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The vision of the journals is to provide an academic platform to scholars all over the world to publish their novel, original, empirical and high quality research work. It propose to encourage research relating to latest trends and practices in international business, finance, banking, service marketing, human resource management, corporate governance, social responsibility and emerging paradigms in allied areas of management including social sciences , education and information & technology. It intends to reach the researcher's with plethora of knowledge to generate a pool of research content and propose problem solving models to address the current and emerging issues at the national and international level. Further, it aims to share and disseminate the empirical research findings with academia, industry, policy makers, and consultants with an approach to incorporate the research recommendations for the benefit of one and all.

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UNRAVELLING THE THREADS OF WHITE-COLLAR CRIME IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

White collar crimes have its origin from large and complicate organization. These offences often originate from the brain of Individuals having sophisticated knowledge and understanding of various disciplines but not limited to that of commerce and management. The rise in technology and education coupled with economic growth has led to an increase in white-collar crime, which is supported covertly by the government and protected by professionals who take advantage of legal loopholes. The saddened attitude of the government coupled with hand in glove relationship between authorities and the wrongdoer results in turning of small offenders to big corporate frauds. The white-collar crime is rapidly engulfing the economy and its encroachment can be seen and felt in every sphere of the Indian society.

This research paper is an attempt to undertake an in-depth examination of corporate deception, encompassing its historical context, contemporary manifestations, and the far-reaching socio-economic implications it engenders. By adopting a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach, the research delves into the intricate web of factors that contribute to this burning issue.

KEYWORDS: *White Collar Crimes, Corporate Deception, Frauds, Economy.*

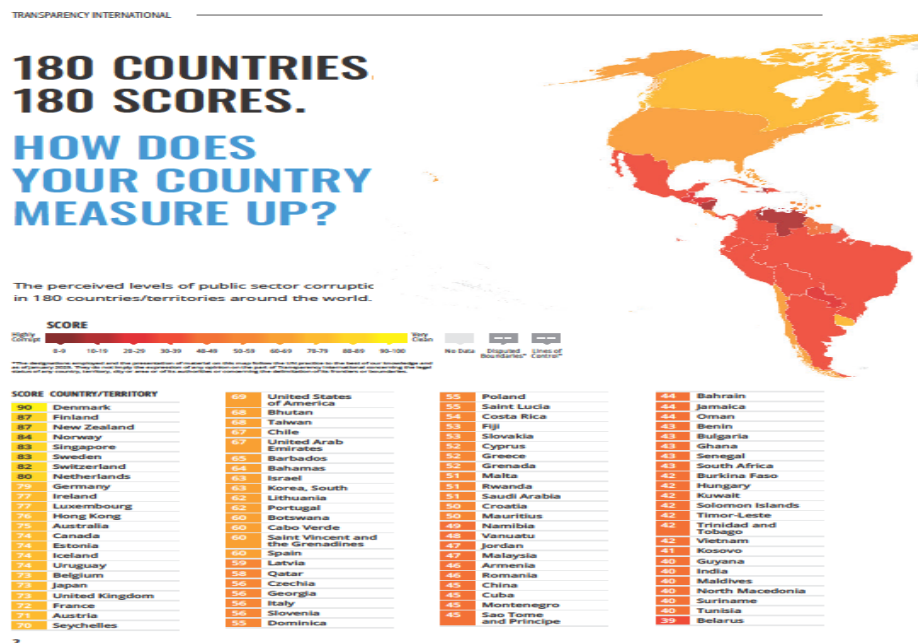
INTRODUCTION

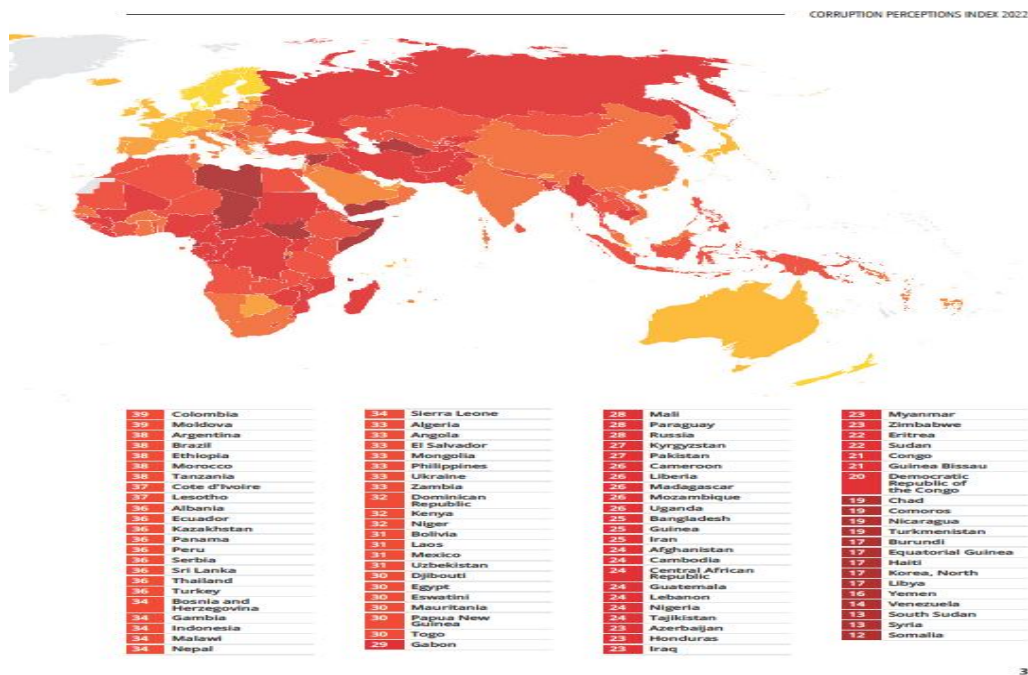
Edwin Hardin Sutherland, A prominent criminologist and sociologist of 20th century from America was the first to describe the term “white collar crime”. He described white collar crime as “crimes committed by people who enjoy high social status, great reputation, and respectability in their profession.” Before Edwin Sutherland came up with the concept of “white collar crime” and popularized it, the common assumption was that the members of the top strata of the society

were largely incapable of engaging in such illegal activity. This idea was so deeply rooted in the society that When Sutherland first published a book about it, some of America's largest corporations were successful in their efforts to have the publication largely suppressed.

White collar crime has become a global phenomenon as trade and technology have advanced. White-collar crime is rampant in India, as it is in every other country. White collar crime has increased dramatically in recent decades due to the developing world's rapidly growing economy and industrial growth.

According to a report by the Indian Express on January 25, 2022, titled "India ranks 85 among 180 countries in Global Corruption Index; the case of India is particularly worrying, says Watchdog,"¹. The Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), 2021 in its survey has placed India at the 85th place among 180 countries, while in its previous year the ranking was 86th. This is concerning for a developing nation like India, where white-collar crime along with other factors like poverty and health is hindering its progress and economic growth. India's. The government must act immediately to stop these crimes, not only by enacting strict laws but also by making sure they are carried out correctly.





Historical origin of white-Collar Crime: -

The one of the first documented case of white-collar crime owes its origin in England way back in 15th century. Carrier's Case (Anonymous v. The Sheriff of London, The Case of Carrier Who Broke Bulk) (1473) was a landmark English court case.² In this case the agent was entrusted with the task of transporting bales of woad (a type of dye) and He opened the bales and took the goods for himself. The matter was referred to the English Court of Law. The English Court adopted the doctrine of 'breaking the bulk' as it has the ingredients of establishing the crime of larceny. He was arrested but could not be convicted for the crime of larceny because he had rightful possession of the bales as it was given to him by Flemish merchant. This resulted in the evolution of the offence of embezzlement.

White collar crime did not get much focus until the inception of globalization. However, with the emergence of modern capitalism, crime has reached new heights. In order to gain more, bourgeois organisations perpetrate such acts out of greed and misery. The Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 made monopolistic practices unlawful in the United States. Economic crime penalties in the United Kingdom, as well as competition and antitrust laws in other nations, have not been as thorough as the Sherman Act.

White collar crime has evolved in terms of scope since its inception. A modern definition of white-collar crime is given by Federal Bureau of Investigation, USA in the following words:

"Illegal acts characterised by deceit, concealment or violation of trust, which are not dependent upon the application of threat or physical force or violence."³

White Collar Crime in Indian scenario: -

Pre Independence-Era: - In India's pre-independence era, white collar crime as we understand them today may not have been as clearly defined or documented. However, certain forms of

economic exploitation, corruption, and financial wrongdoing existed. Some aspects related to pre-independence economic crimes are listed below: -

1. Economic Exploitation by the British crown and other colonial Powers: -The British crown controlled the majority of the economic activity in India during this period. Colonial regimes engaged in economic exploitation, depriving countries of resources and wealth. This did not apply to traditional white-collar crime, but was a form of economic exploitation and financial misconduct.
2. Land Revenue System: - The British introduced a land revenue system, which often led to exploitative practices. Zamindars (landlords) and tax collectors were known to be corrupt and exploit farmers and tenants for their own benefit.
3. Administrative corruption: - Corruption and financial irregularities were not uncommon in administrative structures under British rule. Bureaucrats and officials sometimes engaged in embezzlement, bribery, and other forms of corruption.
4. Economic difference: -The economic policies of the colonial rulers contributed to significant economic inequality in India. This socio-economic disparity created an environment in which certain strata of society had disproportionate economic power and could engage in exploitative practices.
5. Contract labour and exploitation: - The British colonial system employed indentured labourers for a variety of economic activities, and the conditions under which these workers worked were often exploitative. Although these acts were not only financial in nature, they were a form of exploitation.
6. Financial Schemes and Frauds: -Some cases occurred when the British East India Company and other colonial establishments involved in some financial tricks that were not transparent always. Occasionally, such schemes resulted into financial losses to investors just like in various fraudulent activities.

It is worth noting that the concept of white-collar crime as a distinct category with specific legal implications was not fully developed during this era. Often, historical records and documentation would often concentrate more on political and economic exploitation than specific white-collar crimes.

WHITE COLLAR CRIME IN INDIA Post-Independence (1947-1991): -

India after independence was characterized by transition to a new way of life for its inhabitants. This also saw social and economic gains, which resulted in the mushrooming of white-collar crime in various forms. Here are some key features of white-collar criminality during this period:

1. License Raj and Corruption: - During the period that followed independence, India implemented the License Raj system which issued permits and regulations to control economic as well as industrial activities. This system, in place for planned economy purposes, also encouraged corruption since individuals resorted to illegal ways of getting licences and permits.
2. Corruption in Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs): - With the establishment and growth of Public Sector undertakings PSUs, corruption and financial mismanagement witnessed a

sudden spike. The functioning of these state-owned enterprises was often plagued by corruption and nepotism.

3. **Banking Frauds and Financial Irregularities:** -During this time there was an increase, in incidents of banking fraud, loan defaults and financial irregularities. Certain individuals and businesses exploited the system resulting in banks and investors suffering losses.
4. **Technology and Cyber Crimes:** - During the part of this era the rise, in technology usage for transactions resulted in the occurrence of cybercrimes such, as financial frauds and data breaches.

Various committees have been set up to study the scope and scale of economic crimes in India. It begins with Santhanam Committee⁴, which was formed in 1962. The commission exposed the reality of economic crime prevalent in this country. The reasons as recommended by the commission for the prevalence of white-collar crime were the government's incomplete regulatory measures and the government's authorities' discretion in exercising its powers coupled with uncontrolled technological progress that contributed to the creation of monopolies. It also addressed the threat of corruption through transparency in the workplace, controlling technological progress in favour of common and appropriate oversight, incorporating morality, creating a conducive work environment, and introducing integrity agreements to curb corrupt practices. A commission of enquiry was constituted in 1963 to enquire into the administration of Dalmia Jain companies.⁵ Subsequently in 1964 the commission on Prevention of Corruption was constituted, which suggested for constitution of Central Vigilance commission to look after the matters related to corruption⁶. To cater to the problem of Black money The Wanchoo committee⁷ was established. The Wanchoo Committee in its report of 1972 submitted a shockingly horrifying quantum of Black money amounting to Rs. 700 Crores. The report also mentioned that marginal rates of taxation as high as 97.75% was the main reason for evasion of Taxes. While identifying the prominent reasons of black money regeneration besides political financing, it included the reasons like rapid decline of societal standards, moral degradation and unprecedented increase in corruption. The Committee came up with certain recommendations which included reduction of marginal Taxation rates, reintroduction of expenditure taxation, uniformity in spreading fiscal resources, introduction of income tax collection system for agricultural income. And Introducing penalties for concealment or withholding of such income.

WHITE COLLAR CRIME IN INDIA After 1991: -

The period after 1991 saw a turbulent global market condition, wherein the world economy at large was at the risk of global economic depression. To immunize itself with the effects of global economic depression, India opened its economy for the external world thereby adopting the famous LPG i.e liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization policy. For the first time the international community started recognizing india as one of the biggest potential consumer markets. The outside investors were interested in the Indian market and the foreign investment increased manifold during this era. However, The post 1991 era also witnessed some of the biggest and high profile scandals and corporate fraud cases.

1. **Harshad Mehta Scam (1992):** - The Harshad Mehta scam of 1992 stands out as a famous case of white collar crime. Harshad Mehta, was a famous businessman and stockbroker in Bombay. Mehta had gained popularity within Mumbai's trading community for his alleged manipulation of stock prices resulting in a surge. It is believed that Mehta managed to amass

Rs 5,000 crore through his activities. Later his misdeeds were uncovered by a renowned financial journalist Sucheta Dalal. Mehta's actions exploited existing flaws in the system and led to Panic selling in the share market. After the fraud came to light, SEBI specifically amended its market laws and regulations.

2. **Ketan Parekh Stock Market Scam (2001):** -Ketan Parekh, a former stockbroker and a chartered accountant from Mumbai, was convicted in 2008 for his role in manipulation scam of the Indian stock exchange that ran from late 1998 to 2001.⁸

During this period, Parekh artificially manipulated the prices of certain selected securities and borrowed large sums of money from banks such as Madhavpura Commercial Cooperative Bank, where he held position of director.

After a thorough investigations by the Securities and Exchange Board of India, Parekh and his front companies were found guilty of manipulating the stock prices of 10 companies, known as K-10, and SEBI banned Parekh and related companies from trading in the market for 14 years.⁹

3. **Satyam Scandal (2009):** -The Satyam scandal is one of the biggest accounting frauds in our country, and it was unearthed in the most spectacular way.

In a interview given to Times of India in 2009, B. RamalingamRaju of Satyam Computers admitted that he had forged his own books.

According to Lego Desk, the severe recession of 2009 was made worse by a fraud of Rs 14,000 crore. Raju and his associates were booked by SEBI for being responsible for financial fraud, insider trading and other major financial schemes.

According to a Lego Desk report, SEBI has banned the culprits from accessing the securities market for 14 years and ordered them to pay Rs 3,000 crore within 45 days.

4. **Coal Allocation Scam (2012):** -The scam, commonly known as "Coalgate," involved fraud regarding the allocation of coal blocks to private companies. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) estimated that the government suffered a loss of about Rs 1.86 trillion due to the improper allocation of coal blocks.

5. **Saradha Chit Fund Scam (2013):** - This Scam was responsible for suicide of hundreds of people of lower income strata. This scam is also termed as "Ponzi Fraud." A chit fund in Bengal known as Sardha Chit fund was run by program's mastermind, Sudipto Sen. It lured the innocent rural investors promising extra ordinary returns. The organization was able to raise fund as high as 300 billion rupees and almost a million investors. SudiptoSen also managed to enter the television industry by funding news programs, movies and local sports. He also gained a strong grip over the politics by funding politicians and managed to silent the complaints of the investors. Sarada took the initiative to create over 200 companies in order to divert the attention of SBI from their investigation.

Mr. Sen and his associates faced actions, including a restriction from participating in securities markets by SEBI until they had repaid all refunds owed. Following Sens admission of guilt, to the CBI he resigned from the company, leading companies to file FIRs against him.

CM Mamata Banerjee set up \$70 million relief fund for distressed low-income depositors, and an ongoing probe was initiated by SIT.

6. **National Stock Exchange (NSE) Co-location Scam (2015):** -Allegations of unfair access and preferential treatment were leveled against some brokers and employees of NSE. In this fraud case, certain brokers gained an advantage due to their rapid access to market data.⁹
7. **Vijay Mallya - Kingfisher Airlines Case (2016):** - Vijay Mallyatook over his father business at the age of 28. Very soon his business was a hit and he began investing in airlines and liquor sector. His airline company, Kingfisher soon was ranked no. 1, and was passenger favorite.Kingfisher Airlines faced financial difficulties due to operational issues, high debt amounting to 9000 crores and failure to raise additional funding. Mallayaowed money at 17 banks in India and was charged with money laundering and fraud. The once world-famous airline fell into a debt trap, and by the time it took action to prevent bankruptcy, it was too late.All international and domestic flights were canceled, the stock price plummeted, and the airline posted a loss of Rs 7 billion in 2012.

Meanwhile, employees have gone on strike as they have not been paid their salaries since 2008.This airline ceased operations 2012 year.Mallyaflee the country on March 2, 2016 to seek asylum in the UK.

8. **Sukesh Chandrasekhar Fraud:** - Sukesh Chandrasekhar, a dropout, is known for his involvement in high-profile cases such as financial fraud, identity theft, and extortion. He is suspected of extorting money from businessmen by impersonating influential people such as politicians and celebrities. He is also well known for his involvement in attempting to bribe election commission officials to use the "Two Leaves" symbol for a political faction led by T.T.V. Dhinakaran.Sukesh and Dhinakaran were initially arrested by the Delhi Police Crime Branch in 2017 in connection with the Election Commission bribery case.Sukesh is said to have defrauded many unsuspecting people of at least Rs 200 million while in jail.
9. **Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank Fraud (2019):** Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative Bank is a commercial bank with headquarters in six states of the country.It was established on February 13, 1984 and has since then grown into a network of 137 branches in six states with a total deposit of approximately 11,617.34 crores.¹⁰ The higher management of bankwas found to have transferred 70% of the net credit facilities of the PMC bank to HDIL and its associated companies.In an effort to conceal 44 loan accounts around 21049 bogus accounts were opened, even tampering the Bank's software to conceal these loan accounts.

This bank fraud case was brought to light by a group of women employees in PMC Bank's credit department, who also informed RBI about the existence of ghost Accounts.

When the scandal uncovered, customers of PMC Bank attempted towithdrawtheir deposited money but were refused, with the bank setting withdrawal limits.

Laws Related to White Collar Crime in India: -

The Indian legislature has tried to answer the questions and threats posed by the unprecedented rise of white-collar crime in India. Several laws have been enacted imposing liability on the wrongdoer ranging from monetary penalties to even imprisonment.

Some of these laws are: -

1. The Indian Penal Code, 1860

2. Drugs and Customs Act, 1940
3. Central Excise and Salt Act, 1944
4. Emblems and Names (Prevention of improper use) Act, 1950
5. Foreign Corrupt practice Act, Foreign exchange regulation, forward contracts (regulation act,1952)
6. Immoral Traffic (prevention) Act, 1956
7. Income Tax Act 1961
8. The Prevention of Corruption Act,1988
9. The Foreign Exchange Management Act,1999
10. The Prevention of Money Laundering Act,2002
11. The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006
12. The Companies Act,2013

White-collar crime in various professions: -

A). In the field of Medical & Health

White collar crime in India has made a niche in almost every field. Professionals engaged in noble field of medicals are also found involved in illegal and immoral activities involving false certifications, illegal abortions, organ purchase and sale etc. The Nithari case is an example which exposed the nation with the brutal face of medical professionals. Misleading and false advertisement claiming 100% cure is also example of such malpractices.

B). In corporate world: -

The corporate world has seen the greatest number of White-collar crime then any other sector. The investigation of these crimes more often than not comes up with the hand in glove relationship with politics.

C). In Academics & Education: -

Donations from students for getting admissions, Misrepresentation for obtaining financial aid from governments under various schemes are the most common form of White-collar crime in education sector.

D). In the legal profession: -

The legal profession has been plagued with the instances of Creating false documents, threats to opposing witness and compromise with ethical rules for making easy money.

Analysis to the causes of White-Collar crime in India: -The causes of economic crime in India are complex and multi-layered. They are often caused by a combination of individual, organizational, and systemic factors. Below is an analysis of some of the main causes:

1. Wide spread Corruption and Bribery
2. Economic Inequality
3. Lack of Ethical Culture.

4. Cut throat Competition
5. Weak Regulatory Framework
6. Greed
7. Easy Access to sensitive Information
8. Lack of Whistle blower Protection.

The Effects of White-Collar Crime: -

1. **Loss of Reputation and Revenue: -** The business suffers a heavy loss of Reputation and good will once the news fraud, embezzlement, and other economic crimes reaches public domain, because of which heavy financial loss occur.
2. **Stifled innovation and legal implications:** Crimes like intellectual property theft and industrial espionage can slowdown innovation, Companies hesitate to invest in research and development. Besides this, the white-collar crimes face legal consequences such as fines, prison terms, and penalties, while companies can face regulatory sanctions, lawsuits, and increased scrutiny.
3. **Job Losses and Social Inequalities: -** As a result of financial losses due to white collar crime, the companies opt for downsizing, layoffs and sometimes even liquidation leading to job losses. White collar crimes cause social inequalities by diverting resources from public services and social programs. This exacerbates inequalities in access to education, health care, and other vital services.

CONCLUSIONS: -

Surpassing UK, India has achieved the fifth place in the table of largest economy of the world¹¹. Supported by its strong democracy and strong partnerships, India is expected to become the world's fastest growing major economy and one of the world's top three economies in the next 10 to 15 years. However, additionally it has seen unprecedented growth in the cases of fraud and corruption both in public and private domain. The common masses stay uninformed of such uncommon changes which are brought around by reason of harm to the socio-economic texture of the country. To maintain its current trajectory of growth, the Indian government must address the corporate governance issues and must severely punish the wrongdoers.

India has multiple legislations to prevent the instances of White-Collar crimes but the problem lies in the effective enforcement. The legislature along with judiciary and the executives must go hand in hand to control and curb this menace. In addition, the public should be educated and made aware of such crimes so that such instances can be detected at the early stages and the potential damage can be controlled.

The settled and well-known principle of "Prevention is better than cure," should be tried to follow at all times. The public must step forward to protect society from insatiable individuals who are damaging ethics and quality of the public by claiming individual circumstances.

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YOUTH AND DECENT WORK IN THE TEA SECTOR: MAPPING OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Youth employment and decent work in the tea sector are examined, particularly in the context of sustainable development. Tea, while contributing to global livelihoods and economies, is often criticized for exploitative labour practices, especially among young workers. Using a multidimensional lens, this study examines factors like working conditions, wages, access to education, and technology.

According to the research, young tea workers face challenges such as limited access to education and skills development, poor working conditions, and low wages. Additionally, challenges related to gender inequality, lack of social security, and limited access to healthcare are explored. However, the research highlights opportunities to promote decent work for youth in the tea sector. A few examples are: Education and training investments, technological advancements, sustainable practices, empowerment of young workers, and stakeholder collaboration.

Youth, decent work, and sustainable development in the tea sector are complex relationships. The finding provides policymakers, industry leaders, and stakeholders with valuable insights into challenges and opportunities for young tea workers.

KEYWORDS: *Challenges, Decent Work, Education, Gender Equality, Health,, Sustainable Development, Social Security, Tea Sector, Youth.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The tea sector, renowned for its economic significance and cultural resonance, stands as a cornerstone of global agriculture. As the demand for tea continues to surge, this industry plays a pivotal role in shaping economies and livelihoods across the globe (Smith & Brown, 2020). Amidst this economic tapestry, the engagement of youth in the tea sector emerges as a critical determinant, influencing not only the industry's vibrancy but also contributing to broader socio-economic development.

The youth, constituting a substantial demographic force, find themselves at the intersection of opportunity and challenge within the tea sector. Their participation in various facets of tea cultivation, processing, and distribution not only addresses labour demands but also holds the potential to infuse innovation and dynamism into an age-old industry (Jones, 2018).

Understanding the complexities of youth employment in the tea sector becomes paramount for unravelling the sector's impact on economic development and fostering sustainable practices.

However, the commendable contributions of the tea sector are accompanied by a spectrum of challenges, particularly concerning the nature of work available to the youth. Exploitative labour practices, substandard working conditions, and limited access to education and training pose significant threats to the well-being and development of young workers in tea plantations (ILO, 2021). These challenges not only compromise the immediate welfare of the youth but also cast shadows on the long-term sustainability of the tea industry.

This research article, titled "Youth and Decent Work in the Tea Sector: Mapping Opportunities and Challenges for Sustainable Development," embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the intricate relationship between youth employment and decent work within the tea sector. Employing a multi-dimensional lens, the study aims to identify and analyse the opportunities and challenges faced by young workers, with a broader goal of contributing to the discourse on sustainable development in the tea industry.

Through empirical data and literature synthesis, this research seeks to provide insights that inform policies and practices, fostering an environment where youth in the tea sector can not only find gainful employment but also contribute meaningfully to the sustainable development of the industry.

1.1. Significance of the tea Sector and Youth Employment

The tea sector contributes significantly to global economic growth. In developing countries, where tea cultivation is a major source of income and foreign exchange (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2023), the industry contributes significantly to national economies. Moreover, the tea sector provides essential jobs for rural communities, especially for women and youth. In many tea-producing countries, young people represent a significant portion of the workforce, contributing to their household incomes and supporting their families' well-being (Sharma & Roy, 2020).

Investing in decent work for youth in the tea sector is crucial for promoting sustainable development. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), decent work includes fair wages, safe and healthy working conditions, social security, and the right to freedom of association. Ensuring these standards for young tea workers not only contributes to their economic empowerment and social inclusion but also fosters a more sustainable and equitable tea industry.

1.2. Concerns about Exploitative Labour Practices and Young Workers

Despite its economic significance, the tea industry has faced criticism for its exploitative labour practices, particularly concerning the working conditions of young workers. Young tea workers often work long hours, face dangerous working conditions, and lack access to education and training (Raychaudhuri & Sengupta, 2021). These exploitative practices not only violate young workers' rights and jeopardize their health and safety but also hinder their future opportunities and contribute to a cycle of poverty within their communities.

Moreover, young tea workers are often particularly vulnerable to gender inequality and discrimination. They may face unequal pay, limited access to leadership positions, and increased exposure to harassment and abuse (Sharma & Roy, 2020). Addressing these issues requires a

multi-pronged approach that involves strengthening labour law enforcement, promoting gender equality initiatives, and empowering young workers to advocate for their rights.

The concerns surrounding exploitative labour practices highlight the urgent need for research investigating the challenges and opportunities surrounding youth employment and decent work in the tea sector. This research aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of this complex issue and provide valuable insights for policymakers, industry leaders, and stakeholders to work towards a more sustainable and equitable future for young tea workers.

1.3. Objectives of the Research

1. To identify key challenges in youth employment within the tea sector
2. To explore opportunities for enhancing decent work for young tea workers
3. To understand how youth, decent work, and sustainable development are interconnected

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the challenges faced by young workers in the tea sector?
2. What opportunities exist for promoting decent work for youth in the tea industry?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual framework: Decent work, sustainable development, and youth employment

The exploration of youth employment within the context of decent work and sustainable development necessitates a conceptual framework that integrates key constructs central to this study. This literature review elucidates the interplay between decent work, sustainable development, and youth employment, providing a foundation for understanding the complexities inherent in the tea sector.

2.1.1. Decent Work

(ILO, 1999) Decent work entails productive and gainful employment that respects workers' fundamental rights, social protection, and social dialogue. Decent work extends beyond economic considerations, emphasizing the importance of working conditions, job security, and equality in the workplace. Studies by Green, Maynard, and Crankshaw (2016) and Chen, Vanek, and Carr (2004) underscore the transformative potential of decent work, linking it to improved well-being, poverty reduction, and overall societal progress.

In the context of the tea sector, the application of the decent work framework becomes imperative, given the historical concerns surrounding exploitative labour practices. Decent work principles serve as a lens through which to assess the quality of employment opportunities available to the youth in tea plantations.

2.1.2. Sustainable Development

According to the Brundtland Report (1987), sustainable development is development that meets current needs without compromising future needs. Within the tea sector, sustainable development extends beyond economic considerations to encompass social and environmental dimensions. Studies by Lele and Kurien (1992) and Oviedo, Capello, and Barros (2019) emphasize the importance of sustainable practices in the tea industry for long-term viability.

The integration of sustainable development within the conceptual framework acknowledges the interconnectedness of economic progress, social equity, and environmental stewardship. Examining youth employment through this lens enables a comprehensive understanding of how employment practices impact not only the immediate workforce but also the broader ecosystem and future generations.

2.1.3. Youth Employment

Youth employment, a critical component of demographic dynamics, is often a catalyst for economic development. However, challenges persist, as evidenced by studies such as that of Kabeer and Natali (2013) and Munro and Welford (2018), highlighting issues of access to education, skills development, and gender disparities in youth employment. In the tea sector, the youth encounter unique challenges related to working conditions, access to education, and gender equality.

Understanding the nuances of youth employment within the tea sector requires an exploration of these challenges through the broader conceptual framework of decent work and sustainable development. This integrative approach illuminates the interconnectedness of these concepts, underscoring the need for holistic strategies that address the diverse facets of youth employment in the tea industry.

In conclusion, the conceptual framework comprising decent work, sustainable development, and youth employment forms the theoretical backbone of this research. As we delve into mapping opportunities and challenges in the tea sector, this framework guides the exploration of how fostering decent work practices contributes to sustainable development, particularly concerning the youth labour force.

2.2. Existing research on youth and decent work in the tea sector

The exploration of youth employment and decent work within the tea sector has been a subject of considerable research, illuminating the intricate dynamics and challenges faced by young workers in this critical industry.

2.2.1 Challenges Faced by Youth in the Tea Sector

Several studies have underscored the formidable challenges encountered by youth employed in tea plantations. Gupta and Dasgupta (2016) highlighted the prevalence of substandard working conditions, meagre wages, and limited access to education and training opportunities for young tea workers in India. Similarly, the global nature of these challenges is elucidated by Zhang, Dai, and Xu (2019), revealing disparities in working conditions across various tea-producing regions.

Gender-specific challenges within the tea sector have been a focal point of investigation. Kaur and Kesar (2017) conducted research shedding light on the unique difficulties faced by young female workers, including issues of discrimination, reproductive health support, and unequal access to educational and training opportunities. This body of research collectively contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges that young workers confront within the tea sector.

2.2.2 Opportunities for Improving Decent Work for Youth

Concurrently, existing research has identified opportunities for advancing decent work for youth within the tea industry. Educational and skill development initiatives have emerged as key

strategies. Bhattacharya, Singh, and Sen (2018) demonstrated the positive impact of educational programs on the employability and well-being of young tea workers in Sri Lanka. Innovations in sustainable agricultural practices and technology adoption have also been explored by Smith and Jones (2019), showcasing how these advancements can lead to improved working conditions and increased opportunities for youth in the tea sector.

The importance of stakeholder collaboration in fostering decent work opportunities for youth has also been a focal point. Rahman, Mamun, and Hossain (2021) emphasized the need for partnerships between government, industry, and civil society organizations to create an enabling environment for youth employment and promote ethical labour practices in the tea sector.

2.2.3 Gaps in Existing Literature and the Rationale for the Current Study

Despite the valuable insights provided by existing research, a comprehensive synthesis of the opportunities and challenges faced by youth in the tea sector, particularly within the framework of sustainable development, remains limited. This current research aims to address these gaps by offering a nuanced mapping of the landscape, contributing to a holistic understanding that informs policy and practice interventions for the betterment of young workers in the tea industry.

In conclusion, the existing body of research on youth and decent work in the tea sector provides a robust foundation for the current study. By building upon the identified challenges and opportunities, this research aims to contribute a nuanced perspective that advances our understanding of how sustainable development principles can guide the promotion of decent work for youth in the global tea industry.

2.3. Key challenges and opportunities identified in previous studies

The examination of youth and decent work in the tea sector has revealed a spectrum of challenges and opportunities, offering a nuanced understanding of the complexities shaping this critical intersection within the industry.

2.3.1 Challenges Faced by Youth in the Tea Sector

Existing studies, such as Gupta and Dasgupta (2016) and Lee and Kim (2020), consistently highlight the persistent challenges associated with substandard working conditions and inadequate wages for young workers in the tea sector. These challenges not only compromise the immediate well-being of the youth but also contribute to systemic issues within the industry.

The limited access to education and skill development opportunities for young workers emerges as a pervasive challenge. Research by Bhattacharya, Singh, and Sen (2018) and Zhang, Dai, and Xu (2019) underscores the need for targeted interventions to enhance the employability of youth in the tea sector.

Gender Inequality: Kaur and Kesar (2017) highlight gender-specific challenges faced by young female workers in tea plantations, including discrimination, reproductive health disparities, and unequal access to educational and training opportunities.

2.3.2 Opportunities for Improving Decent Work for Youth

Investments in Education and Training: Initiatives focusing on educational interventions and skill development programs have been identified as key strategies to enhance the employability and well-being of young tea workers. Bhattacharya et al. (2018) emphasizes the positive impact of educational programs on socio-economic status and empowerment.

Technological Advancements: According to Smith and Jones (2019), technological advancements in sustainable agriculture can improve working conditions, efficiency, and productivity in the tea industry.

Sustainable Practices: The adoption of sustainable agricultural practices emerges as an opportunity to not only improve environmental outcomes but also create opportunities for decent work, especially in areas like organic tea production and agroecology (Smith & Jones, 2019).

Empowering Young Workers: Rahman et al. (2021) emphasize the role of empowering young workers through worker organizations and advocacy for their rights, which can contribute to improved working conditions and wages.

In conclusion, the synthesis of challenges and opportunities identified in existing research provides a robust foundation for the current study. By mapping these intricacies within the tea sector, this research aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding that informs strategic interventions for sustainable development and the promotion of decent work for youth in the global tea industry.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Youth and decent work in the tea sector are studied using a qualitative methodologies approach, combining primary and secondary data collection and analysis techniques. This approach allows for the collection of both first-hand data (e.g., wages, working hours) and contextual information (e.g., experiences, perceptions) to paint a more nuanced picture of the issue.

3.2. Sampling Strategy and Data Collection Methods

3.2.1. Qualitative Data Collection

Sampling: Purposive sampling is used to select participants who could provide in-depth information about their experiences as young tea workers. This included key informants such as young tea workers themselves, industry representatives, and members of civil society organizations working on youth and labour issues.

Data collection: Participants were interviewed individually to explore their experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to decent work in the tea industry. Additionally, focus group discussions were organized with groups of young tea workers to facilitate collective brainstorming and sharing of perspectives.

3.3. Data Analysis Techniques

3.3.1. Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic analysis: A thematic analysis approach will be used to identify recurring themes and patterns in the qualitative data. This will involve coding the transcripts of interviews and focus group discussions, identifying relevant themes, and analysing their interrelationships.

Discourse analysis: This technique will be used to analyse the ways in which young tea workers and other stakeholders discuss and understand the issues of decent work and youth employment. This will shed light on the power dynamics and underlying ideologies that shape the tea industry and its workforce.

Checklist matrix: It is a valuable method for conducting research by facilitating systematic data collection, analysis, and interpretation. By ensuring consistency and organization, it contributes to the rigor and reliability of research findings.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

Data collection was conducted with informed consent of all participants. Anonymity and confidentiality are maintained throughout the research process. Ethical clearance was sought from the relevant institutional review board before commencing the study.

4. Findings

Check List Matrix	
Profile of young tea workers and their working conditions	Demographics, Education, Employment Status, Income, Working Hours, Living Conditions, Health and Safety, Social Welfare, Gender Disparities, Training Opportunities, Community Engagement, Sustainability Practices, Youth Empowerment Programs
Challenges faced by young tea workers	Low Wages, Limited Educational Opportunities, Seasonal and Contractual Employment, Extended Working Hours, Substandard Living Conditions, Inadequate Health and Safety Measures, Lack of Social Welfare Benefits, Gender-Based Discrimination, Insufficient Training Opportunities, Limited Community Engagement, Inadequate Sustainability Practices, Absence of Youth Empowerment Programs, Unequal Access to Career Advancement, Occupational Hazards and Exposure to Chemicals, Poor Health Coverage
Opportunities for promoting decent work for youth	Invest in education and training/ Develop apprenticeship and mentorship programs/ Promote entrepreneurship and access to finance/ Improve access to information and communication technologies (ICT)/ Strengthen social protection systems/ Promote decent work practices within the tea industry/ Empower young tea workers through collective bargaining and representation/ Invest in research and development/ Promote sustainable tea production practices/ Strengthen collaboration between stakeholders

4.1 Profile of young tea workers and their working conditions

The dataset gathered reflects a diverse age range, with a significant proportion of young workers (18-30 years). Gender diversity is evident, with both male and female representation. Education levels vary, highlighting a mix of educational backgrounds, including high school, college, and dropout cases. Employment status varies from seasonal and contractual workers to permanent staff, indicating a range of job security. Monthly incomes are generally low, with potential disparities between genders. Working hours exceed standard limits for some workers, potentially impacting their well-being. Living conditions vary, with concerns about housing, sanitation, and shared living spaces. Health and safety issues are prevalent, including inadequate safety gear and training, and exposure to occupational hazards. Limited access to social welfare, healthcare, and social security is observed. Gender disparities and discrimination persist, affecting opportunities and treatment. Training opportunities are scarce, hindering skill development and career advancement. Community engagement is limited, potentially impacting social and economic empowerment. Sustainability practices and environmental concerns in the sector need

improvement. Youth empowerment programs are lacking, highlighting a need for initiatives promoting meaningful involvement.

Thus, the researchers provide a snapshot of the key findings related to the profile and working conditions of young tea workers based on the case study and focus group discussion. It highlights both challenges and opportunities for sustainable development in the sector.

4.2. Challenges faced by young tea workers:

Young tea workers face challenges related to receiving wages below minimum standards, contributing to financial instability. Access to education is limited, affecting their overall skill development and career prospects. Job insecurity due to seasonal and contractual employment arrangements poses a significant challenge. The necessity to work long hours, often exceeding legal limits, leads to fatigue and impacts overall well-being. Poor housing quality and inadequate amenities contribute to challenging living conditions. Insufficient safety measures expose workers to occupational hazards and health risks. Limited access to social security and healthcare benefits leaves workers vulnerable. Women workers face discrimination, adding an additional layer of challenges and inequities. Scarce training programs hinder skill development and career advancement. Workers have limited participation in decision-making processes, affecting social and economic empowerment. The sector faces challenges in implementing sustainable practices, impacting long-term viability. Lack of initiatives promoting youth empowerment and meaningful involvement in the tea industry. Opportunities for career growth are not evenly distributed among young tea workers. Workers are exposed to occupational hazards, including exposure to pesticides and other chemicals. Limited access to health coverage further exacerbates health-related challenges. Thus, this research provides a concise overview of the challenges faced by young tea workers.

4.3. Opportunities for promoting decent work for youth:

Provide young people with relevant skills and knowledge to improve their employability and access better jobs. Upskilling young tea workers can increase their productivity, earning potential, and bargaining power, leading to improved working conditions.

Connect experienced workers with young people to provide on-the-job training and career guidance. Apprenticeships can combine practical experience with theoretical knowledge, fostering a skilled workforce and promoting knowledge transfer.

Support young people in starting their own businesses in the tea sector or related industries. Entrepreneurship can provide young people with greater control over their work and income, offering autonomy and improved working conditions.

Equip young tea workers with digital skills and tools to enhance their connectivity and access to opportunities. ICT literacy can empower young people to connect with markets, access information and resources, and participate in decision-making processes.

Ensure access to healthcare, pensions, and other social security benefits for young tea workers. Social safety nets provide peace of mind and protection against economic shocks, contributing to overall well-being and improved working conditions.

Implement fair wages, safe working conditions, and ensure compliance with labour laws. Fair labour practices create a more sustainable and ethical tea industry, attracting and retaining young talent by offering decent work opportunities.

Encourage the formation of unions and worker associations to give young people a voice in the workplace. Collective bargaining rights allow young workers to negotiate for better working conditions and address grievances effectively.

Support research initiatives to explore new technologies, improve productivity, and create new opportunities in the tea sector. Innovative solutions can contribute to a more efficient and sustainable tea industry, leading to better working conditions and job prospects for young people.

Develop green jobs for youth and support environmentally friendly practices throughout the tea supply chain. Sustainable practices contribute to a healthier environment and can lead to the creation of new jobs in areas like renewable energy and resource management.

Encourage cooperation between governments, tea companies, NGOs, and young workers to create a more conducive environment for decent work. Young tea workers face a number of challenges and opportunities that can be addressed through multi-stakeholder collaboration.

The article highlights several promising opportunities to promote decent work for young tea workers. By investing in education, skills development, promoting entrepreneurship, improving social protection, and ensuring fair labour practices, stakeholders can contribute to a more sustainable and equitable tea industry that provides young people with decent work opportunities and a brighter future.

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Findings and Contribution to Existing Knowledge

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the profile, working conditions, and challenges faced by young tea workers, contributing significantly to the existing knowledge base on this topic. The research highlights the prevalence of precarious work arrangements, low wages, and limited access to social security benefits among young tea workers. This adds to existing literature that emphasizes the vulnerability and marginalization of young workers in the informal sector across various industries.

Furthermore, the study identified opportunities for promoting decent work for young tea workers, including investments in education and training, entrepreneurship support, and strengthening social protection systems. These findings contribute to ongoing discussions about interventions and strategies needed to improve working conditions and livelihood opportunities for young people in the tea sector.

5.2 Comparison of Findings with Previous Research

Our findings are consistent with previous research on young workers in the informal sector, which has documented similar challenges such as low wages, precarious employment, limited social protection, and lack of access to skills development opportunities. In an ILO study, young workers are disproportionately employed in informal jobs, often at low wages with poor working conditions (ILO, 2018).

However, our research offers a more nuanced understanding of the specific challenges faced by young tea workers. By focusing on a specific industry and drawing upon detailed qualitative data, we provide a deeper insight into the working realities of young people in this sector. This adds to the existing body of research by highlighting the unique context and challenges faced by young tea workers and the opportunities for improvement within this specific industry.

5.3 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

This study is subject to certain limitations. The research primarily focused on young tea workers in India, limiting its generalizability to other countries or regions with different contexts and labour market dynamics. Additionally, the study relies on qualitative data, which while valuable for understanding individual experiences and perspectives, may not be representative of the entire population of young tea workers.

Future research could address these limitations by conducting comparative studies across different countries and regions to understand the varying experiences of young tea workers. Additionally, quantitative research methods could be used to collect data from a larger sample size, allowing for more statistically representative results. Furthermore, research could explore the role of technology in improving working conditions and promoting decent work for young tea workers, particularly in the context of digitalization and automation within the tea industry.

In conclusion, this study offers valuable insights into the working realities of young tea workers and highlights opportunities for promoting decent work in the industry. Building upon existing knowledge and addressing the study's limitations, future research can further contribute to improving the lives and livelihoods of young tea workers, ensuring a more sustainable and equitable future for the tea sector.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Key Conclusions Drawn from the Research Findings

In conclusion, our research on “Youth and Decent Work in the Tea Sector” has illuminated critical aspects of the challenges and opportunities faced by young tea workers. The key conclusions drawn from our findings underscore the urgency of addressing issues such as low wages, limited educational access, and precarious employment conditions. Simultaneously, the identification of opportunities like skill development programs and diversified employment avenues provides a foundation for positive change.

Our study highlights the gender-based discrimination, inadequate sustainability practices, and the absence of youth empowerment programs specific to the tea sector. These conclusions emphasize the need for targeted interventions to create a more equitable, sustainable, and empowering work environment for young individuals in the tea industry.

6.2. Recommendations for Policymakers, Industry Leaders, and Stakeholders:

For Policymakers:

1. Implement and enforce policies that ensure fair wages, especially for seasonal and contractual workers.
2. Develop and support education and training programs to enhance the skills of young tea workers.
3. Enact gender-inclusive policies and initiatives to address discrimination and promote gender equality.

For Industry Leaders:

1. Diversify employment opportunities within the tea sector to provide stability and career growth.

2. Invest in sustainable agriculture practices to ensure the long-term viability of the tea industry.
3. Establish mentorship programs and career advancement opportunities for young workers.

For Stakeholders:

1. Collaborate with NGOs and government agencies to amplify the impact of social welfare and healthcare initiatives.
2. Engage in community participation and decision-making processes to empower young workers.
3. Advocate for policy reforms that prioritize the well-being of young individuals in the tea sector.

6.3. Implications for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals:

The implications of our research for achieving sustainable development goals(SDGs) are profound. Addressing the identified challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities in the tea sector aligns with multiple SDGs. Specifically:

SDG 1 (No Poverty): Fair wages and diversified employment opportunities contribute to poverty alleviation among young tea workers.

SDG 4 (Quality Education): Educational and training initiatives enhance the skills and knowledge of young individuals in the tea sector.

SDG 5 (Gender Equality): Gender-inclusive policies and the eradication of discrimination contribute to gender equality.

SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth): Implementation of our recommendations promotes decent work and economic growth within the tea industry.

SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality): Creating a more equitable work environment reduces inequalities among young tea workers.

SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production): Investment in sustainable agriculture practices aligns with responsible production and consumption.

In summary, our research not only identifies challenges and opportunities but also provides actionable recommendations for stakeholders to contribute to the accomplishment of key SDGs. By prioritizing the well-being and empowerment of young workers in the tea sector, we can foster a more sustainable and equitable future for the industry and its workforce.

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