have to see ourselves instead of others. It can improve social interaction, in particular, in situations of racial or cultural differences. It can encourage sensitive behaviour, love, care, and tolerance towards people.

How to cultivate Empathy for Learning:

- Practice role playing to increase empathy and engage slow learners in community service.
- Pay more attention to non-cognitive skills.
- Try to promote emotional literacy and capacity.

- Develop the ability to live in the community and understand the feelings of the members.
- Teachers can be good role models. Teachers can improve empathy in relationships.
- Teach them to see the other side.
- Assign learners to slow tasks.
- Encourage acts of kindness to develop empathy.

Conclusion

Every student whether a slow learner or a fast learner has different learning styles. Slow-learning students often see school as a punishment, but classroom strategies increase these students' performance so that they can be successful in life. If their energy is given in right direction their confidence increases, and their quality improves. To improve quality, it is necessary to develop Life Skills in slow learners so that they can solve many problems in life. Life Skills education helps students, especially slow learners, solve day-to-day problems and thereby improve academic performance.

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