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**DECODING THE VIRAL LOOP: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF NETWORK EFFECTS IN DRIVING GROWTH OF PLATFORM-BASED BUSINESSES**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The platform-based companies have taken over the modern digital economy but a thorough empirical investigation is needed to unveil the mechanisms ensuring their sustainable growth. The research is focused on understanding the viral loop, together with the network effects that form its close bond, the challenges that it brings along, and the implications of these for the company's survival and prosperity in the future. The key finding discloses that success of a platform does not depend on the number of users but on their engagement quality. Growth that is sustainable is caused by a "spark" of immediate user value, an intentionally devised moment of success that triggers the network effect. The study points out to a significant trade-off between the aggressive user acquisition and the deep user engagement, and it also recognizes that viral loops are limited by natural saturation points. Hence, there is a need for a transition in the metrics used from deceptive "vanity metrics" (e.g., total downloads) to enlightening "vitality metrics" (e.g., user retention, interaction density) that correctly reflect the health of a platform. The researchers with this paper agree that the sustainable growth of platforms is not something that can happen once and for all but rather a continuous effect of the so-called "flywheel". Platform strategists will have to change their focus to product- and community-centric models that put the user experience above the short-term acquisition tactics which are, in fact, the very opposite of what academia views. The latter will have to alter its thinking and regard the network effects as a hidden potential that will only be released through intentional and user-focused design.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Viral Loops, Network Effects, Platform Business, Vitality Metrics, K-Factor, Sustainable Growth.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital landscape, the global economy has experienced a fundamental transition from traditional pipeline enterprises to platform-oriented models. With a valuation above \$5.5 trillion, platform-based enterprises account for approximately a third of worldwide economic transactions, driven by innovations in artificial intelligence, blockchain, and cloud infrastructure (**Marketplacer,2024**)<sup>1</sup>. These platforms, which enable value-generating interactions across multiple distinct user groups, have become predominant economic forces, with companies such as Amazon, Airbnb, and Meta transforming entire sectors(**Parker et al., 2016**)<sup>2</sup>.

The internet giants' triumphs were not only attributed to the technological innovations but also to their distinctively fast and effective expansion capacity. The scalability has rendered the traditional business expansion methods insufficient and led to organic, user-centered acquisition approaches which are now part of the product being used (**Evans & Schmalensee, 2016**)<sup>3</sup>. One of the main ingredients of this inherent growth strategy is the viral loop.

A VL is a cycle that is continuously flowing, where the current users are motivated to bring in new users, thus leading to an exponential surge that is quantified by the viral coefficient, or 'k-factor', which is the number of users that each current user brings in(**Chen, 2021**)<sup>4</sup>.This approach has worked wonderfully for new companies and digital platforms that need to get to the market quickly. Virality increases adoption, but its efficiency gains when it is coupled with network effects which are vital for user retention and sustainable value creation (**Parker et al., 2016**).

A VL fosters its platform growth through user referrals and feature-driven sharing. This approach not only cuts down on the costs of acquiring new users but also takes full advantage of the highest level of social trust (**Skok, 2011**)<sup>5</sup>; **Croll, 2025**)<sup>6</sup>.Unrestrained virality might be a double-edged sword, nevertheless, temporarily or permanently, it would cause operational problems, a decline in quality and user fatigue thus emphasizing the importance of the strategic management (**Goldenberg et al., 2001**)<sup>7</sup>; **Watts & Dodds, 2007**)<sup>8</sup>.

Concurrently, product and service are enhanced when there is new audiences in the market. This has a major influence in the virtual landscape as the marketers see this as a great interaction and strong point. At this point marketers are both explicit and implicit.(**Katz & Shapiro, 2025**)<sup>9</sup>; **Rochet & Tirole, 2003**)<sup>10</sup>; **Evans & Schmalensee, 2016**). Still in present there are struggle as multi homing and market permeation, that delays the procedure. Therefore it is a significant aspect to have quick integration with resilient development (**Cennamo & Santalo, 2013**)<sup>11</sup>; **Andrei Hagiu & Wright, 2015**)<sup>12</sup>

VL and network are approached similarly. While, their partnership influence the growth of platform business sustainably. VL enhances the network effects, increase the process of acquisition rate, referral scheme add value to ecosystem and supports self-supporting growth cycles(**Büge & Ozcan, 2021**)<sup>13</sup>). When market penetration increases, return from investment may decline thus, it becomes necessary to maintain innovation in strategies like referrals or integrating ecosystem. (**Cennamo & Santalo, 2013**).This research paper provides empirical evidence on combined influence of all these factors providing insights in this competitive digital landscape to achieve sustainable growth. (**Rochet & Tirole, 2003**).

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To understand the notion of the viral loop and its relevance to platform-based business models.
- To find out how viral loops and network effects work together to increase users and business growth.
- To examine challenges and potential saturation points of viral loops.
- To provide recommendations for leveraging network effects to achieve sustainable growth.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**(Zhelezniakova & Zmiivska, 2025)<sup>14</sup>** A digital platform is a foundational tool of modern business, acting as a virtual environment that integrates technology, society, and economics to drive digital transformation. This model of business is completely reliant on technology to provide a space for users to carry out exchanges of goods, services, or information, thus making the platforms the core of the sharing economy. The shift in the paradigm has effected a massive transformation in commerce, a change that has, as we discovered during the COVID-19 crisis, borne the imprint of seismic importance.

**(Liu & Yao, 2025)<sup>15</sup>** User behaviour is strongly influenced by network effects which in turn speed up the growth of platform data and content to an incredible extent. Positively, the platform could develop a feedback loop through the recommendation refining and user interaction enhancement which would result in increased engagement and revenue. The research indicates that understanding and leveraging network effects yield a major competitive advantage, thus improving the customer acquisition and retention strategies of the platforms

**(Moldovan et al., 2019)<sup>16</sup>** Viral marketing refers to the rapid spread of information through social media, enabling brands to achieve massive visibility without substantial advertising expenses. The authors emphasize that the success of such campaigns is not random; the primary outcome of their analysis is that creativity and informativeness are the critical drivers of a successful viral strategy.

**(Khalil, 2016)<sup>17</sup>** Most people consider virality to be a matter of luck because of the low success rate of viral tactics, but this study claims the opposite and says that it can be systematically engineered. It puts forth a model that has seven core components: product/market fit, large target audience, adequate resources, open cooperation, fast user success, a structure that is able to grow, and minimal resistance.

**(Adam Harahap & Osly Usman, 2025)<sup>18</sup>** This study identifies viral marketing as the primary driver of local brand development, finding that content quality has a significant positive influence while content type has only a marginal effect. The research has concluded that viral marketing is the single most influential factor for user retention and it has surpassed all other variables in this respect.

**(Leskovec et al., 2006)<sup>19</sup>** Viral marketing functions not as a single, massive cascade, but as a sequence of short recommendation chains that are most effective in smaller communities. As recommendations become more and more persuasive, the impact of 'super-spreaders' is eventually restricted. The positive aspect of the strategic directive is that it is a main output: for the platforms to be successful, they should not only stop using the standard viral methods but also personalize their method according to the individual structure and preferences of their user base.

**(Soares & Nieto-Mengotti, 2024)<sup>20</sup>** Network effects are the main driver of market dominance for digital platforms, but they create a "chicken and egg" dilemma where a large user base is needed to raise switching costs. Competition is further intensified by "multihoming" (users on multiple platforms). The study finds that in response, successful platforms develop complex ecosystems and subsidize one side of the market as a primary strategy to retain users.

**(Justus Haucap & Ulrich Heimeshoff, 2013)<sup>21</sup>** The competition between different online platforms is shaped by their network effects and switching costs. Their study shows that the online platforms can hold a strong market position as long as their users find it difficult to switch to other platforms and their reputation can't be transferred. But if the users find it easier to switch platforms then no platforms can stay dominant. Thus, continuous innovation is the key for survival.

**(Rochet & Tirole, 2003)<sup>22</sup>** Their study on two-sided online markets explains how they set prices to attract both group of users, especially in the case of multi-homing (using more than one platform at the same time). It is concluded that platforms lower their prices strategically to create a sense of exclusivity for their users which in turn increases the market competition.

**(Santoro et al., 2025)<sup>23</sup>** Time efficiency acts as a strategic factor that enhances user experience in the online platform business. At the same time it lowers the transaction costs. Despite that, some users prefer richer and more immersive experiences more than the speed of the platform. So, companies should know how to balance efficiency with user engagement, because focusing only on speed might drive the users away who value depth and quality of their experience.

Most research on viral loops and network effects focus on large global platforms or niche industries. The mechanisms behind these phenomena in different platforms and markets are understudied. In many cases, viral loops are treated as a mere tool to measure customer engagement and customer lifetime value which misrepresents their actual purpose. Also issues like over- participation, declining content quality and triggers that reduce the potency of the viral loops are overlooked. This uncertainty around the growth of platform businesses, driven by viral loops and network effects highlights a significant research gap, which is addressed by the aims of this study by analysing multiple online platforms by using a more comprehensive set of metrics and examining not just how viral loops drive growth but also their inherent constraints.

## DISCUSSION

Indian platform - based business significantly rely on virtuous cycle reinforced by strong network effects. Rather than focusing solely on increasing their user base they should aim to achieve user engagement. Enhanced user engagement encourages retention of old user as well as attracting new ones creating positive cycle in which more active results in higher engagement. Ultimately, this forms competitive advantage in sustainable growth even in highly saturated market.

The shift in digital strategy from waiting for viral growth to deliberately creating it has profound change in thinking. Studies suggest that even little user success and smaller interaction are essential generation for network effect. Like a spark ignites the fire, network effect needs that initial spark where user instantly recognises value without effect. When passive visitors are converted into parts of active and committed partner that point is where utility of medium is demonstrated. A platform power and ability to create network effect arise from user - focused

design and value provision providing the essence of success is depend on user experience rather than technology alone.

One key takeaway is the tension between rapid user acquisition and long-term engagement. Platforms that invest heavily in marketing see quick spikes in visibility and number of users, but those users lose interest very soon. In contrast, platforms that focus on a smaller and loyal group of users i.e. strong initial customer engagement tend to grow more slowly but steadily and sustainably. Here, word of mouth plays a crucial role. So platform strategists must balance between using marketing to attract users and then focus on product development and user experiences to deliver real value and keep the users engaged over time.

Also, viral loops are not infinite. They eventually lose their potency when all the potential target audience has joined. The viral co-efficient (k-factor) also tends to decline as the user experience fatigue develops once the platform's novelty fades overtime. This implies that viral loops can be used as a tool for the launch mechanism that is useful for user attraction at the initial stage but not as a tool for long-term growth mechanism. To sustain the momentum, platforms need a clear plan for what comes next and focus on maturity phase, where continuous product development, customer engagement, customer retention by building trust plays a crucial role and drive long-term success.

These implications suggest that it's necessary to rethink the way how we measure online platforms' success. Vanity metrics like number of users, total likes etc are impressive but they don't reveal what's actually happening. Vitality Metrics like user retention rates, daily active users etc gives a clear picture of the platform's true health and sustainable growth potential.

The study ultimately comes to a conclusion that sustainable growth is not a one time achievement, it's a continuous process backed by a strong feedback loop. A successful viral loop is comparable to a flywheel, demanding a steady, long-term investment to keep it rotating. Though smart marketing strategies attract users and build initial excitement, long-term growth of the business depends on the building trust and relationships with their users. To sustain in a highly competitive market, it is necessary to commit to community engagement and improve user experience over time. To increase customer loyalty and credibility, companies should give equal importance to product development and community management as they give to marketing. This type of marketing approach is more authentic and promotes steady growth than short-term, aggressive advertising campaigns.

## IMPLICATIONS

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PLATFORM STRATEGISTS AND ENTREPRENEURS

- **Shift Focus from User Quantity to Engagement Quality:**Entrepreneurs should shift their mindset that the user acquisition is the only means of growth. Instead, they should focus on instant value creation for their users. This implies that designing onboarding and core features ensures that users succeed fast, which keeps them coming back and the viral loops rotating.
- **Adopt a Balanced, Phased Growth Model:**Platforms shouldn't fall into the confusion of selecting between aggressive marketing and organic growth. The smart approach is to use the mix of both which is to use strong branding strategies to attract users at initial stage at the same time invest more resources in building features and form a community that creates a deep engagement and convert the first users into loyal supporters of the business.

- **Implement "Vitality Metrics" for True Performance Measurement:** This study suggests that the businesses should avoid relying on vanity metrics like total users or sign-ups which can be misleading. Instead, they can track vitality metrics such as customer engagement and retention. For instance, they can measure daily vs monthly active users, interaction level of the users etc which will give a better picture of the platform's health and sustainable growth potential.
- **Planning for the "Post-Viral" Phase:** Viral loop cannot run forever without recharging. It will eventually reach its limit once the most potential users have joined and the initial excitement fades. Entrepreneurs should treat viral loops as a way to quickly attract initial users, not the ultimate goal. Long-term success can be achieved through continuous innovations and user engagement that promotes the platform. This creates a self-sustaining flywheel effect where the existing users keep coming back, attracting new users and maintaining momentum even after the initial hype slows down.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMIC THEORY

- **Reframing Network Effect Theory:** This study contradicts the traditional idea of network effects which states that a platform automatically becomes more valuable as more users join. The findings of this study suggest the opposite, a platform's value doesn't grow just because of numbers but through the quality experiences it creates for its users. The "network effect" requires a spark of deliberate user value creation through design and usability to set the viral loops in motion. In other words, it's not a built-in feature but something that should be actively created by the platforms.
- **Transforming the Product-Led and Community-Led Growth Models:** This research supports the idea of models like Product-Led Growth (PLG) and Community-Led Growth (CLG) drives sustainable success. They are not just theories. It replaces the older belief that marketing alone fuels expansion. It proves that when a product provides true value and there is high user engagement there will be organic growth in the business.
- **Integrating Saturation Models with Virality Theory:** The study highlights that viral marketing is short-lived and has a saturation point. To understand this in depth, academic theories on virality should merge models of market saturation and technology adoption. It should closely examine how the viral effects weaken over time (for example, when the viral coefficient or k-factor drops) so that more sustainable models supporting the platform growth can be developed.

## 5.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- **Cross-Sector Analysis of Viral Loop Mechanics:** This study provides insights about how different platform business models work. The future research should expand by comparing how viral loops function in different sectors like social media, e-commerce and SaaS. As each of these sectors have different "sparks" that trigger user engagement and growth. It is significant to understand these sector specific differences to design effective strategies tailored to each industry.
- **Longitudinal Studies on "Flywheel" Momentum:** This study highlights the flywheel effect i.e. the ability to maintain platform stability even after the viral phase is the key to long-term success. Future studies should track platforms and identify the activities that truly sustain the

momentum of virality. For example, tracking feature updates, user experience, engagement rate etc shows which factor keeps the platform thriving even after the initial buzz.

• **Investigating the Threshold of Negative Network Effects:** While this study focuses on the positive effect of the viral loops, there is a scope for future research to explore the point at which it creates a negative effect. Platforms can reach a stage where they face issues like spam, toxic behaviour or declining user satisfaction which is caused when there are too many users or poor quality interaction. Future research could identify early signs of these negative effects and develop strategies or policies to prevent them, helping platforms maintain healthy growth and keep the viral loops rotating.

## CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to evaluate viral loops as a primary growth mechanism in the dynamic Indian online platform-based business. Sustainable growth is not achieved by chance or merely acquiring a large user base. It is a result of a well-engineered viral cycle. This cycle is strengthened by network effects and depends on the quality of user engagement rather than the number of users, which marks a major shift from traditional growth strategies focusing only on customer acquisition.

This study suggests that viral loops or virtuous cycle needs to be ignited by a "spark" of quick user advantage. To satisfy users and kickstart growth, platforms should offer smooth interactions and quick benefits. This suggests the businesses to focus less on aggressive user acquisition and more on building a loyal, engaging community that helps in organic growth of the platform. This research also highlights the limitation of viral loops i.e. the platforms eventually reach a saturation point. It emphasizes the importance to use the "virality metrics" like user retention and engagement that offers better insights of the platform's health instead of relying on "vanity metrics" like number of users and number of likes which are misleading.

The findings of this study are very significant. Founders and Platform designers are made aware that user acquisition strategy should focus on long-term value creation rather than short-term gains. Here, the quality of user experience acts as the most powerful competitive advantage. From a theoretical perspective, the study suggests that the full potential of the network effects is realized only when a platform actively supports user success and fosters meaningful engagement.

While this research provides a solid foundation, future studies can look across different industries to examine how viral loops work in various platform models. Ultimately, it is asserted that the platforms that are resilient and create the most value are those that view growth as a flywheel rather than a one-time campaign. In today's digital economy, success goes to those who are willing to invest in the continuous improvement of their product and nurture their community.

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**“IMPACT OF SHORT-FORM VIDEO CONTENT [INSTAGRAM REELS] ON PURCHASE BEHAVIOR OF GEN Z IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY.”**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This investigation delves into the significance of Instagram Reels (short-form video content) being a major influencer on the purchasing habits of Gen Z consumers in the fashion sector. The constantly changing digital environment together with the introduction of Instagram Reels has caused a serious disruption in marketing and made social media the most important channel for brand awareness, influencing of trends, and consumer interaction.*

*The study shows that the Gen Z consumers are not merely using Reels for fun but considering it as an instantaneous and reliable channel that they use to form their identities and make purchasing decisions. The short video format creates a fast-paced and vibrant atmosphere in which it is necessary for fashion brands to produce visually attractive, short, and genuine content to keep their attention. According to the research, among the various impacts of Reels, the major one is the impulsive buying which is largely influenced by social factors such as the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and high attachment to micro- and nano-influencers.*

*Although its usage increases the sales of the brand and the intention to buy the product, the study points out the risk of losing brand loyalty as the latter is dynamic and depends on constant value alignment (e.g., authenticity and inclusivity). The marketers are suggested to tap into the influencer collaborations, Instagram shops and the real-time insights of the Reels to mix up the instant interaction with the trust-building process which lasts. Thus, they would be able to face the complexity of navigating this digit-born generation's fashion consumption. The study highlights Reels being a very important digital marketing format, which the fashion industry can benefit from (through rapid trend dissemination) and also face the challenge (leading to impulsive buying) at the same time.*

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**KEYWORDS:** *Short-form video content, Purchase behavior, Gen Z, Fashion Industry, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), Brand loyalty, Purchase decision.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, companies have drastically shifted their strategies, processes, and culture in order to become more agile, efficient, and ready for the future. One of the main drivers of such a radical change in operating and value creation was the blend of disruptive technologies like AI, the cloud, and social media, among others. The once prevalent business models have been overturned, thereby implying organizations to come up with innovative solutions and be flexible towards the demands of the market as well as changes in consumer behavior. The Covid 19 outbreak turned online strategies into a must-have for maintaining operation, but at the same time, it was an opportunity for businesses to innovate and change their non-digital-first operations. The networks of social media are now the main channels of communication and consumer interaction. Among these, the short-form video platforms like Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts have emerged as the most effective in keeping and engaging the audience's attention through fast, interactive content (**Ade Fitria Fatimah, 2025**). Fashion, being a medium of art and a matter of identity, takes a lot of its inspiration from these networks where trendsetting and reshaping happen on a daily basis (**Vavrová, 2024**). The given situation shows the power of social media, for, despite the postmodern world being troubled, social media is one of the major factors influencing culture and the behavior of customers, especially in the case of youngsters.

Generation Z considers short-form videos to be not only a source of entertainment but also a means for discovering and evaluating brands. The instant and real nature of these formats build up a virtual world around the consumers, traditional media often lacking to such an extent. (**Muhammad Aria Wahyudi, 2025**). Gen Z, being the ones who have never known anything but digital, very much appreciate the content that is natural, personal, and reliable, and thus, they are very much open to influencer marketing. The micro and nano influencers are the ones who are in fact more like us than the stars or the companies, and so they can make fashion and even buying decisions in a strong way. The lifespan of trends is limited but they still have a great impact on the way people shop, and the differences between generations in terms of values, money, and ways of living lead to different fashion tastes. (**Apurva Muralidhar, 2019**). The influencers, trends, and social factors never-ending interaction is one of the main reasons that these people consider fashion as a necessity and, at the same time, as a way to express their identity and to show their connection to a group.

Beneath this aspect, one could say that Instagram has become a primary platform for Gen Z, not just for sharing nice looking pictures and moments with friends but also for reels which are coming into the picture more and more. The values of the generation are inclusivity and authenticity; (**Swanson, 2022**) thus, their purchase behavior is not determined merely by brand loyalty but rather by social influences like Fear of Missing Out [FoMO], which impulsively makes them buy things that they do not really need just to avoid feeling that they are missing something. (**Tita Borshalina, 2021**). Moreover, the instability of intentions is such that, depending on the continuous search for information, the evaluation of options, and the influence of negative word-of-mouth, they change. Therefore, it is crucial that the fashion brands not only rely on the marketing through Instagram to show the impact on their purchase behavior but also

on the genuine engagement to measure and evaluate the impact on their purchase behavior. (Mafas Raheem, 2023)

In the digital marketplace, Instagram Reels have redefined value creation by moving beyond the traditional media models and, at the same time, collaboration of creators with brands, co-promotion of products, and direct selling through Instagram shops. (Imran, 2023). Social media usage of Gen Z is firmed up by the connection and identity aspects. Thus this feature is, on one hand a fun thing and on the other an opportunity to showcase yourself. The clothes come to say much more than covering and the issue is to express one's uniqueness that goes along with the brands that match one's values. Such a way of expressing oneself through fashion is not the case with millennials and the preceding generations who are more likely to buy for the sake of buying and not necessarily seeking the support of social values in the brands they choose to buy. (Wang, 2021). The confluence of reels, Gen Z values, and changing fashion trends is an indication of the platform's power in cutting across the behavioral patterns and at the same time, in the unlocking of new possibilities for creativity in the fashion industry. This research is aimed at measuring the social media impact mainly on the GenZ fashion industry in terms of buying behavior.

### Review of Literature

#### ➤ Instagram Reels

- **Aleksandra Sisova (2023)** assessed Instagram reels, via a mixed method study, and obtained powerful indications of cell engagement - short videos are extremely engaging with the audience, 47% watch reels more than five times a day and 53% make a decision to continue watching within 1 to 4 seconds, 78% engagement [like/share/comment] and 80% report taking an action/purchase after viewing reels campaigns - thus, the importance of capturing the audience's attention at once and applying Reels insights.
- **Gargi Doloi (2024)** conducted a survey of 120 respondents aged [18-25 years] to investigate the impact of Instagram reels on the media habits of Gen. Z. Among the findings was the fact that 78% of the respondents use reel daily, mainly for the purposes of entertainment and discovering new content, which in turn has reduced their traditional TV/YouTube consumption. Reels also played a major part in the catching up of fashion trends and making a decision to buy, naming them the last ones to be considered both an entertainment medium and a marketing tool.
- **Zemzem Selin Oruç, Mehmet N. Aydın (2022)** utilized the media richness theory to analyze the variations of Instagram content in an e-commerce case study. The results of the study indicated that richer media, especially Reels, had a huge impact on visibility and reach but engagement did not increase proportionally. The research points out that rich media posts visibility targeting the right audience is essential for actual engagement and purchase intentions improvement.

#### ➤ Purchase Behavior

- **Steven (2025)** investigated the influence of digital marketing on the land purchasing behavior of Gen Z in Indonesia using the S-O-R model with 153 respondents. The findings indicated that perceived ease of use and usefulness had a direct impact on emotional responses which in turn drove impulsive purchases. Although emotions had a positive effect

on buying, their mediating role was not significant, thus indicating that direct effects of digital marketing elements are stronger predictors of impulsive buying.

- **Sudha and Bharathi (2018)** investigate the social media parameters' impact, which are media entertainment, social interaction, and word of mouth, on apparel impulsive buying behaviour in Chennai. The research involved 194 respondents. Through SEM analysis, the researchers concluded that social media had a major and significant effect on the impulsive buying of apparel. The consumers were found to rely heavily on the internet for fashion but still practice cost-conscious buying.
- **Jovanović and Doljanica (2020)** performed an empirical study in Serbia, surveying 125 people in order to investigate the impact of social media on buying behavior in the fashion industry. The findings indicated that 39.7% of the people surveyed use social media as the first point of search; among the social media platforms, Instagram was the most influential. The quality and reviews of the content were major factors in influencing the purchase decisions, and the most important reason for buying clothes online was convenience. However, concerns over financial fraud were still very prominent.

➤ **Gen Z**

- **Ekta Lalwani, G Uday Kumar, and N. Meena Rani (2021)** investigate the impact of social media on the purchasing habits of Gen Z in three major Indian cities with 200 participants. The most influential platform was Instagram, while the main factor for males was price, and advertisements affected males more strongly than females. Professionals based their choices on reviews, and in general, social media usage made buying easier, increased interaction, and provided better customer satisfaction.

➤ **Fashion Industry**

- **Tina Zou (2024)** analyzed marketing in the fast fashion sector, with the emphasis on sustainability problems and consumer perceptions. The research showed how companies rely on advertising—notably through social media—to lure the youth and at the same time hide the negative impact of the industry on the environment and labor in less developed countries. The results underscore a growing requirement for sustainable practices in the fashion industry, the detrimental consequences of overproduction, and an urgent call for the adoption of ethical and environmentally friendly fashion solutions.

**Research Gap**

The literature on Instagram Reels affecting the buying behavior of Gen Z has not yet covered the entire picture, hence the gap that still exists in the literature is considerable. The earlier research has shown the high engagement and entertainment value of Reels, and their influence on trends and impulsive buying, but the studies have not touched upon the psychological and ethical foundations. More specifically, in the context of the present research, the aspects of trust have not been considered in the case of social media reviewing and influencer content, neither has the impact of artificial intelligence in fashion marketing on emotional and ethical changes been looked into. Besides, the psychological effects the continuous use of Reels has on the viewers' purchase decision process and the marketing implications of influencer content are also to be researched in the future. The present study will not only add to the scanty literature but also delve into the mechanisms - particularly, the way Instagram Reels affect Gen Z fashion buying -

and move beyond the broad engagement metrics to understanding the deeper psychological, ethical, and long-term behavioral implications.

### Research Objectives

- To gauge the influence of Instagram reels on brand awareness and purchase intentions.
- To analyze consumer engagement with short-form video content by fashion brands.
- To measure the effectiveness of Instagram Reels as a marketing platform.
- To investigate long-term effects of social media on brand loyalty and impulse control mechanisms.

### DISCUSSION

This study suggests that short-form video content, especially Instagram Reels, has an impact that goes beyond mere entertainment and, in fact, is the main factor that determines the purchasing behavior of the younger generation in the fashion industry. The culture of interaction and immediacy brought by Instagram Reels enables the fashion industry to get notices within seconds and to keep the audience involved through authentic and eye-catching storytelling. Engagement of consumers with Reels is seen as both frequent and interactive, with the young people being the ones that are most engaged in the short videos, often making the decision whether to keep watching or swipe away. (Sisova, 2023). Consequently, this demand places a heavy emphasis on companies to create the type of content that would be attractive, short and very engaging to the feelings of the audience so that they would be interested for a long period, and finally, the brands would be able to convince them to act.

This attempt investigates the role of Instagram Reels in boosting the visibility of brands as well as their interaction with customers through brand awareness and buying intents. (Saša Virijević Jovanović, 2020). For Gen Z consumers, the short videos are the intersections of evaluation where identity, trends, and peer approval all come together. This is in line with the wider values of the generation being coalescence of inclusivity, authenticity, and individuality where influencer-driven content is often seen as a connecting path between personal expression and brand usage. In addition, the impulsive buying trend triggered by Fear of Missing Out[FoMO] and fast-moving trends indicates that Reels encourage consumption that may not necessarily be supported by loyalty or reasoned choice over a long period. (Tita Borshalina, 2021)

Although Instagram Reels are an asset in marketing, their success is not anchored wholly on outreach. (Zemzem Selin Oruç, 2022). Merely being visible and having exposure do not suffice unless they are paired with audience-specific strategies that rely on personalization, relatability, and value alignment. This points out the necessity for brands to adjust their content in accordance with the peculiar demographic and psychographic characteristics thus ensuring that their campaigns genuinely connect with the Gen Z shoppers who are very picky about which brands they will support and be loyal to. (Ekta Lalwani, 2021)

In addition, this investigation analyzes the direct impact of the characteristics of digital marketing in promoting impulse buying and at the same time points toward the problem of loyalty inconsistency experienced by Gen Z (Steven, 2025). The results over time suggest that the loyalty of this generation is variable and always needs to be in agreement with their norms and surroundings to maintain its status. Even though the Gen Z targets are very much concerned about the ethical aspects of fashion and sustainability, their purchases, in most cases, are made in

favor of cheapness, trendiness, and quickness rather than eco-friendly practices. (Zou, 2024). For fashion brands, this situation embodies a dual character: the ones which shall combine quick trend followers' method with diversity and sustainability will be the best to grow their relationship with this group of consumers.

Moreover, the outcomes, besides being a plus to marketers, are an eye-opener to marketers for the Reels campaigns that they have to build up incorporating immediate engagement and continuous trust building. Fashion brands are advised to represent true relationships with micro and nano influencers, keep inclusiveness in communication, and tell sustainability stories in a believable way that is not just for appearance but indeed part of the fashion brand's DNA (Muhammad Aria Wahyudi, 2025). Through this method, companies can not only reach but also understand the emotional and social factors that drive Gen Z's purchase decisions, thereby establishing a long-lasting loyalty that is not limited to fleeting trends.

Ultimately, this research is directed towards evaluating the enlargement of the area of research by emphasizing that short-form videos are not only marketing instruments but also powerful shapers of consumer behavior. The Instagram Reels platform forms a mixed ecosystem where the three activities of entertainment, self-expression, and commerce are fused together, thus creating both opportunities and troubles for fashion brands. On the one hand, Reels can dramatically and very quickly spread trends, increase brand visibility, and support sales; on the other hand, the extremely fast pace of Reels may foster impulsive buying, impair rational decision-making, and make it difficult to hold on to consumers for the effectiveness. Reels marketing strategies have to be the combination of immediacy and authenticity, personalization and inclusiveness, and short-term excitement and long-term value alignment.

## **Conclusion and Implications**

This attempt validates the online influence of Instagram Reels on Gen Z's fashion purchases and the importance of it moreover. The analysis indicated that the short videos are not only fun and entertaining for the audience, but also a great power and credibility channel for product discovery, influencing, engagement, and buying. Gen Z with its very high interaction with Reels that results from daily use and urgent purchase decisions, requires brands to make very real, appealing and not boring content that has an expiration date. The researchers found that although the classic marketing frameworks could be applied, the biggest selling point of this platform is the spontaneous buying and shaping of one's identity through wardrobe and fashion, which is mostly determined by the relatedness and genuineness of the micro and nano- influencers. Thus, the combination of the technologies' rapid advancements, the tapping into consumer psychographics, and the brands' adeptness have made Reels a choice of modern digital marketing tool and a vital digital marketing format for the fashion brands to interact with the young millennial and Gen Z consumers.

## **Implications for Future Research:**

Future studies could be directed to not only the engagement metrics in a broad way but also to the underlying psychological effects of short-form video content, which are very intricate. The use of models like the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) could be one of the ways researchers map more accurately the different characteristics of the Reels (like sound, filters, and speed) as stimuli that elicit emotions, and ultimately lead to buying behavior.

Furthermore, future studies need to address the ethics in this digital realm in a clear manner, the psychological pressure of FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) being one of the issues and the effects of AI-generated algorithms that stimulate consumer cravings being another. It would also be interesting to see how Reels would fare against other popular platforms like TikTok in terms of the effects they produce; such comparisons would help to present a more comprehensive view.

### **Implications for Brands and Marketers:**

Moreover, the consequences for the fashion industry and marketing strategies are very close and offer practical solutions right away:

Using micro and nano-influencers whom the audience considers approachable and trustworthy will not only increase the acceptance of a brand but also lead to more sales. Besides that, companies could utilize features like Instagram Shops and tagging of products in Reels as means to remove obstacles in the buying process and to promote spontaneous buying. Another strategy for Companies can be analyzing the Reels insights like watch time and engagement and figure out which content will attract the target audience in real time.

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## RECONNECTING THE TRAJECTORIES OF BHARAT VARSA, VEDIC ARYANS AND SAPT SINDHU REGION

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### ABSTRACT

*Historically, Indian region and its surrounding area are known as Jambudvipa which means island of Jamun trees. Jambudvipa is further divided into nine varsas or countries and one of them is Bharat varsa in which Bharata clan was inhabited. In the Bharat varsa, there took place many historical and ancient events. And the Battle of Ten Kings or Dash Raja ka Yudh is a major historic event of Sapt Sindhu region of Bharat varsa in which ten kings fought against King Sudasa of Bharata clan. The Sapt Sindhu region is a very significant region as Rig Veda is developed here hence, the well known Aryans or Rig Vedic civilization also developed and flourished in the same region. Sapt Sindhu region means the land where seven rivers flows i.e., Indus, Jhelum, Ravi, Chenab, Beas, Satluj and Saraswati and this region extend from present Pakistan, Pakistan Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Eastern Punjab and Haryana. Although, Sapt Sindhu region is the heartland of Rig Veda and it has clearly described the term Aryan or Arya and their identity, which was later misinterpreted by western intellectuals. Therefore, the present study aims to understand that Aryans are the natives of Bharat varsa. In addition, the study also reveals that the Rig Vedic civilization is a Sapt Sindhu civilization.*

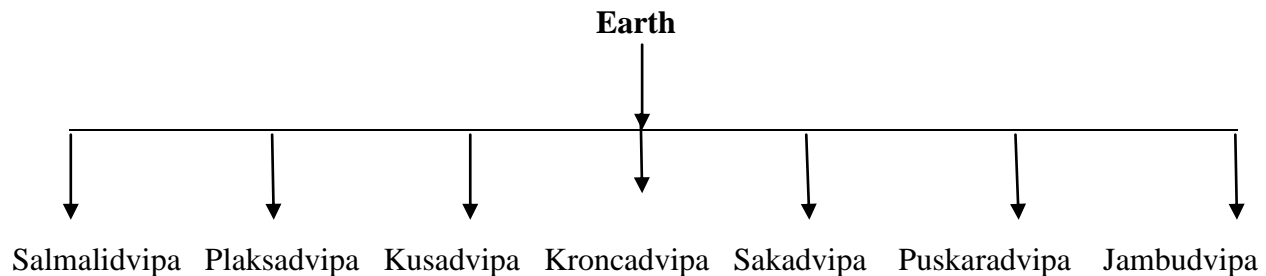
**KEYWORD:** *Aryans, Bharat Varsha, Identity, Jambudvipa, Rig Veda, Sapt Sindhu Region.*

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### INTRODUCTION

According to Puranic cosmography, the entire earth has been split into a seven parts or called continents (dvipas) which consists Salmalidvipa, Plaksadvipa, Kusadvipa, Kroncadvipa, Sakadvipa, Puskaradvipa and Jambudvipa. These continents are apart from each other and surrounds with seven different oceans. The one which is denoted as Jambudvipa, ruled by the mighty King Agnidhara and the Jambudvipa consists of nine varsas (country) and it was enormous dvipa, enriched with glory and encompassed it by nine circles and it was surrounded with salty ocean. Hari varasa, Bhadravsa, Ketumala, Svetavarsa, Hiranyanka varsa, Ilavrita varsa, Haimavata varsa, Kuru varsa and Bharat varsa are the nine varsas. Out of nine varsas, Bharat varsa is one of them and king Agnidhara divided his empire into his nine sons. The southern varsa, also referred as 'Hima' granted to his son Nabhi and Merudevi and Nabhi's son named Rsabha the heir of the kingdom then in Rsabha's hundred sons, the eldest one Bharata who is courageous and fearless bequeathed the southern varsa (Dakshinvarsa) after him the intellectuals referred the region as Bharat varsa. In Jambudvipa, the Bharat varsa is recognized as the most favorable place. Visnu Purana also describes Bharata as one of the finest place of Jambudvipa

because it is known as land of action (*karma*) whereas on the other hand, others are of enjoyment (*bhoga*). The Bharata is the land of action and people inhabited in it have a strong faith in action it was not only a piece of land (Kumar, 2023).



**Figure No.: 1.1**

**Figure No.: 1.1** display Earth is divided into seven continents (Dvipas)

However, the extremely southern region Bharat varsa (approx. present day India) and the extremely northern region Airavata varsa known as (Siberia) these both are bow shaped regions and this bow-shaped region to the south of the Himalayas is identified as Bharat varsa. Here, the bows are an allusion to the shape of the Indian peninsula, Hemkuta/ Kailash refers to the Himalayas northern mountain ranges in Tibet and the Indus and Brahmaputra valleys, often known as the Himavat Varsha, which are located in between these ranges. Tibet is recognizable as Hari Varsha, which is located beyond Hemkuta/ Kailash. The Kunlun Mountain ranges (Kunlun Shan), also known as the Nishadha Mountains, formed Tibet's northern border. The Tien Mountain (Tien Shan), also known as the Nila Mountain, is the mountain range located to the north of Kunlun. The Pamir Mountain, are located in between Tien Shan and Kunlun Shan and the lowlands that encircled them are known as the Ilavarta region. The Altai Mountain, which may be distinguished as the Sveta Mountain, is located north of Tein Shan and the area which includes Lake Baslkash and Dzungeria valley in between Tein Shan. A plain that is identified as the Hariyanka varsa, lies beyond the Altai Mountains in both Northern Kazakhstan and Mongolia. The southern border of Siberia (recognized as the Airavata varsa) is formed by the Saya Mountains (recognized as Srngavan Mountain). The following people who were resided in the six Mountains: In the Himavat Mountains, Rakshasas resided, on the Hemkuta (Kailash) Mountain Yakshas (Guhyakas) inhabited. The Nishada Mountain is the home of Sarpas, Nagas and Gandharvas and in the Nila Mountains Brahmarishis lived. Sveta Mountain is used to be live by the Devas and Asuras and whereas on Srngavan Mountains Pitris resided (Ravi, 2019).

In the historical epic Mahabharata, there was a description of Bharat varsa which was dear nation or Desh by God Indra and Vaivsvat Manu. All the almighty Kshatriya kings and warriors including Vananndan Prthu, Mahatma Ishvaku, Yayyati, Ambrish, Mandhata, Nhush, Muchukund, Usheenrputra Shibhi, Rishab, Ilanandn Pururba, Raja Nrug, Kushik, Mahatma Gadhi, Somak, Deleep etc. they all were fond of Bharat varsa. The Bharat varsa also includes seven almighty Mountains i.e., Mahendra, Mlye, Shhye, Shuktiman, Rishban, Vindhya and Pariyatra and around these there were thousands of mountains which were unknown and have expanded and unique peaks and all these peaks consists of valuable gems. Besides all these, there were also small unspecified mountains in which tiny beings were inhabited and were dependent of them for their survival. *Arya, Mallech and Sankar jati* people were lived in Bharat varsa and these people were dependent on the rivers like Ganga, Sindhu, Saraswati, Godavari, Narmada,

Bahuda, Mahanadi, Shatdru, Chandrabhaga, Mahanadi Yamuna, Drshdvti, Vipasha, Vipapa, Sthulba luka, Vetravti, Krishnvena, Iravati, Vistasta, Pyoshni, Devika, Vedsmrta, Vedvati, Tridiva, Ikshula, Krumi, Kreshini, Chitravaha, Chitasena etc. (VedVyas, 2019).

According to the Hindu traditions, the oldest texts are well known as Vedas which comprises of four books i.e. Rig, Yajur, Sam and Atharva Vedas. The Vedas majorly consists of hymns, prayers, religious practices, rituals and fire sacrifice. The oldest of all Vedas is the Rig Veda and it is assembled in ten parts. This oldest text used actively in the world and one of its hymns i.e. *Gaytri Mantra* which is chanted everyday by many people and mostly Hindus considered, it the most sacred texts. In the Rig Vedic landscape, the central point is Sapt Sindhu which means land of the seven rivers was also known as the Rig Veda's heartland (Sanyal, 2013).

Sapt Sindhu means where seven rivers flows i.e. Satluj, Jhelum, Beas, Ravi, Chenab, Sindhu and Saraswati whereas some historians argued that Khubha or Kabul river is the seventh river. The Sapt Sindhu region consist area of Pakistan, Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (POJK), Eastern Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Ladakh. The region of Sapt-Sindhu boundary extends from Afghanistan up to India (Delhi). When Maharaja Ranjit Singh rule in the enormous region of North-West of India i.e., the Sapt Sindhu region, Maharaja didn't only set India free from foreign invasions but also laid foundation of geographical and political unit. But after the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1850 British authority occupied the region of Sapt Sindhu or Punjab earlier known as *Panchnad* they started breaking the unification policy of Maharaja for their own motives and benefits in which they laid the foundation of today's Pakistan. In 1901, British authority separates present Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from Punjab and named it as North West Frontier Province. Like this they made Baluchistan and Sindh as separate administrative units and the region of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit and Baltistan forming them as different administrative unit. British were successful to divide Sapt Sindhu or Punjab into many administrative units. Muslim League and British Government to make Sapt Sindhu region as a different sovereign country, named as Pakistan. But they also initiated one false narratives which was set by their thinkers or intellectuals to play dirty politics of divide and rule policy i.e. Aryan Invasion Theory in which they considered that Aryans have European origin and they entered through Middle Asia and attacked Sapt Sindhu region and make the native population their slaves and move them towards southern part of India (Agnihotri, 2023). They started misinterpreted the Indian texts, scripture etc. and created their own theories which suited them.

Hence, the major objective of the research paper is to highlight that Aryans are the natives of Bahrat varsa and the study reveals that the Rig Vedic civilization is a Sapt Sindhu civilization.

## **Rise of the Aryan Theory**

The origin and meaning of the term 'Arya' or 'Aryan' are at the core conundrum of the ancient Indian history. A specific understanding of what Aryan is meant to imply forms the basis of contemporary historical interpretations of ancient Indian history that have emerged in the previous one hundred fifty years. Aryans, specific group of people who displayed specific racial kind-normally light skinned kind of Caucasian. It was believed that in between 4000 and 2500 BCE, the Indo-Aryans and the progenitors of all Indo-Europeans, including the Irish and Iranians, shared a familiar motherland in Central Asia or Eastern Europe. After 1500 BCE, an enormous migration took place by this group of people who leave their motherland to overpower world from Bengal to Persia, Anatolia, Italy, Greece, Scandinavia and Ireland. But here, the question arises, what were the forces behind this massive migration of people, why they travelled

in various direction and how they were able to overcome human and natural hurdles in addition to conquering their new homeland was a difficult one to solve and raises serious questions about the theory (Rajaram & Frawley, 2018).

Although there are many perspectives behind their origin and migration: different scholars have offered a variety of explanations. Prof. Max Mullar asserts that Aryans were indigenous to Central Asia, but some foreign scholars believed that North Germany and South Russia were the original homeland of Aryans'. In contrast, Indian scholar Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak linked them to the Arctic, Swami Vivekanand connected them with Tibet and Dr. Sampurnanand believes that the Sapt Sindhu region was their original homeland, he was primarily backed by a number of notable intellectuals, including Pandit Ganganath Jha and Dr. Rajbali Pandey. Dr. Sampurnanand believed that the Sapt Sindhu region (present-day Punjab and North West border Province) was the original homeland of Aryans on the basis of the Rig Veda's signs and geographical area. They were divided into two groups: those who followed the *Devas* and those who followed the *Asuras*. Both took part in the battle known as, and once the *Asur* devotees were vanquished, they left the Sapt-Sindhu region, travelled to west, and eventually settled in Iran. According to Dr. Rajbali Pandey the Madhya desh (present-day Uttar Pradesh and Bihar) was where the Aryans originated and from there, they spread across the rest of India, and some of its branches even went as far as Central and Western Asia via the western passes. It was never even discovered that Bhartiya Aryan was an outsider in the vast body of knowledge that present in Indian literature. Pandit Ganganath Jha believed that Kashmir and the Himalayan states were their original motherland, and that India was the home of the Bramharishi nation and the Aryans. The Veda, Purana, and other Hindu texts never described the arrival of the Aryans, nor do they state that they have ancestors (Pitra Bhumi) and an action land (Karm Bhumi) outside of India (Bhagrav, 2011). Various scholars have different perspective regarding the origin and migration of Aryans but the most appropriate and logical one is given by Dr. Sampurnanand mentioned that the Sapt Sindhu region is the homeland of the Aryans which is supported by many other intellectuals and various Hindu scriptures and texts in which it never mentioned any kind of mass arrival of foreign people in the Sapt Sindhu region. Ancient scriptures also mentioned the connectivity of Vedic Aryans on Sapt Sindhu region.

But later on, there has been always a controversy between intellectuals regarding the native homeland of the Aryans and it was led by British historians who came with the East India Company to India. Indeed, they were surprised to see overall development in the cultural, social and civil sphere of India. When some of its nobles learnt the Sanskrit language, an abundance of information that their ancestors had assembled during their arduous voyage and stay on this hallowed soil—now known as Duggar—was preserved ( whole of Jammu, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh)(Dogra, 2022). Western intellectuals set their own narratives for their benefits and then demean indigenous people or tribes.

Therefore, the Aryan Invasion theory was created on the basis of assumption that the Aryans attacked and overpower native culture who was less in number but in the Vedic battle which was held between power of light and darkness was misinterpreted as the Aryan Invasion Theory in which light skinned people overpowered the dark skinned native people and they were tagged as rough and uncivilized. The Vedas indeed depict conflicts and battles, just like a lot of literature does. Since, there was no other indication that was interpreted as suggesting an invasion. This necessitates making the assumption that the conflicts shown were between the native people and the invading Aryans, which the literature does not support but instead, illustrates conflict within

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the similar culture. A lot of information has to be disregarded, especially the belief found in Vedas and Puranic texts that Aryan culture originated in India and expanded from a homeland located along Indian rivers such as Sarasvati and Ganga (Rajaram & Frawley, 2018). But the western intellectuals misinterpreted texts for showing their cultural superiority while tagged Aryans with European origin.

### **Battle of the Ten Kings or Dasrajan Ka Yudh**

Aryans were divided into numerous qbilas, which they named it 'Jan' and the major Aryan qbilas, or jan, were Bharat, Puru, Anu, Druhyu, Tubarshu, or Yadu. The battle of Ten Kings, also known as *Dash Raja ka Yudh or Dashraj Samar* was the bloodiest of these qbilas' conflicts. The King Sudasa of Bharat qbila (Tutsu caste) vanquished the ten qbila kings who had formed an alliance against him in the battle. From time to time, the great kings extended his domain. Aryans engaged in lengthy combat with non-Aryans outside of these conflicts, but in the end, the well-organized military system the Aryans had created proved to be too strong for them. Several non-Aryan states were subjugated by the Aryans, who dubbed them as Das or Dasyu. Some of these people hid in the jungles and mountain caves, where their descendants still reside. According to Rig Veda, denounces Dasas or Dasyus, saying that "Aryans and non-Aryans engaged in a protracted conflict that ultimately resulted in a decisive victory for Aryans over Dasyu or Dasa (Non-Aryan)." After the fight, the Dasas managed to survive in huge numbers. Then they managed to get away from the Aryans and sought refuge in the forests and caves of the mountains, or they chose to accept their dominance. The title 'Das' was later used to refer to slaves, and many members of the Dasa clan were made into slaves (Bhagrav, 2011).

But, it was argued that the Rig Vedic people were iron-wielding 'Aryans' who were engaged in ceaseless conflict with their opponents, the 'Dasas' (Hrrappan or aboriginal tribes). Although it was frequently used in Sanskrit literature and the term 'Arya' was never used in a racist connotation. Since it is described, as cultured or noble individual, all organizations seek to identify as Aryans and their opponents as non-Aryans. The word is used racially in modern Europe and ancient Iran, but not in India. In a similar vein, we must exercise caution when referring to non-Aryan opponents as Dasas, particularly in light of the fact that Sudasa, son of Divodasa, the greatest of the 'Aryan' chieftains listed in the Rig Veda, is a Dasa himself (Sanyal, 2013). The Battle of Ten Kings is regarded as the most significant and extensive battle in human history. In this conflict, the Aryan King Sudasa of Trstu Bharata qbila vanquished all ten kings on the bank of the river Ravi and established his authority, which is known as the conflict of Ten Kings. Previously, it was believed that the Aryans overcame the Non-Aryans and made them Dasas or Dasyus, which means slaves. However, in Hindu texts and scriptures, the term 'Arya' was never employed in a racial context; rather, it referred to a cultured or noble person. Even King Sudasa, an Aryan, used the name 'Dasa' for himself. The confusion was created by some notable intellectuals or scholars who were misinterpreted the scriptures or texts which are present in Sankrit language.

### **Rig Vedic Civilization**

The Rig Vedic civilization was considered as the rural civilization, they prefer using gold and silvers in tools and in the 'Yajur Veda' the use of iron was mentioned but on the other hand, the Sapt Sindhu civilization was urban and they were also aware of using gold and silver but they used more of silver than gold and they make many tools by using bronze and copper but they were unaware of using iron. Marshall again mentioned that there were no sign of *Agnikund* in

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excavation of the Harrappa and Mohenjodaro cities of Sapt Sindhu civilization and they concluded there was no prevalence of *Ygya* (Sacrifice Ritual) but there was a lot of significance of *Ygya* in Aryans lives. But, later on there are addition of excavations took place on these sites which unfold hidden truths that was not present on Marshall Time period for e.g. on the site of Lothal (Gujarat) got the clay figures of horses and excavating on the Surkotda (Gujarat) and other sites found the bones of horses. In the new excavations in Kalibanga, Lothal and on other sites the religious rituals and beliefs were mentioned in detailed on the *Agnikund* or fire pit and some intellectuals considered it the *Ygya Bhumi*. According to Rig Veda, there was a special shower which was taken place after the completion of *Som Ygya* and it might be possible that vast bathroom of Mohanjodaro were used for that purpose. According to Buddh Prakash, on the other sites of Mohenjodaro found the piles of utensils which have the possibility to use as a sacrificial vessel (*Ygya Patra*) and on the time of *Ygya* it was used at the time of death ritual offering (*Pind*) (Thaplyal & Shukl, 2019). Earlier, the excavated sites were less in numbers that's why it is difficult for many archeologists as well as historians to get confused in Rig Vedic civilization or Sapt Sindhu civilization. However, as more excavated sites were opened, some glimpses of hidden truths emerged, raising the possibility that Rig Vedic Civilization is also a Sapt Sindhu Civilization.

Many historians and archeologist were of the opinion that Sapt Sindhu civilization genetically and culturally have no influence on present day India. The well known historian, Romilla Thappar, belief that material culture shows no continuities but on the other hand the former Director General of the Archeological Survey and B.B. Lal, and other renowned archeologists of India believed that Indian cultural traits are rooted in the Sapt Sindhu civilization or Harappan civilization' for e.g., In Indian culture, *Namaste* is a gesture of reverence towards both people and gods. A figure with palms joined in *Namaste* is shown on a number of clay figurines from the Harappan sites. Even ceramic figurines of ladies with red vermilion marks on their foreheads were present. The discovery of chess pieces at Harappan sites is particularly intriguing as they bear a striking resemblance to their contemporary counterparts. Though the origins of chess are well known to have been in India, it was remarkable that the game—or something quite similar—was played over 4,000 years ago (Sanyal, 2013).

According to Brajvassi, the geographical area of Rig Vedic and Sapt Sindhu civilization was quite similar. In Rig Veda, river Saraswati was mentioned in several times, Yamuna river was mentioned thrice and Ganga was once mentioned. There were many urban places and villages in between Shoturghai (Afghanistan) to Aalngirpur (Uttar Pradesh) of Sapt-Sindhu civilization in which they were against of the perspective which said Aryan invaded and supported the belief that as per the data collected by biological science in 4500 B.C to 800B.C. that shows continuity and there was no evident proof that shows people came from outside. It was concluded by this that there was no difference between the geographical area of Rig Vedic civilization and Sapt Sindhu civilization, neither in people and nor in eras and many intellectuals believed that Sapt Sindhu civilization was Rig Vedic civilization (Thaplyal & Shukl, 2019). The Sapt Sindhu civilization has a great significance on the modern civilization of India. In fact, it reveals the cultural continuity that is present in the current period. For example, in the excavation sites, a figure with palms united in *Namaste* is portrayed on a variety of clay figurines from the Harappan sites; it represents old Indian cultural signs and symbols that preserve cultural continuity. Even after some studies and excavation it was also confirmed that the area of both the

Civilization i.e., Rig Vedic civilization as well as Sapt Sindhu Civilization both were quite similiar.

## CONCLUSION

The Bharat varsa lies on *Jambudvipa* where the Bharat clan was inhibited, and on the Bhrata varsa, lies the Sapt Sindhu region where seven rivers flow. There are several historic events in the Rig Veda that occurred on the territory of Sapt Sindhu, and *The Battle of Ten Kings or Dasrajan ka Yudh* is one of the most significant. However, many Western intellectuals and historians subsequently misread original historical texts and sources. They misconstrued the Aryan Invasion Theory, claiming that Aryans migrated from Central Asia while dominating the indigenous people. They created their own narrative of divide and rule. Later on, many historians and intellectuals believed that the Sapt Sindhu civilization was a Rig Vedic culture because fewer excavations were conducted and evidence was limited earlier. However, several discoveries and new information have emerged in recent years, claimed that both civilizations i.e., Rig Vedic civilization is a Sapt Sindhu civilization. Overall, it reconnected the trajectories of Bharat varsa, Vedic Aryans with the Sapt Sindhu region.

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## **FOMO AS A SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING TOOL -ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONVERSION IMPACT AMONGST GEN Z**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study aims to explore how Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) serves as a marketing tool on social media, with an emphasis on its ethical considerations and its impact on the purchasing decisions among Gen Z. In today's digitally connected world, FOMO acts as a strong psychological mechanism driving purchasing behavior and customer engagement on various digital platforms. Based on secondary qualitative research, this paper consolidates findings from prior literature to explore how FOMO works through feelings of social comparison, emotional anxiety and the desire to connect, which often contributes to Gen Z's impulsive buying habits. This study reveals that Gen Z, being raised in a digital environment, are highly responsive to FOMO- triggering strategies such as time-limited offers, Influencer-driven promotions & scarcity cues that creates urgency and social pressure. Although these strategies can successfully drive engagement & short-term conversions, they also raise ethical concerns as they capitalize on psychological susceptibilities which often results in emotional distress and post-purchase regrets. Ultimately, the study also highlights the need for marketers to maintain a balance between persuasive appeal & ethical integrity, it also encourages them to adopt value-driven marketing practices. The future research can explore more frameworks that aligns FOMO-driven marketing with consumer welfare to build a more ethical and sustainable digital environment.*

**KEYWORDS:** *FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out), Social Media Marketing, Digital Persuasion, Gen Z Consumers, Ethical Implications, Purchasing Behavior.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of social media has revolutionised the way people connect and consume information. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, social media have pervaded people's daily life with unprecedented velocity to become one of the most significant means of communication through technology (**Mude &Undale, 2023**)<sup>1</sup>. Social media can be understood as computer-mediated applications in which the users create content, which is designed and built to act as interconnecting these users, their content & profiles with others (**Obar & Wildman, 2015**)<sup>2</sup>. Various platforms like Instagram, Snapchat & Facebook thrive on real-time user engagement making individuals feel constantly connected to peers and trends.

In this hyper-active digital era, the rise of social media and its constant connectivity has introduced a new phenomenon known as "FOMO" or "Fear or Missing Out". According to (**Przybylski et al, 2013**)<sup>3</sup> FOMO has been explained as one of the major drivers of continuous use of social media as it gives the users a way to satisfy natural human needs for belonging and social connections. FOMO has become more pervasive amongst youngsters, who are constantly exposed to social media feeds showcasing curated lifestyles, trendy fashions and other viral products. (**Beyans et al,2016 & Blackwell et al, 2017**)<sup>4</sup> found that peers who tends to spend a lot of time on social media, as it can easily be used to engage in social interactions and can boost perceived social involvement, making ideal platforms for them who wish to gather information about others.

At the core, FOMO is relatively a recent psychological phenomenon. It may exist as a feeling of anxiety, insecurity and social comparison that strikes in the middle of a conversation usually as a pervasive disposition or an attitude that makes the individuals feel a sense of more profound and social inferiority (**Gupta & Sharma, 2021**)<sup>5</sup> According to (**Gupta & Sharma, 2021**)<sup>6</sup> In today's generation the individuals are subjected to show more interest on what others are doing and they are confronted with the ongoing uncertainties of whether they are doing enough in their life. FOMO consists of two processes. First, the perception of missing out, supplemented by an obsessive behaviour to preserve these social connections making FOMO as an influential psychological stimulant on social media.

As the narrative develops, the influence of FOMO is felt most acutely in relation to Gen Z, a generation fully submerged in such digital culture. Gen Z, growing up in a hyper-connected world, is glued to social media following all the viral trends. They often tend to make quick purchases influenced by the exclusive drops and influencer endorsements to prevent the disappointment of missing out (**Habib & Almamy, 2025**)<sup>7</sup>. It also renders them to be highly vulnerable towards FOMO marketing, where the "Now or Never" urgency of messages has a direct influence on their buying decisions (**Fuat Tanhan H et al., 2022**)<sup>8</sup>.

Though the marketing potential of FOMO has been widely recognised, yet its ethical implications remain contested. Marketers have noticed the FOMO phenomenon and have started to ride on it by implementing FOMO strategies in their marketing campaigns (**Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010**)<sup>9</sup>, For instance, most of the companies employ scarcity marketing strategies to invoke a feeling of urgency among young adults. These strategies can be very effective at sparking engagement and sales, but they do create ethical issues. The ethical dilemmas are caused when marketers target consumer's vulnerabilities, creating urgency to pressure the young adults that may harm their well-being, erode their trust towards the brands and it may result in the manipulation of consumers.

Despite the growing awareness of FOMO, there is much to be learned about the phenomenon and its impact on consumer well-being. The future of marketing is moving towards those principles that balances the convincing strategies with well-being of consumers. However, the progressive marketers have now increasingly understood that in order to maintain trust and long-term relationships, there needs to be transparency, authenticity and concentration on real value rather than focusing on last-minute, stress- driven conversions (**Chan et al., 2022**)<sup>10</sup>. Also, (**Ebru Enginkaya & Munise Hayrun Sağlam, 2025**)<sup>11</sup> found that FOMO- based marketing strategies must change to prioritise protecting the interest of Gen Z, encouraging healthy engagement and foster trust in an age of digital persuasion.

Taken together, the FOMO phenomenon demonstrates a double-edge sword in social media marketing. The future of marketing is about balancing influence with responsibility to ensure that strategies utilising FOMO are not at the expense of customer trust or long-term brand relationships. Drawing on this, the current research aims to critically examine the psychological processes of FOMO, its ethical implications, and its influence on Gen Z's buying behaviours. Thus, providing insights into marketers can craft effective yet ethical campaigns in a fast growing digital-first economy.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To examine the underlying psychological processes of FOMO on social media and determine its viability as an effective tool in a market-driven approach.
- To assess the impact of intensity of FOMO messaging on buying behaviour amongst the Gen Z.
- To critically evaluate the ethical considerations of deploying FOMO-based strategies in social media marketing.
- To suggest marketing principles to harmonise persuasive tactics, well-being, and trust of the consumer.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### ❖ FOMO AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS

- (**Buglass et al., 2017**)<sup>12</sup> discovered that higher use of social networking sites gives rise to greater FOMO, which results in more online vulnerability and less self-esteem. This illustrates the way FOMO works as a psychological motivator for digital dependency.
- (**Fuat Tanhan H et al., 2022**)<sup>12</sup> offered a comprehensive review that identified FOMO as a chronic fear associated with social comparison and ambiguity and stressed its position as a central psychological driver of online conduct.

### ❖ FOMO AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

- (**Habib & Almamy, 2025**)<sup>13</sup> empirically illustrated that FOMO is leveraged through social media marketing in order to enhance responsiveness and purchase intention among Gen Z in India. Their research established that FOMO-based strategies significantly enhances responsiveness and conversions.
- (**Chan et al., 2022**)<sup>14</sup> proposed a "Social Media Mindfulness Pathway" illustrating how habitual, mindless use of social media contributes to FOMO. The framework also highlights

that FOMO is core to online persuasion and is widely leveraged in social media marketing strategies.

#### ❖ FOMO AND GEN Z PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR

- **(Habib & Almamy, 2025)<sup>15</sup>** revealed that Gen Z demonstrates a heightened sensitivity towards FOMO-based marketing strategies such as scarcity cues, limited-time offers and social validation across various digital platforms. These factors strongly shaped their buying intentions by generating a sense of urgency and promoting peer-influenced decision making.
- **(Roberts & David, 2019)<sup>16</sup>** also showed that younger individuals are more likely to show participation in FOMO-related activities on social media, making them more vulnerable to persuasive marketing tactics. The study also found that FOMO intensifies Gen Z's exposure on social media, influencing their purchasing patterns.

#### ❖ ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF FOMO-BASED STRATEGIES

- **(Fuat Tanhan H et al., 2022)<sup>17</sup>** emphasized the psychological risks which were seen associated with FOMO, highlighting its link to increased anxiety levels and tendencies towards social comparison. The study also warned that overuse of FOMO-driven marketing could negatively harm consumer well-being and lead to long-term dissatisfaction.
- **(Chan et al., 2022)<sup>18</sup>** also dealt with the ethical dimension of FOMO-driven marketing and observed that it often leads to impulsive consumption patterns. They also recommended to adopt ethical marketing practices to prevent the exploitation of consumer fragilities and maintain a fair balance between persuasion and responsibility.

Though FOMO has been broadly studied within the context of social media, the existing research offered limited understanding of its direct impact on Gen Z consumers, who are generally more impulsive and easily get influenced. Furthermore, the ethical aspects of employing FOMO as a marketing tool are still underexplored, and there is limited evidence which connects the intensity of FOMO-based messaging with actual purchase conversions. Additionally, there are also ethical and practical guidelines for marketers to apply the FOMO tactics responsibly without eroding consumer trust and their psychological well-being. Hence, creating a gap this study aims to address.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aims to examine how FOMO-Based marketing influences the purchasing behaviour of Gen Z on various digital platforms. To achieve this, the research relies entirely on secondary data analysis, where all the information and insights related to FOMO and consumer psychology were gathered. Relevant data is drawn from peer-reviewed journals, existing academic literature, research papers and other online databases. The research followed a qualitative approach, emphasizing the interpretation and synthesis of previous studies rather than collecting primary data. The gathered materials were organised and interpreted carefully into key themes to address the objectives of the current study. By Analysing FOMO-based marketing tactics, the current research aims to fill gaps on how it drives both the buying behaviour and attitudes among Gen Z. Furthermore, by using insights from a wide range of existing studies, this paper provides a holistic view of the psychological processes and the ethical considerations linked to FOMO-based marketing practices.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to examine the psychological functions behind FOMO, its effects on **Gen Z's purchasing behaviour** and the **ethical aspects** of using it as an **effective marketing tool on social media**. The study has shown that the **Psychological Mechanisms of FOMO** encompasses factors such as social comparison, anxiety and the urge for inclusion are the most important in understanding Gen Z's reactions to the online marketing strategies. As we know Gen Z's continuous engagement on **social media platforms** like **Instagram, Snapchat, Youtube** renders their psychological susceptibility. As **(Buglass et al., 2017)<sup>19</sup>** argued that more exposure to social media leads people to spend their most of the time on social media and they feel vulnerable and may have reduced self-esteem, while **(Fuat Tanhan H et al., 2022)<sup>20</sup>**, described that FOMO is more like a 'Fear' that is chronic and is based on making unknown comparisons with each other. These studies indicate that FOMO functions on two levels where the first one is reflexive, which heightens the consumers' engagement effectively and the second one is deliberate, where the consumers are aware about the pressure yet they prefer to act on it. This dual nature of reflecting and intentions makes FOMO a persuasive **psychological factor**.

This link becomes evident when recognising that the **Intensity of FOMO messaging** plays a key role in driving **purchasing behaviour** and its **influence on consumers**. Most of the consumers are concerned about being left out of the loop on things like trendy fashions, important information and other opportunities **(Gunawan, 2024)<sup>21</sup>**. Here, we can talk about the absence of social approval that is threatening in nature, the feeling of being excluded from the current trends or the disclosure of any information. Moreover, the application of scarcity signals such as "Only a few left", countdown timers or influencer-driven promotions creates psychological triggers of anxiety and belonging. According to the findings of **(Habib & Almamy, 2025)<sup>22</sup>**. Gen Z is known to be pre-dominantly responsive to these signals of urgency, while **(Roberts & David, 2019)<sup>23</sup>** showed that young consumers often display FOMO-triggered actions online. However, on the other hand, high intensity is not the only thing that can lead to negative results. The moderate application of urgency-mindset can be an effective way to convert one's attention into a purchase, while its excessive use will create a feeling of skepticism and distrust. Therefore, the intensity of appeal works as a bridge linking the internal mechanisms and the external actions. It is responsible for transition of psychological susceptibility into impulsive actions or skepticism.

This interplay is clearly visible in the **purchasing behaviour of Gen Z**, which is the result of the **psychological drivers** that got amplified by the **message intensity**. Essentially, many Gen Z shoppers make impulsive decisions based on the short-term FOMO cues, where the factor of avoiding exclusion is prevailing over the factor of the actual need of product **(Habib & Almamy, 2025)<sup>24</sup>**. However, as **(Roberts & David, 2019)<sup>25</sup>** observed that such purchases are frequently followed by regret, thus illustrating the paradoxical quality of FOMO. On one hand, such strategies on social media platforms capture immediate attention and drive sales; whereas, on the other hand, they risk weakening long-term satisfaction and loyalty. This paradox also highlights how closely **purchasing behaviour** is tied to **ethical considerations**. What begins as a sense of insecurity, fuelled by intense marketing can lead to decisions that feel rewarding in the moment but may carry risks in the long run.

Another dimension that becomes unavoidable is the **ethical implications of FOMO-based marketing**. **(Fuat Tanhan H et al., 2022)<sup>26</sup>**, brought to light that constant FOMO exposure increases anxiety and stress, whereas **(Chan et al., 2022)<sup>27</sup>** cautioned that FOMO promotes

mindless digital consumption. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)<sup>28</sup>, previously noted that social media marketers deliberately craft a sense of urgency in ads by manipulating scarcity cues. In this light, ethics is not an independent issue but a by-product of how psychological processes and message intensity intersect in the digital ecosystem. Therefore, the quicker and more compelling the appeal, the higher the chance that consumers feel pressured and skeptical. It also implies that ethical implications emerge not only as a separate concern but as an integral part of this system. This highlights that **social media** not only amplifies the reach of FOMO, but also addresses the associated **ethical implications**.

To address these tensions, the **dimension of balancing persuasion with responsibility** encompasses all other aspects and offers a framework for sustainable marketing practices. Lacking credibility can harm lasting reputation, whereas, (Ebru Enginkaya & Munise Hayrun Sağlam, 2025)<sup>29</sup> advocates of the idea of transparency and consumer-centric strategies. Responsibility can be operationalised through the **guiding principles** such as ensuring transparency while communicating urgency, moderating message intensity and influencing with authenticity and pairing persuasion with genuine value. For Gen Z, these principles not only foster the trust but also enhance the sustainability of engagement and positive impact on conversion rates. Consequently, responsibility serves as the system's controlling factor, preventing the excess use of psychological triggers, calibrating the strength of messaging and reducing ethical risks while still maintaining engagement. **Social Media Marketers** can also benefit from using the **FOMO principles** to generate excitement, particularly if they relate the element of scarcity to real value of the product, provided they do it in a way without compromising honesty.

Ultimately, the discussion demonstrates that the factors which are influencing FOMO on digital media platforms are not isolated but are inter-connected with multiple dimensions. **Psychological mechanisms** explain the **consumers sensitivities**, while Gen Z's **purchasing behaviour** reflects the practical outcomes of FOMO and also the **ethical implications** highlighting the risk of over exploitation, with **responsibility** acting as the unifying core that ensures persuasion builds trust and connections rather than undermining it. Taken together, these elements fulfil the aims and objectives of the study and also highlight a key insight that FOMO on social media is a double-edged phenomenon. It can effectively motivate users, but its continued effectiveness relies on marketers aligning persuasive strategies with well-being of consumers and enduring long-term trust which requires thoughtful ethical implementation.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE

The study concludes that FOMO is a viable psychological and marketing strategy that substantially shapes Gen Z's purchasing behaviours on social media platforms. The findings suggest that while FOMO strategies act as solid mechanisms to create urgency and drive consumer engagement with the brand, at the same time, they may also lead to anxiety, impulse purchasing behaviour and post-purchase regret. Therefore, the effectiveness of FOMO lies in striking the right balance where the persuasion does not erode trust and the engagement does not compromise well-being of Gen Z consumers.

For organisations the implications are quite clear and simple. Brands must adopt those digital marketing strategies which are transparent, authentic and have an ethical appeal rather than manipulative pressure and urgency. Brands that address ethical aspects into their marketing campaigns are more likely to have long-term connections with Gen Z consumers, which will

enhance their loyalty towards the brand and also improve conversion rates while maintaining trust and credibility.

Whereas, for regular customers, the research highlights the need of the digital mindfulness and ethical consumption habits. Understanding how FOMO- based marketing tactics are activated can facilitate consumer's decision-making and limit the unplanned spending driven by social influence. By strengthening digital awareness and emotional stability, the users can be benefitted from social connectivity while avoiding cycles of stress and excessive consumption. Future research is encouraged to investigate how both marketers and consumers can maintain a balanced relationship in a digital environment that provides excitement and engagement while protecting ethical integrity and psychological well-being.

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## **A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND WORKFORCE EFFICIENCY IN THE CEMENT INDUSTRY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In today's globalized and technologically evolving environment, the cement industry continues to be a critical driver of infrastructure growth, particularly in developing nations like India. As competition intensifies and automation and customer expectations rise, companies must increasingly depend on skilled human resources alongside machinery and materials. Talent Management (TM) has become a crucial approach for organizations aiming to achieve long-term competitive advantage. This research paper delves into the theoretical underpinnings of TM and examines its influence on workforce efficiency within the cement sector. Utilizing secondary data from scholarly articles, industry analyses, and case studies, the paper underscores the importance of TM practices—such as recruitment, employee development, retention strategies, performance evaluations, and succession planning—in enhancing organizational productivity and effectiveness. Key theoretical stances are used in this study to examine the connection between organizational performance and human resource practices, including Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the Resource-Based View, Human Capital Theory, and Social Exchange Theory. It emphasizes how crucial it is to match talent management plans with long-term corporate goals in order to increase output, reduce attrition, and promote creativity. Given the cement industry's capital-intensive nature and complex operations, it faces unique challenges like skill gaps, high employee attrition in remote areas, and resistance to adopting new technologies. By bringing in, nurturing, and keeping the best personnel, strategic talent management may successfully address these problems. The paper concludes with actionable insights and outlines emerging trends such as digital learning platforms, AI-powered HR analytics, and inclusive workforce initiatives, all of which have the potential to turn human capital into a key competitive advantage in the cement sector.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Talent Management, Workforce Efficiency, Cement Industry, Strategic Hrm, Human Capital, Employee Productivity.*

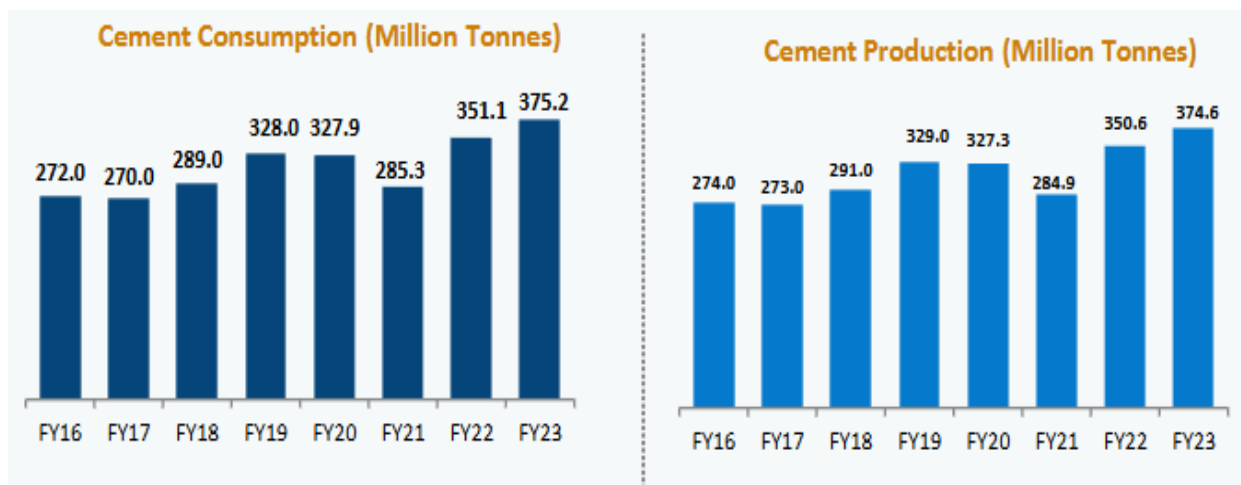
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## 1.INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Strategic Importance of The Cement Industry:

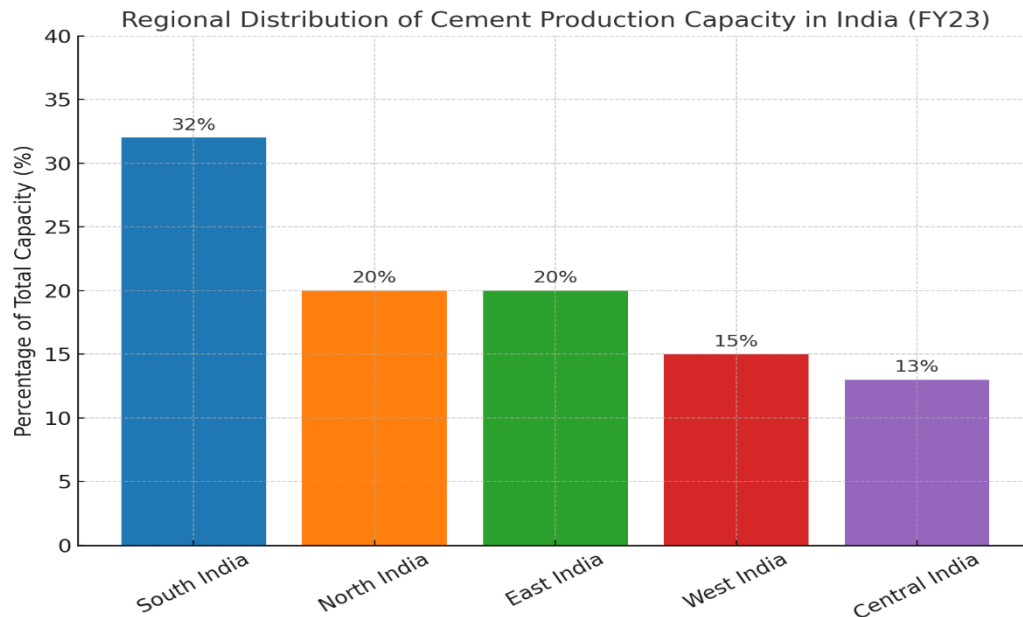
The cement industry, widely recognized as a key pillar of infrastructure development, holds substantial importance in driving a nation’s economic progress. In a country like India, the cement sector makes a notable contribution to GDP, generates foreign exchange, and provides significant employment opportunities. As reported by the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF, 2024), India is the second-largest manufacturer of cement in the world, with a capacity of more than 500 million tons per year. This positions the industry as a vital component in supporting industrial expansion, real estate growth, urban development, and major government programs such as "Housing for All," Smart Cities, and rural infrastructure projects like the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

By 2032, the cement market in India is expected to have grown from 3.96 billion tonnes in FY23 to 5.99 billion tonnes, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.7% from 2024 to 2032. The industry has a lot of room to grow because of the nation's rich and high-quality limestone sources. Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu are home to 77 of India's 210 major cement facilities. Of the country's cement manufacturing capacity, about 32 percent comes from South India, with the remaining 20 percent coming from the North, 15 percent from the West, 13 percent from the Central region, and 20 percent from the East. India's cement production reached 374.55 million tonnes in FY23, representing a 6.83% increase from the previous year.



(Source: India Brand Equity Foundation)

Here is a **bar chart** illustrating the **regional distribution of cement manufacturing capacity in India (FY23)**. The percentages represent each region's share of the total national capacity:



(Source: India Brand Equity Foundation)

### 1.2 Human Capital: The Driving Force Behind Efficiency:

While the cement industry is largely capital- and machinery-intensive, its success is closely tied to the effectiveness of its human resources. The sector's continuous operations, complex supply chains, environmental obligations, and safety requirements demand a highly skilled and efficient workforce. Properly managed human capital can be a critical asset, helping ensure smooth operations, high-quality output, and compliance with regulations. As a result, prioritizing workforce efficiency is essential for achieving strategic and operational goals.

### 1.3 Defining Workforce Efficiency in the Cement Sector:

Workforce efficiency generally refers to the relationship between output and input, where input encompasses factors such as time, labor, skills, and other resources. Greater efficiency indicates maximum productivity with minimal errors and resource wastage. In the cement industry—characterized by tight profit margins and fierce competition—each unit of output generated per employee plays a crucial role in overall profitability. A Deloitte report (2023) highlights that manufacturing companies, including those in the cement sector, with higher employee efficiency tend to achieve stronger financial performance and improved customer satisfaction.

### 1.4 Evolution and Strategic Relevance of Talent Management:

The goal of talent management (TM), a crucial strategic component of human resource management (HRM), is to improve workforce capabilities. It includes an organized method for locating, training, keeping, and making efficient use of people whose abilities and potential match organizational needs. TM is more than just hiring outstanding people, according to academics like Collings and Mellahi (2009). It also entails creating an atmosphere where talent is continuously nurtured to serve the organization's evolving goals.

## **1.5 Theoretical Underpinnings of TM:**

The foundation of TM is rooted in several influential theoretical frameworks. The Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991) identifies human capital as a crucial driver of long-term competitive advantage, emphasizing that organizations with distinctive and hard-to-replicate talent capabilities tend to outperform their rivals. Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961) argues that investing in education, training, and skill enhancement directly contributes to higher productivity. Meanwhile, Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) explains that effective organizational relationships are built on reciprocal commitments, such as employer support and employee loyalty, which foster greater performance and engagement.

## **1.6 Sector-Specific Challenges in TM:**

Within the cement industry, the application of effective TM strategies encounters unique, sector-specific obstacles. Many manufacturing facilities are situated in remote locations, posing challenges in attracting and retaining skilled professionals. Additionally, the workforce is composed of a diverse mix—including permanent staff, contract workers, and technical specialists—necessitating customized engagement and development approaches. Furthermore, as digital transformation accelerates with trends like Industry 4.0, there is an increasing demand for reskilling and upskilling employees across various roles (World Economic Forum, 2020) to keep pace with technological advancements.

## **1.7 Case Examples: TM Integration in Leading Cement Firms:**

Organizations such as UltraTech Cement and Shree Cement have started embedding Talent Management (TM) strategies into their core operations. UltraTech, for example, has introduced the “Learn@UltraTech” platform, offering digital learning resources that have contributed to improved employee productivity and a decrease in operational mistakes (UltraTech Cement Sustainability Report, 2023). Similarly, Shree Cement’s “Young Leaders Program” supports succession planning by identifying promising talent and preparing them for future leadership positions.

## **1.8 Talent Management and Employee Engagement:**

A crucial dimension of TM is its connection to employee engagement. Engaged employees tend to demonstrate greater dedication, creativity, and responsibility in their roles. According to a Gallup poll from 2022, businesses with high employee engagement saw a 17% rise in productivity and a 21% increase in profitability. In labor-intensive sectors like the cement industry, this directly impacts key operational indicators, including reduced downtime, better quality management, and stronger compliance with safety standards.

## **1.9 Performance Management as a TM Lever:**

Moreover, performance management systems (PMS), which are a fundamental part of Talent Management (TM), play a vital role in boosting workforce efficiency. Instead of relying solely on traditional yearly evaluations, many organizations are adopting continuous feedback, tailored development plans, and incentive structures tied to performance. These modern PMS approaches help align employee objectives with overall business goals, promoting a culture of clarity, motivation, and responsibility.

### **1.10 Gaps and Shortcomings in TM Implementation:**

Despite progress in some areas, many cement companies still lack comprehensive Talent Management (TM) systems. According to the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII, 2023), over 40% of manufacturing firms, including those in the cement sector, have not implemented formal succession planning or structured employee development programs. Furthermore, the use of data analytics in HR remains minimal, limiting the ability to forecast workforce needs and make informed talent-related decisions.

### **1.11 Embracing Digital Transformation in Talent Strategies:**

Artificial Intelligence (AI), algorithms for learning, and analytics for big data are being used more and more by progressive companies worldwide to improve their Talent Management (TM) strategies. These advanced technologies assist in detecting skill shortages, forecasting employee turnover, and personalizing training and development programs. As cement manufacturing becomes more digitized—with technologies like robotics in kilns and predictive maintenance in logistics—a technologically proficient workforce is becoming increasingly critical.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section aims to critically analyze the theoretical frameworks and existing empirical research on talent management (TM) and workforce efficiency, with particular emphasis on the industrial and manufacturing sectors, especially the cement industry.

### **2.1 Defining Talent Management:**

According to Collings and Mellahi (2009), management of talent (TM) is the systematic process of identifying, developing, keeping, and making use of people who have outstanding abilities and are strategically significant to a company. It has developed into a strategic role that has a big influence on an organization's long-term success, going beyond traditional HRM tasks.

According to Lewis and Heckman (2006), terms like strategic HR management and human assets administration are commonly used interchangeably with talent management. But what makes TM unique is its particular focus on putting the right people in the right roles and creating a solid pipeline for future leaders.

### **2.2 Employees Efficiency: Concept and Importance:**

Employees efficiency is commonly understood as the amount of output produced per unit of input, such as labor hours or employee count. It is shaped by several human resource practices, including training, employee motivation, leadership quality, and performance management (Becker & Huselid, 1998). In manufacturing sectors like the cement industry, workforce efficiency has a direct impact on key operational indicators, including productivity levels, cost management, quality control, and adherence to safety standards (Jiang et al., 2012).

### **2.3 Theoretical Foundations of Talent Management:**

**a. Resource-Based View (RBV):** Having resources that are valuable, rare, hard to duplicate, and irreplaceable (VRIN) can give businesses a long-term competitive advantage, according to Barney (1991). Since human capital complements these qualities, talent management (TM) becomes a top strategic concern. In the cement sector, where physical infrastructure is often comparable among competitors, the presence of a skilled and motivated workforce becomes a significant factor that sets firms apart (Wright, Dunford, & Snell, 2001).

- b. Human Capital Theory:** Rooted in the research of Schultz (1961) and Becker (1964), this theory suggests that investing in individuals—through education, training, and healthcare—enhances overall productivity. Cement industry organizations that focus on ongoing skill development are more capable of managing technical and operational challenges effectively (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2013).
- c. Social Exchange Theory:** According to Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory, when organizations offer positive actions—like recognition, growth opportunities, and equitable treatment—employees are likely to respond with increased loyalty, improved performance, and lower turnover. Talent management practices help cultivate this mutual exchange, leading to enhanced workforce efficiency.
- d. Motivation-Hygiene Theory:** Two types of elements are identified by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) as having an impact on employee contentment: hygienic factors like pay and work atmosphere, and motivators like success, recognition, and personal growth. Well-designed Talent Management (TM) practices address both sets of factors, resulting in higher employee motivation and improved performance (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959).

#### 2.4 Components of TM in Industry:

- a. Recruitment and Selection:** Recruitment serves as the entry point to effective talent management. Inadequate hiring choices can significantly reduce productivity and raise employee turnover rates (Chapman & Webster, 2003). In the cement industry, where specialized roles such as plant engineers, safety officers, and logistics supervisors are crucial, accurate and targeted selection is essential.

Modern organizations increasingly utilize advanced HR analytics and psychometric assessments to evaluate candidate suitability. Research by Sparrow and Makram (2015) indicates that predictive recruitment techniques improve overall organizational performance and better align talent with business needs.

- b. Training and Development:** Training is one of the most extensively studied components of TM. Noe et al. (2017) highlight a growing trend toward lifelong learning and the adoption of e-learning platforms, which is especially important in widely spread industries such as cement. Training and organizational performance are strongly positively correlated, especially in technical fields, according to research by Tharenou et al. (2007).

In the Indian scenario, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII, 2023) notes that cement firms that invest in safety training, digital tools, and lean manufacturing practices experience improved efficiency at the plant level.

- c. Performance Management:** Performance management systems (PMS) help align employee contributions with overall organizational goals. Armstrong (2014) describes PMS as an ongoing process that includes setting objectives, monitoring progress, and assessing the performance of individuals and teams. In cement production, where results can be clearly measured, key performance indicators (KPIs) like tonnes produced per employee or machine downtime per shift provide a clear link to efficiency (Singh & Agarwal, 2020).
- d. Subsequent Planning and Leadership Development:** Ready and Conger (2007) assert that companies with well-defined succession plans perform better than their counterparts during

uncertain times. With an aging workforce in industrial sectors, preparing the next generation of leaders has become a strategic necessity. Research indicates that practices like mentoring and job rotation are effective in maintaining leadership continuity in production-driven organizations (Groves, 2007).

- e. **Retention Strategies:** Elevated employee turnover results in higher expenses and disrupts operational consistency. Allen et al. (2010) found that TM practices like professional growth, employee recognition, and organizational support play a key role in lowering turnover intentions. To enhance retention in remote cement plant locations, companies often offer location-specific incentives and employee wellness initiatives.

## **2.5 Talent Management in Cement and Manufacturing Industries:**

High employee turnover increases operational costs and hampers workflow stability. According to Allen et al. (2010), Talent Management (TM) strategies like career progression opportunities, recognition programs, and supportive work environments significantly help in reducing employees' intent to leave. In remote cement plant locations, organizations commonly implement region-specific incentives and wellness programs to improve employee retention.

Das and Baruah (2013) discovered that Indian manufacturing companies adopting Talent Management (TM) practices experienced increased employee engagement, reduced absenteeism, and improved adherence to safety protocols. Likewise, Shah and Irani (2021) noted that manufacturing plants with a strong focus on talent reported 15–20% higher productivity levels than those operating with conventional HR systems.

UltraTech Cement (2023) reported a 9% improvement in production efficiency after introducing AI-based Talent Management tools such as skill matrix assessments, personalized training suggestions, and competency tracking dashboards.

## **2.6 Limitations in Existing Literature:**

Although existing literature offers valuable insights into the effect of TM on workforce performance, empirical studies specifically targeting the cement industry remain scarce. Additionally, factors such as regional variations (urban versus rural plant locations), the presence of labor unions, and cultural influences affect the success of TM practices but are frequently overlooked in research.

Future research could utilize a mixed-method approach by integrating quantitative performance metrics with qualitative perspectives gathered from HR professionals and line supervisors working in cement plants.

## **3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:**

Main research objectives are as follows:

- ❖ To explore the theoretical frameworks related to talent management.
- ❖ To investigate how TM practices and worker productivity relate to each other in the cement sector.
- ❖ To identify challenges faced by the cement sector in implementing effective TM.
- ❖ To provide practical recommendations for enhancing TM systems.

## **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

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This research adopts a qualitative and conceptual methodology based on secondary data sources. Data has been collected from :

- ❖ Academic journals and books (e.g., *HRM Journal*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*)
- ❖ Industry reports by IBEF, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Deloitte, and McKinsey
- ❖ Company reports (e.g., UltraTech, ACC, Shree Cement)
- ❖ Government and trade association databases (e.g., Cement Manufacturers' Association of India)

Data analysis was conducted through content analysis and theoretical interpretation.

## **5. Talent Management Practices in the Cement Industry:**

### **5.1 Recruitment and Selection:**

Cement companies use diverse recruitment methods such as campus placements, lateral hiring, and employee referral programs, aiming to align talent acquisition with their strategic objectives. For instance, ACC Cement utilizes psychometric testing and AI-powered applicant tracking systems to enhance person-job alignment.

### **5.2 Training and Development:**

Training plays a significant component of keeping the workforce up to date in a technology-focused industry. Key training areas include process automation, safety regulations, sustainability practices, and leadership development. UltraTech Cement reported a 22% rise in output following the introduction of its “Learn@UltraTech” learning management system, designed to support ongoing employee education.

### **5.3 Performance Management Systems (PMS):**

Performance evaluations have shifted from traditional annual reviews to ongoing feedback systems. Cement firms now utilize key performance indicators (KPIs) linked to operational efficiency, including output per hour, equipment uptime, and safety ratings. Tools like 360-degree feedback, performance scorecards, and personalized development plans are also widely implemented.

### **5.4 Succession Planning:**

With an aging workforce and increasing technical demands, succession planning has become essential. Companies build leadership continuity through talent pipelines, mentorship programs, and job rotation. Shree Cement’s “Future Leaders Program,” for example, focuses on identifying and developing young managers for key strategic positions.

### **5.5 Retention and Employee Engagement:**

Retention strategies encompass performance-based incentives, job enrichment, work-life balance initiatives, and wellness programs. To boost employee engagement, companies implement recognition systems, idea-sharing platforms, and participative management practices.

## 6. Measuring Workforce Efficiency in Cement Firms:

Evaluating workforce efficiency is essential for assessing the effect of TM initiatives. In the cement sector—known for its capital-intensive nature and reliance on both manual labor and machinery—the following metrics are commonly used:

- **Productivity per Employee:** This indicator evaluates the amount of output (such as metric tons of cement) produced by each worker within a specific period. It demonstrates the efficiency of human capital in contributing to overall operational performance.
- **Output per Labor Hour:** This more detailed metric shows the amount of work completed—either in volume or value—per hour of labor. It is especially useful for monitoring efficiency in shift-based operations within cement plants.
- **Training ROI (Return on Investment):** Training ROI is assessed by evaluating the cost of employee development initiatives against the resulting performance gains or cost reductions. A positive return indicates that the investment in talent is delivering measurable business value (Phillips, 2003).
- **Reduction in Absenteeism and Attrition:** A decrease in absenteeism typically reflects greater employee engagement, while reduced attrition suggests stronger organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Together, these factors point to a productive and stable workforce.
- **Health and Safety Incident Frequency:** In sectors such as cement, workplace safety is closely linked to employee performance and overall organizational risk. Reduced accident rates usually indicate successful safety training programs and a committed, well-managed workforce.

For instance, UltraTech Cement's 2023 Sustainability Report highlighted a 9% boost in employee productivity after implementing AI-driven workforce planning tools, personalized training programs, and predictive analytics. These digital innovations facilitated the identification of skill gaps, automated training schedules, and improved the allocation of skilled workers across production units. Additionally, the company experienced a 12% decrease in minor safety incidents, credited to focused safety drills and real-time performance feedback systems.

## 7. Challenges in Implementing Talent Management in Cement Firms:

Although the advantages of talent management are widely acknowledged, applying it within the cement industry involves a number of challenges:

### 7.1 Skill Gaps:

The cement sector often faces a gap between the skills available in the labor market and the technical expertise needed on-site. This issue is especially evident in areas like automation, digital monitoring, and lean manufacturing—competencies that traditional education systems rarely cover. Consequently, companies invest considerable resources in internal training and skill development.

### **7.2 High Attrition in Remote Locations:**

Cement plants are frequently situated in remote or rural regions, posing challenges for attracting and retaining skilled employees. Workers in these locations often have limited access to healthcare, education, and recreational facilities, which adversely affects retention. Additionally, career advancement prospects are generally viewed as more limited compared to those available in urban areas.

### **7.3 Lack of Digital Integration:**

Despite progress in HR technology, numerous cement companies continue to use outdated or manual processes for payroll, attendance tracking, performance evaluations, and training. This absence of digital integration restricts real-time decision-making and hinders the customization of learning and performance improvement initiatives.

### **7.4 Resistance to Change:**

Managing change continues to be a significant challenge. Senior employees or those from unionized environments frequently resist new work processes or digital HR technologies. Such resistance slows down the implementation of technology and diminishes the impact of Talent Management initiatives.

### **7.5 Compliance and Safety Training Burdens:**

The cement sector operates under a wide range of labor laws and safety regulations. HR departments carry the responsibility of maintaining compliance by conducting frequent and often mandatory training sessions. If these programs are not managed effectively, they tend to become routine exercises that lack engagement and fail to promote meaningful improvement.

To address these challenges, companies need to implement comprehensive TM strategies customized to the particular geographical, technological, and cultural contexts of the cement industry.

## **8. Emerging Trends in Talent Management:**

Amid rapid technological advancements and shifting workforce expectations, Talent Management practices in the cement sector are evolving. Notable emerging trends include:

### **8.1 AI and Predictive HR Analytics:**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning are increasingly used to improve different HR activities. Predictive models assist in identifying employees likely to leave, evaluating recruitment effectiveness, and anticipating future skill requirements aligned with production demands. Additionally, AI aids workforce planning by suggesting the best staffing arrangements and necessary training programs (Bersin, 2020).

### **8.2 Remote Learning and Mobile Learning Platforms:**

More companies are embracing digital learning platforms that can be accessed on smartphones and tablets. This allows employees, even in remote plant locations, to participate in self-paced training covering technical skills, safety protocols, and leadership development. Leading cement companies are deploying platforms such as SAP SuccessFactors and Cornerstone OnDemand to offer scalable, mobile-friendly e-learning solutions.

### 8.3 Focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):

Historically dominated by men, the cement industry is now placing greater focus on workplace diversity and inclusion. Companies are adopting DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) policies to encourage the participation of women and other underrepresented groups in operations, engineering, and leadership positions. Efforts include gender-neutral recruitment practices, safety assessments tailored for female employees, and the creation of inclusive work environments.

### 8.4 Integration of TM with Sustainability Goals:

Several cement companies are integrating Talent Management (TM) with their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives. Employees are motivated to take part in corporate social responsibility (CSR), energy-saving, and sustainability efforts. This strategy fosters a sense of purpose that is in line with the organization's long-term objectives and increases engagement. For example, Dalmia Cement has launched “Green Leaders” programs that blend employee growth with environmental responsibility.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Drawing from the evaluation of Talent Management practices and challenges within the cement sector, the following recommendations are suggested:

- **Adopt AI-driven HR Technologies** :Cement firms should allocate resources toward AI-driven recruitment, predictive workforce analytics, and learning management systems (LMS) to tailor employee development and enhance the quality of hiring.
- **Align TM with ESG and Business Strategy**: Talent objectives should be integrated into the organization’s overall strategic vision, encompassing areas such as sustainability, innovation, and digital transformation.
- **Promote a Culture of Lifelong Learning**: Develop ongoing, role-specific learning initiatives that incorporate microlearning, certification courses, and job shadowing to enhance technical skills and prepare employees for leadership roles.
- **Customize Training Based on Competency Frameworks**: Create training programs tailored to the specific skills needed for various job categories, including maintenance engineers, plant operators, and safety inspectors.
- **Foster an Inclusive, Engaging Environment**: Introduce flexible work arrangements, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and employee recognition programs to enhance engagement and retention. For remote plant locations, offer wellness programs, support services for families, and efforts to integrate employees into the local community.

## 10. CONCLUSION

Talent management has become essential for improving workforce efficiency and competitiveness in the cement industry. This study demonstrates that good talent management, when combined with essential ideas such as the Resource-Based View, Human Resources Theory, and a theory of social exchange, not only increases productivity but also helps to tackle problems such as skill shortages and employee turnover. Companies that actively invest in developing their talent, adopting digital tools, and promoting inclusive practices are better prepared to handle complex operations and future challenges. As the industry moves towards advanced technologies (Industry 4.0) and focuses on environmental and social responsibilities

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(ESG), the importance of strategic HR management will continue to grow. The cement sector, which was once slow to update its HR practices, is now at a crucial stage where talent management is no longer just a support role but a key factor driving growth, sustainability, and strength.

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**EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND TEACHER JOB PERFORMANCE:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DELTA AND EDO GOVERNMENT  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study comparatively investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and teachers' job performance in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. Fournull hypotheses guided the study. The correlational survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 10,262 teachers from 792 public secondary schools across both states, while the sample consisted of 387 teachers (208 from Delta and 179 from Edo States) selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured instrument titled Emotional Intelligence and Teacher Job Performance Questionnaire (EITJPQ), validated by three experts in Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation. Reliability was determined through a pilot test yielding Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.71 for the Emotional Intelligence Scale and 0.81 for the Teacher Job Performance Scale. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), independent samples  $t$ -test, and regression analyses at 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed no significant difference in emotional intelligence and job performance between Delta and Edo teachers. Emotional intelligence significantly correlated with teacher job performance in both states, explaining about 50% of the variance. Among emotional intelligence components, self-awareness and self-management were the strongest predictors of job performance, while social awareness and relationship management contributed moderately. The study concluded that Ministries of Education organize emotional intelligence training, integrate EI development into teacher preparation programmes, strengthen mentoring systems, and implement performance-based incentives.*

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**KEYWORDS:** Comparative study, emotional intelligence, government secondary schools, teachers' job performance.

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## INTRODUCTION

The quality of education in any nation largely depends on the effectiveness and performance of its teachers. In Nigeria, public secondary schools are the foundation for developing learners' intellectual and moral capacities, yet teacher job performance remains a recurring concern in many states. Job performance among teachers involves the extent to which they effectively plan lessons, deliver instruction, assess students, maintain discipline, and engage in school-related responsibilities. However, beyond professional competence and technical skills, teachers' ability to understand, regulate, and manage emotions—both their own and those of others—has emerged as a crucial factor influencing their effectiveness in the classroom (Savina et al., 2025).

Emotional intelligence (EI), conceptualized as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions constructively, has gained significant attention as a determinant of employee effectiveness and productivity in human service professions such as teaching. The school environment is inherently emotional, requiring teachers to navigate complex interpersonal relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators. Consequently, teachers with high emotional intelligence are often better able to handle classroom challenges, sustain motivation, and foster positive learning climates. Studies have emphasized that teachers who demonstrate higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to exhibit stronger interpersonal communication, better conflict management, and greater adaptability, all of which contribute to improved job performance (Fteiha&Awwad, 2020; Bibi, Farooq & Akbar, 2024).

Across various educational systems, research has shown that emotional intelligence influences key indicators of teacher effectiveness, including classroom management, student engagement, and instructional delivery. For instance, Shengyao et al. (2024) found that teachers with higher emotional intelligence recorded superior performance ratings, largely due to their capacity for empathy and relational management. In the African context, emotional intelligence has been linked to enhanced teacher morale, lower burnout rates, and improved professional commitment (Mardi et al., 2025). Similarly, Ogunmola et al. (2024) reported that emotional intelligence fosters positive attitudes and collaborative practices among educators, thereby improving institutional outcomes.

Within Nigeria, emerging evidence has continued to underscore the connection between emotional intelligence and job performance among teachers. Efayena (2024) reported that school leaders with high emotional intelligence exhibited more effective interpersonal relationships and decision-making abilities that translated into improved school management and teacher productivity. Savina et al. (2025) also revealed that teachers who possess strong emotional self-awareness and empathy tend to achieve better instructional outcomes and maintain higher classroom discipline. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence may be a valuable factor in understanding differences in teacher job performance within Nigerian educational contexts.

Despite these insights, studies directly comparing teachers' emotional intelligence and job performance across Nigerian states remain limited. Delta and Edo States, though geographically proximate and similar in socio-cultural characteristics, operate distinct administrative and educational frameworks that may influence teacher behaviour and performance outcomes.

Comparative studies are essential to identify whether contextual differences account for variations in teachers' emotional intelligence and job performance. Moreover, while many existing studies have explored emotional intelligence as a general construct, few have examined how its components—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness (empathy), and relationship management—relate to teachers' job performance across different public-school systems (Bibi, Farooq & Akbar, 2024).

## **Statement of the Problem**

Despite continuous professional development initiatives and policy reforms aimed at improving teaching effectiveness, many teachers still exhibit inadequate classroom engagement, poor time management, weak communication with students, and limited capacity to handle job-related stress. These challenges suggest that factors beyond cognitive and technical competencies influence teachers' performance. In an environment where teachers face large class sizes, limited resources, and high emotional demands, the ability to understand and regulate emotions becomes increasingly critical. Emotional intelligence—encompassing self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and relationship management—may therefore play a significant role in determining how effectively teachers perform their duties and maintain professional relationships within their schools.

However, there is limited empirical evidence comparing how emotional intelligence relates to teacher job performance across different state contexts in Nigeria. Delta and Edo States, though neighbours and similar in socio-cultural orientation, operate distinct administrative systems and educational climates that could influence teachers' emotional and behavioural dispositions. The extent to which teachers' emotional intelligence differs across these two states, and how such differences relate to variations in job performance, remains largely unexplored. Furthermore, the specific contribution of the components of emotional intelligence—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management—to teacher job performance in government secondary schools has not been clearly established. The absence of such comparative evidence creates a gap in understanding the psychological and emotional dimensions of teaching effectiveness in Nigerian public education. This study, therefore, seeks to address this gap by examining emotional intelligence and teacher job performance in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

## **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. There will be no significant difference in the levels of emotional intelligence between teachers in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.
2. There is no significant difference in the levels of job performance between teachers in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.
3. There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of teachers in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.
4. The components of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness/empathy, and relationship management) do not significantly predict teachers' job performance in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

## Methods and Materials

The study adopted a correlational survey research design, which was considered appropriate for examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher job performance without manipulating any of the variables. This design enabled the collection of quantitative data and the statistical analysis of the strength, direction, and predictive influence between the variables.

The population of the study comprised 10,262 teachers drawn from 792 public secondary schools across the six senatorial districts of Delta and Edo States. Out of this number, 6,441 teachers were from 477 schools in Delta State, while 3,821 teachers were from 315 schools in Edo State. A sample of 387 teachers was drawn using a multi-stage sampling technique that involved both stratified and simple random sampling methods. The sample size was considered sufficient based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, which recommends a minimum of 384 respondents for a population of 10,000 at a 95% confidence level.

Data for the study were collected using a single structured instrument titled the Emotional Intelligence and Teacher Job Performance Questionnaire (EITJPQ), which consisted of three sections. Section A captured the respondents' demographic information, such as gender, teaching experience, and qualification. Section B focused on Emotional Intelligence, measuring the dimensions of self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and relationship management. Section C addressed Teacher Job Performance, assessing areas such as lesson preparation, instructional delivery, classroom management, and participation in co-curricular activities. All items were structured on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1), which facilitated consistent response measurement and simplified data analysis.

The validity of the instrument was ensured through face and content validation by three experts—two in Educational Management and Foundations and one in Measurement and Evaluation—from reputable Nigerian universities. Their feedback helped refine the clarity, content coverage, and relevance of the items. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients obtained EI was 0.71 for the Emotional Intelligence Scale and 0.81 for the Teacher Job Performance Scale, indicating high internal consistency and reliability of the instrument for the study. The questionnaires were personally administered to the respondents by the researcher and trained research assistants. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately to ensure a high return rate.

The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions 1 and 2, which examined the levels of emotional intelligence and teacher job performance among teachers in both states. Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was employed to answer research questions 3 and 4, which explored the predictive influence of emotional intelligence and its components on teacher job performance. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using the independent samples t-test to determine significant differences between groups, while Hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested using linear regression and multiple regression analyses, respectively, to determine the nature and extent of prediction between emotional intelligence and teacher job performance.

**Hypothesis 1:** There will be no significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence of teachers in secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

**Table 1: Independent Samples t-Test Analysis of the Difference in the Level of Emotional Intelligence of Teachers in Delta and Edo States**

Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Delta	208	2.76	1.04	385	0.24	0.81	Not Significant
Edo	179	2.79	1.05				

Table 1 presents the independent samples t-test results on the difference in the level of emotional intelligence of teachers in Delta and Edo States. Teachers in Delta State had a mean score of 2.76 (SD = 1.04), while those in Edo State had a mean score of 2.79 (SD = 1.05). The computed t-value of 0.24 with 385 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.81 ( $p > 0.05$ ) indicates that the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant. This finding suggests that the level of emotional intelligence among teachers in Delta and Edo States is similar. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there will be no significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence of teachers in secondary schools in both States is retained.

**Hypothesis 2:** There will be no significant difference in the levels of job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

**Table 2: Independent Samples t-Test Analysis of the Difference in the Level of Job Performance of Teachers in Delta and Edo States**

Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Delta	208	3.32	0.89	385	0.28	0.78	Not Significant
Edo	179	3.34	0.88				

Table 2 shows the independent samples t-test results comparing the job performance of teachers in Delta and Edo States. Teachers in Delta State recorded a mean score of 3.32 (SD = 0.89), while those in Edo State obtained 3.34 (SD = 0.88). The t-value of 0.28, with 385 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.78 ( $p > 0.05$ ), reveals that the difference in their mean scores is not statistically significant. This result implies that the job performance of teachers in both Delta and Edo States is approximately the same. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the job performance of teachers in the two states is retained.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant relationship between the level of emotional intelligence and job performance of teachers in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

**Table 3: Coefficient of Determination on the Relationship between the level of Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance of Teachers in Government Secondary Schools in Delta and Edo States**

State Variables	R	r <sup>2</sup>	r <sup>2</sup> %	Remark
Delta Emotional Intelligence → Job Performance	0.708	0.501	50.1	Strong positive relationship
Edo Emotional Intelligence → Job Performance	0.710	0.504	50.4	Strong positive relationship

Table 3 shows the coefficient of determination of the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of teachers in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States. The result reveals correlation coefficients (r) of 0.708 and 0.710 for Delta and Edo States

respectively. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) indicates that emotional intelligence accounted for 50.1% of the variation in teachers' job performance in Delta State and 50.4% in Edo State. These findings demonstrate a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance, implying that teachers who exhibit higher levels of emotional awareness, regulation, empathy, and interpersonal competence tend to perform better in their professional duties across both states.

**Table 4: ANOVA Summary for the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance (Linear Regression)**

State	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Delta	Regression	7.951	1	7.951	49.876	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	30.901	206	0.150		
	Total	38.852	207			
Edo	Regression	8.342	1	8.342	51.237	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	31.124	177	0.176		
	Total	39.466	178			

**a. Dependent Variable:** Job Performance

**b. Predictors:** (Constant), Emotional Intelligence

Table 4 reveals that in Delta State, emotional intelligence significantly predicted teachers' job performance,  $F(1,206) = 49.876$ ,  $p < .05$ . Likewise, in Edo State, emotional intelligence also significantly predicted teachers' job performance,  $F(1,177) = 51.237$ ,  $p < .05$ . The significance levels (.000) indicate that emotional intelligence has a strong positive linear relationship with job performance among teachers in both states. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that teachers who exhibit higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to perform better in their job roles across government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

**Hypothesis Four:** The components of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness/empathy, and relationship management) do not significantly predict teachers' job performance in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

**Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Contribution of Emotional Intelligence Components to Teachers’ Job Performance in Delta and Edo States**

State Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Remark	
Delta Constant	0.708	0.501	0.495	0.508	1.186	Strong Relationship	Positive
Self-Awareness	0.643	0.413	0.405	0.562	0.476	Strong Relationship	Positive
Self-Management	0.587	0.344	0.336	0.601	0.398	Moderate Relationship	Positive
Social Awareness (Empathy)	0.524	0.274	0.266	0.639	0.332	Moderate Relationship	Positive
Relationship Management	0.468	0.219	0.211	0.681	0.247	Weak Relationship	Positive
Edo Constant	0.710	0.504	0.497	0.505	1.193	Strong Relationship	Positive
Self-Awareness	0.657	0.431	0.423	0.559	0.482	Strong Relationship	Positive
Self-Management	0.594	0.353	0.345	0.596	0.403	Moderate Relationship	Positive
Social Awareness (Empathy)	0.531	0.282	0.274	0.635	0.338	Moderate Relationship	Positive
Relationship Management	0.476	0.227	0.219	0.678	0.252	Weak Relationship	Positive

**a.Predictors:** (Constant), Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness (Empathy), Relationship Management

Table 5 presents the multiple regression analysis results showing the predictive contributions of emotional intelligence components—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness (empathy), and relationship management—on teachers’ job performance in Delta and Edo States.

For Delta State, the composite model yielded  $R = 0.708$  and  $R^2 = 0.501$ , meaning that the four components collectively explain 50.1% of the variation in teachers’ job performance. For Edo State, the model produced  $R = 0.710$  and  $R^2 = 0.504$ , indicating that emotional intelligence accounts for 50.4% of the variance in job performance. These findings show that emotional intelligence exerts a strong positive influence on teacher job performance across both states.

Examining the individual components, self-awareness made the highest unique contribution to job performance in both states ( $R^2 = 0.413$  in Delta;  $0.431$  in Edo), signifying that teachers who are more self-aware—understanding their emotions, strengths, and weaknesses—are likely to perform management followed as the next strongest predictor ( $R^2 = 0.344$  in Delta;  $0.353$  in Edo), showing that teachers who can regulate their emotions and remain calm under stress tend to demonstrate consistent job performance.

Social awareness (empathy) contributed moderately ( $R^2 = 0.274$  in Delta;  $0.282$  in Edo), suggesting that teachers who show empathy and social sensitivity create more positive classroom climates that enhance performance. Relationship management recorded the lowest contribution ( $R^2 = 0.219$  in Delta;  $0.227$  in Edo), though it still showed a weak positive relationship, implying

that maintaining effective professional relationships supports performance but to a lesser extent compared to self-awareness and self-management.

**Table 6: ANOVA Summary for the Components of Emotional Intelligence Predicting Job Performance (Multiple Regression)**

State	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Delta	Regression	19.711	4	4.928	23.214	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	19.141	203	0.094		
	Total	38.852	207			
Edo	Regression	20.233	4	5.058	24.071	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	19.233	174	0.111		
	Total	39.466	178			

**a. Dependent Variable:** Job Performance

**b. Predictors:** (Constant), Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness/Empathy, Relationship Management

Table 6 shows that in Delta State, the components of emotional intelligence jointly predicted teachers' job performance significantly,  $F(4,203) = 23.214$ ,  $p < .05$ . Similarly, in Edo State, the regression model was significant,  $F(4,174) = 24.071$ ,  $p < .05$ . The results indicate that the four components of emotional intelligence collectively explain a substantial proportion of the variance in teachers' job performance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding implies that the combined influence of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness/empathy, and relationship management significantly enhances teachers' job performance in both states. In essence, emotionally intelligent teachers are better equipped to manage classroom interactions, maintain discipline, and achieve higher instructional effectiveness.

## DISCUSSION

The results showed that teachers in both Delta and Edo States exhibited high levels of emotional intelligence, with mean scores of 2.76 and 2.79 respectively, and no statistically significant difference between the two groups. This indicates that teachers in both states possess similar capacities for recognizing, understanding, and managing emotions in their professional interactions. The finding supports earlier studies that identified emotional intelligence as a common attribute among effective educators, regardless of geographic or administrative differences (Fteiha&Awwad, 2020; Shengyao et al., 2024). It also aligns with the view of Savina et al. (2025), who found that teachers in Benue State with high emotional intelligence demonstrated strong interpersonal communication and emotional regulation skills that enhanced their instructional performance. The similarity in emotional intelligence levels between Delta and Edo teachers could be attributed to shared cultural, socio-economic, and professional training contexts within the South-South region of Nigeria. This suggests that emotional competencies are becoming a standard psychological resource among public-school teachers, likely due to increasing awareness of socio-emotional skills in teacher development programs.

The study also found that the level of job performance among teachers in Delta and Edo States was high and statistically similar, with mean scores of 3.32 and 3.34 respectively. This implies that teachers across both states demonstrate commendable levels of professional effectiveness,

including lesson preparation, instructional delivery, classroom management, and participation in co-curricular activities. The finding corroborates the assertion by Bibi, Farooq, and Akbar (2024) that emotionally intelligent teachers often display consistent job performance and commitment due to their ability to manage stress and sustain motivation. Similarly, Efayena (2024) emphasized that emotionally competent school leaders and teachers in Delta State were better able to maintain morale, leading to improved organizational effectiveness. The absence of a significant difference between the two states suggests that teachers operate under similar structural and motivational conditions that influence their performance. It may also indicate that institutional reforms and professional standards within Nigeria's education system have fostered relatively uniform performance expectations across states.

The findings further revealed a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and teachers' job performance in both Delta ( $r = 0.708$ ;  $r^2 = 0.501$ ) and Edo States ( $r = 0.710$ ;  $r^2 = 0.504$ ), indicating that emotional intelligence accounted for about half of the variation in teacher job performance in both states. This result implies that teachers who possess higher emotional intelligence tend to perform better in planning, instructional delivery, classroom management, and communication. The finding agrees with Shengyao et al. (2024), who reported that teachers with higher emotional intelligence achieved superior performance ratings due to their empathy and interpersonal sensitivity. It also supports the conclusion of Ogunmola, Eguabor, Ogbechi, Ogbechi, Halim, and Adow (2024), who found that emotional intelligence enhances positive attitudes, teamwork, and productivity among Nigerian educators. In the same vein, Mardi, Kudzawu, Dontoh, Agyei, and Fuseinic (2025) established that emotional intelligence significantly improves job satisfaction and reduces burnout among Ghanaian teachers, thereby enhancing performance outcomes. The strong correlation observed in the present study suggests that emotional intelligence serves as a psychological anchor for effective teaching behaviour, helping teachers to maintain composure, empathy, and professional focus even under challenging school conditions.

The multiple regression results showed that the components of emotional intelligence—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness (empathy), and relationship management—jointly and significantly predicted teachers' job performance in both Delta and Edo States. Specifically, self-awareness and self-management made the strongest contributions, while social awareness and relationship management contributed moderately and positively. This indicates that teachers who understand their emotions and can regulate them effectively are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of job performance. These findings are consistent with those of Bibi, Farooq, and Akbar (2024), who reported that teachers' self-awareness and emotional control are central to their ability to handle classroom challenges and sustain motivation. Similarly, Fteiha and Awwad (2020) emphasized that emotionally self-regulated teachers are better able to adapt to students' needs, manage conflict, and achieve instructional objectives. The findings also align with Efayena (2024), who highlighted that emotional awareness among school heads and teachers enhances decision-making and professional interactions that foster effective performance.

The relatively lower contributions of social awareness and relationship management observed in this study suggest that while empathy and interpersonal relationships are valuable, they may depend on institutional support systems and organizational culture for their full impact. Nonetheless, their positive influence reinforces the idea that emotional intelligence operates as an integrated construct, where self-understanding, emotional control, empathy, and relationship skills collectively drive teacher effectiveness.

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## CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to examine and compare the impact of emotional intelligence on the job performance of teachers in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States. Based on the findings, it was concluded that emotional intelligence significantly influences teachers' job performance in both states, although the degree of influence varied slightly. Teachers in Edo State demonstrated higher levels of emotional intelligence and job performance compared to their counterparts in Delta State. This suggests that contextual or environmental factors such as school climate and administrative support may play a role in strengthening the link between emotional intelligence and performance. Overall, the study established that teachers with higher emotional intelligence are more effective in classroom management, interpersonal relationships, and instructional delivery across both states.

## Recommendations

1. The Ministries of Education in Delta and Edo States should organize state-specific emotional intelligence training programmes tailored to address the distinct emotional and professional needs of teachers in each state.
2. Teacher education institutions should include comparative emotional intelligence development modules to help pre-service teachers understand how emotional skills influence performance across different educational contexts.
3. School administrators in both states should strengthen mentoring and support systems that promote empathy, collaboration, and self-regulation among teachers to enhance performance outcomes.
4. State governments should adopt performance appraisal policies that recognize and reward teachers who demonstrate high emotional intelligence and outstanding job performance, fostering healthy competition and continuous improvement across both states.

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## FROM CHARACTER TO NATION: RECLAIMING VIVEKANANDA'S EDUCATION FOR INDIA'S YOUTH DIVIDEND

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper argues that India's youth dividend will translate into national capability only when education forms persons of character who can convert knowledge into service and ethical leadership. Building on Swami Vivekananda's "man-making" ideal education as the integrated cultivation of body, mind, heart, and spirit the study synthesizes contemporary analyses of globalization's pressures on mass education, convergences and gaps within NEP 2020, and practice-oriented designs for teacher development, assessment, and equity. The article proposes the C3 framework Character, Competence, Contribution as co-equal, assessable outcomes operationalized through experiential and service-learning, dialogic and contemplative routines, arts and physical culture, and community partnerships. It details curricular design across school and higher education, pedagogies that humanize learning, teacher preparation and school culture reforms, performance-based assessment, equity architecture for first-generation and rural learners, and digital-era applications that marry scientific temper with responsibility and pluralism. The discussion advances "scale-with-humanization" as a system design principle, and the conclusion outlines measurable indicators and policy recommendations to align institutional incentives with well-being, civic participation, employability quality, and community impact. In doing so, it reframes nation-building as the everyday practice of strength, truthfulness, and service, where character becomes capability and personal excellence advances the public good.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Man-Making Education, Character Education, Service-Learning, Ethical Leadership, Experiential Learning, Assessment Reform, Character–Competence–Contribution (C3), Daridra Narayana (Dignity Of Labour).*

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### INTRODUCTION

India's demographic moment is both promise and responsibility: millions of youths require more than credentials they need inner strength, purpose, and social consciousness to convert opportunity into nation-building. Vivekananda's insistence that education is "the manifestation of the perfection already in man" reframes policy debates moving beyond content acquisition to cultivating will, fearlessness, and compassion, while embracing science, industry, and service to the poorest as sacred duty. Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy offers a precise language and a practical compass for this moment. He conceived education as "man-making," the manifestation of the learner's inherent perfection through disciplined development of body, mind, heart, and spirit. In this view, strength and fearlessness are not incidental virtues but

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intended outcomes of education; scientific temper and universality are to be yoked to compassion and responsibility; and service to the poorest, “Daridra Narayana” is not charity but the site where knowledge, character, and contribution meet. This synthesis speaks to today’s context, where globalization and platform economies have widened access and aspiration but also exposed fault lines credentialism without capability, anxiety without agency, and skills often detached from social purpose, especially for first-generation and rural youth navigating volatile labour markets and digital distraction.

At the policy level, NEP 2020 provides framework that resonates with Vivekananda’s compass: holistic development; value-based and experiential learning; arts, sports, and vocational integration; foundational literacy in the mother tongue; and flexible, multidisciplinary pathways. Yet implementation gaps persist: teacher preparation seldom equips facilitators for character pedagogy and reflective dialogue; classroom routines inadequately cultivate values-in-action; assessments over-reward recall; and well-being supports remain uneven despite their centrality to attention and purpose. This paper responds with an operational blueprint that treats Character, Competence, and Contribution as co-equal, assessable aims. It sequences curricular design from early attention and language foundations to multidisciplinary problem-solving and capstone service or enterprise; it specifies pedagogies experiential projects, guided reflection, contemplative and dialogic routines, arts, and physical culture that humanize learning; and it centers teacher formation and school culture so that courage, honesty, and service become lived norms rather than posters on walls.

This article situates Vivekananda’s man-making education within these realities, arguing for a practical, scalable framework that binds character, competence, and contribution as mutually reinforcing aims rather than trade-offs (Bharadwaj & Pradeep, 2023). By grounding curriculum in experiential learning and service, strengthening teacher formation in reflective and inclusive practices, and reforming assessment to recognize ethical reasoning, teamwork, and community impact, the proposal seeks to humanize education at scale without sacrificing rigor or employability (Soy, 2023). In doing so, it positions youth not merely as beneficiaries of development but as co-creators of a just, innovative, and cohesive India aligning personal excellence with national purpose through everyday practices of strength, truthfulness, and service (Ranjan, 2021).

### **Vivekananda’s Educational Core: Concepts and Continuities**

Vivekananda’s educational core is best understood as “man-making” education, a holistic formation of the whole person that integrates physical vigour, mental clarity, moral courage, and spiritual awareness, so that knowledge becomes character and character becomes social contribution (Bharadwaj & Pradeep, 2023). Central to this vision is the axiom that education is the “manifestation of the perfection already in man,” which moves pedagogy beyond information transfer to the cultivation of will, discernment, and purposeful self-reliance through disciplined practice, reasoned inquiry, and lived responsibility in community (Talukdar, 2020). Strength and fearlessness are not incidental virtues but intended outcomes of education, linking psychological resilience, ethical self-command, and initiative to leadership, entrepreneurship, and citizenship thus redefining success as excellence yoked to duty rather than credentialism alone (Bharadwaj & Pradeep, 2023). Equally foundational is the ethic of service encapsulated in “Daridra Narayana” which recasts social uplift from charity into spiritual praxis: the dignity of labour, the inclusion of the marginalized, and solidarity across communities become intrinsic to educated personhood

and to nation-building as an everyday discipline (Ranjan, 2021). Vivekananda's synthesis extends to scientific temper and universality: he urges an integration of modern science and technology with Vedantic humanism so that innovation is steered by compassion, truthfulness, and responsibility, while pluralism is practiced as "unity without uniformity" through dialogue, shared projects, and institutional ethos (Talukdar, 2020; Ranjan, 2021). Contemporary policy analysis shows strong continuities with these principles holistic development, value education, experiential and vocational learning, early mother-tongue foundations, and multidisciplinary pathways yet highlights implementation gaps in teacher preparation for character pedagogy, classroom routines that sustain reflection and service, and assessment architectures that reward ethical reasoning, teamwork, and community impact alongside academic mastery (Soy, 2023). Addressing these gaps requires making character, competence, and contribution co-equal and assessable aims: embedding reflective practices and physical culture (yoga, sports, arts) to build attention and discipline; designing project-based learning that applies the scientific method to local problems; and instituting credit-bearing service-learning that binds knowledge to public good, so that the learner's trajectory consistently aligns personal excellence with civic responsibility (Bharadwaj & Pradeep, 2023; Soy, 2023; Ranjan, 2021).

## **Globalization, Mass Education, and the Indian Youth Context**

Globalization has expanded India's mass education system in scale and aspiration, but it has also exposed fault lines between credential acquisition and capability formation, particularly for first-generation, rural, and lower-income youth navigating volatile labour markets and digital disruption (Dutta, 2017). Evidence from Indian studies of mass education under globalization highlights three recurrent mismatches: curricula emphasize coverage over competence; assessments privilege recall over problem-solving; and institutional incentives reward short-term placement metrics rather than long-term human development, producing anxiety without agency and skills detached from social purpose (Dutta, 2017). A Vivekananda-informed synthesis responds to these conditions by re-centering education as "man-making" integrated development of body, mind, heart, and spirit so that knowledge becomes character and character becomes contribution; this requires pedagogies that cultivate attention, resilience, ethical discernment, and purpose alongside scientific temper and employable skills (Bharadwaj & Pradeep, 2023). Texts on Vivekananda's life and philosophy underscore his call for strength, fearlessness, and self-reliance as true outcomes of education, aligning closely with contemporary needs for entrepreneurial initiative, adaptive learning, and civic leadership in a globalized economy (Talukdar, 2020). His ethic of "Daridra Narayana" reframes inclusion as dignity-centered participation, implying that mass education must integrate service-learning and community engagement so that the poorest are not passive recipients but co-creators of development a design that links capability with cohesion in contexts of rapid socio-economic change (Ranjan, 2021). Policy analyses mapping NEP 2020 to Vivekananda's thought show strong convergence holistic and experiential learning, value education, mother-tongue foundations, vocational integration, and multidisciplinary pathways but they also specify implementation levers: teacher preparation in character pedagogy, classroom routines for reflection and dialogue, and assessment architectures that credit ethical reasoning, teamwork, and community impact alongside academic mastery (Soy, 2023). Complementary streams in Indian educational philosophy, including integral education and spiritually informed well-being, further support embedding contemplative practice, arts, and physical culture to build attention, empathy, and disciplined will capacities that buffer digital overload and precarious work while deepening learning transfer and life outcomes

(Mishra&Muddgal, 2022; Valmiki, 2018). Taken together, the literature suggests that reconciling globalization's demands with mass education's public mission requires a shift from scale-with-standardization to scale-with-humanization: project-based and community-linked curricula, teacher formation for values-in-action, and metrics that track not only placements but also resilience, civic participation, and sustained community benefit, thereby aligning youth employability with ethical leadership and national development (Dutta, 2017; Soy, 2023; Bharadwaj& Pradeep, 2023).

## **NEP 2020 Through Vivekananda's Lens**

Viewed through Vivekananda's lens, NEP 2020 exhibits a deep consonance with "man-making" education an approach that unites knowledge, character, and service yet it also requires operational clarity to translate ideals into classroom practice, teacher preparation, and assessment architectures. At the level of aims, NEP's emphasis on holistic development, value education, experiential and vocational learning, and flexible, multidisciplinary pathways resonates with Vivekananda's insistence that education manifest the learner's inner perfection through disciplined cultivation of body, mind, heart, and spirit (Bharadwaj& Pradeep, 2023). The policy's focus on foundational literacy in the mother tongue, integration of arts, sports, and life skills, and project-based learning echoes his call for strength, fearlessness, and practical capability treating physical culture, attention, and ethical discernment as essential educational outcomes rather than add-ons (Talukdar, 2020). NEP's thrust on employability through skill development and internships aligns with Vivekananda's synthesis of scientific temper and Vedantic humanism, if innovation and entrepreneurship are anchored in responsibility, truthfulness, and compassion what he framed as the dignity of labour and service to "Daridra Narayana" (Ranjan, 2021). However, analyses mapping NEP to Vivekananda's thought find persistent gaps at the level of implementation: teacher education rarely prepares facilitators for character pedagogy and reflective dialogue; classroom routines insufficiently cultivate values-in-action; and assessments still privilege recall over performance tasks that evidence ethical reasoning, teamwork, and community impact (Soy, 2023). Addressing these gaps requires embedding structured service-learning as credit-bearing coursework, building teacher capacity for contemplative and dialogic practices that humanize learning, and redesigning evaluations to include community-verified projects and longitudinal indicators of resilience, civic participation, and contribution thereby aligning personal excellence with national purpose (Bharadwaj& Pradeep, 2023; Soy, 2023). Complementary Indian perspectives on integral education and spiritually informed well-being further support NEP's holistic aspirations by specifying routines mindful reflection, arts integration, and movement practices that strengthen attention, empathy, and disciplined will, capacities vital for learning transfer in a digitally saturated, precarious labour context (Mishra&Muddgal, 2022). In sum, NEP 2020 offers a policy scaffold that can realize Vivekananda's vision if and only if institutions move from scale-with-standardization to scale-with-humanization equipping teachers to form character, structuring curricula around real problems and service, and rewarding institutions for demonstrable community outcomes as much as for academic metrics (Dutta, 2017; Soy, 2023; Bharadwaj& Pradeep, 2023).

## **An Operational Framework: Character-Competence-Contribution (C3)**

C3 operationalizes Vivekananda's man-making ideal by setting three co-equal, assessable outcomes: character (fearlessness, integrity, empathy, purpose), competence (literacies,

problem-solving, teamwork, digital/design skills), and contribution (demonstrable community impact) (Bharadwaj& Pradeep, 2023). Instead of treating values as add-ons, C3 embeds ethical reasoning and service into core learning, aligning with NEP 2020’s holistic, experiential, and vocational thrust while correcting gaps in implementation through explicit rubrics and credit for values-in-action (Soy, 2023). The framework fuses Vedantic humanism with scientific temper so innovation is guided by responsibility and dignity of labour Vivekananda’s “Daridra Narayana” ethicensuring inclusion and social cohesion in a globalized economy (Ranjan, 2021). Practically, institutions map every course to at least one C3 outcome, require reflective practice to cultivate attention and will, and structure partnerships with local bodies so that projects deliver public value, turning credentialing into capability and civic agency (Dutta, 2017; Soy, 2023).

**Character:** Courage, integrity, self-discipline, empathy, and purpose as explicit learning outcomes taught through stories from Indian traditions and world humanism, guided reflection, and contemplative practices.

**Competence:** Foundational literacies, digital and design skills, problem-solving, and teamwork through project-based, multidisciplinary modules linked to local challenges and industry needs.

**Contribution:** Structured service-learning tied to SDGs public health, environment, inclusion so that every graduate has demonstrated community impact alongside academic achievement.

## Curricular Design

A C3-aligned curriculum sequences foundational attention and language development, applied multidisciplinary projects, and capstone service or enterprise, mirroring NEP 2020’s stages while centering character and contribution (Soy, 2023). Early years prioritize mother-tongue literacy, story-based moral imagination, play, arts, and physical culture to build empathy and self-regulation (Bharadwaj& Pradeep,2023). Secondary levels integrate STEMhumanities studios around local problemswater, waste, health, livelihoodsso learners practice the scientific method, ethical deliberation, and teamwork in authentic contexts (Dutta, 2017). Higher and vocational education add internships with social enterprises, entrepreneurship for public value, and credit-bearing service-learning; reflective seminars connect work, dignity, and responsibility, resonating with Vivekananda’s unity of strength, knowledge, and seva (Talukdar, 2020; Ranjan, 2021). Cross-cutting modules include digital citizenship, media literacy, and dialogue across differences, operationalizing “unity without uniformity” as a curricular habit (Talukdar, 2020; Soy, 2023).

## Pedagogical Practices

Pedagogy moves from recitation to formation: experiential projects, guided reflection, contemplative routines, dialogic inquiry, and physical culture are scheduled not incidental so that attention, resilience, and ethical discernment are systematically cultivated (Bharadwaj & Pradeep, 2023). Daily short practices (breathwork, mindful movement, gratitude journals) support focus and emotion regulation; weekly dialogues surface values tensions in real dilemmas; and studio-style teamwork normalizes cooperation and civic problem-solving (Mishra & Muddgal, 2022). Fieldwork with panchayats/SHGs/NGOs is mapped to competencies and followed by feedback from community stakeholders to validate impact (Dutta, 2017). Sports and yoga develop discipline and fearlessness; arts nurture perspective-taking and meaning, echoing Vivekananda's call for strength and universality aligned with scientific temper (Talukdar, 2020). Teacher facilitation emphasizes questioning, peer feedback, and reflective assessment so knowledge consistently converts to character and contribution (Soy, 2023).

### Teacher Preparation and School Culture

Teacher education must equip facilitators for character pedagogy: modules on reflective practice, inclusive and trauma-informed methods, dialogic skills, assessment of values-in-action, and community partnership design (Soy, 2023). Mentorship ladders faculty to students, seniors to juniors, and community mentors create role-modeled cultures where courage, honesty, and service are lived norms (Bharadwaj & Pradeep, 2023). Institutional ethos matters: recognition systems reward community impact and ethical leadership alongside grades and placements; time-tables protect space for reflection, movement, and service; staff well-being programs mirror student supports, modeling the man-making ideal (Talukdar, 2020). These moves translate NEP 2020's holistic intent into daily routines while embodying Vivekananda's dignity-centered humanism within organizational life (Ranjan, 2021; Soy, 2023).

**Teacher formation:** Modules on character pedagogy, facilitation of reflection, trauma-informed and inclusive practices, and assessment of values-in-action.

**Mentoring systems:** Vertical mentorship (senior-junior) and community mentors; teacher wellness programs mirroring student well-being supports.

**Ethos:** Symbols and routines that normalize service, honesty, and courage—recognition for community impact and ethical leadership equal to marks and placements.

### Assessment Reform

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Assessment must evidence C3 outcomes. Beyond exams, institutions adopt performance tasks (design a low-cost local solution), community-verified projects, teamwork rubrics, and ethics cases assessed via structured criteria (Soy, 2023). Portfolios document growth in resilience, collaboration, and impact with triangulated feedback (self, peer, teacher, community). For character, validated scales and narrative reflections track integrity, empathy, and purpose; for competence, problem-based evaluations and internship ratings replace recall-heavy tests; for contribution, indicators tie service hours to outcomes (e.g., adoption of practices, environmental improvements) (Dutta, 2017; Bharadwaj& Pradeep, 2023). Longitudinal dashboards follow alumni civic participation, quality of employment, and continued volunteering to align institutional incentives with human development, echoing Vivekananda's linkage of personal excellence with national service (Talukdar, 2020; Soy, 2023).

## **Equity and Inclusion**

C3 foregrounds dignity and participation: bridge courses, bilingual supports, and peer tutoring protect first-generation learners from exclusion; rural hubs integrate local crafts and paid service internships to blend earning and learning (Dutta, 2017). Gender equity includes safe mobility, leadership labs for girls, and mentoring networks; culturally responsive pedagogy honours community knowledge while building scientific and entrepreneurial capabilities (Bharadwaj& Pradeep, 2023). The ethic of "Daridra Narayana" reframes beneficiaries as co-creators: curricula are co-designed with communities, and credit is contingent on mutual value, advancing social justice as educational practice (Ranjan, 2021). Such designs operationalize NEP 2020's inclusion aims by embedding support structures and co-production into the learning architecture (Soy, 2023).

## **Digital Era Applications**

Globalization and platform economies demand digital competence with moral center. Curricula therefore teach attention hygiene, misinformation resilience, and online empathy, aligning with man-making education's stress on disciplined will and truthfulness (Bharadwaj& Pradeep, 2023). Students build open resources in vernacular languages, run peer study circles, and develop civic tech (dashboards for water, waste, health), converting coding into public value (Dutta, 2017). Contemplative and arts practices buffer digital overload; dialogic protocols mitigate polarization; and project repositories showcase community-verified impact, amplifying NEP's experiential vision (Ranjan, 2022; Soy, 2023). This synthesis of scientific temper and humanism anchors innovation to responsibility and pluralism, echoing Vivekananda's universality in a networked age (Talukdar, 2020; Ranjan, 2021).

## **Measurable Outcomes and Indicators**

A Vivekananda-aligned system should evidence growth in character, competence, and contribution with indicators that are rigorous yet humane capturing not only what learners know, but who they are becoming and how their learning uplifts others (Bharadwaj& Pradeep, 2023). For character, track development in integrity, empathy, courage, and purpose using mixed methods: short validated scales for prosocial attitudes and grit; narrative reflections coded with rubrics; and teacher-peer-community triangulation to surface values-in-action during dilemmas and teamwork (Bharadwaj& Pradeep, 2023). For competence, move beyond recall scores to problem-based assessments, internship supervisor ratings, and multidisciplinary capstones that require design, data, and dialogue mirroring NEP 2020's emphasis on applied,

experiential learning across stages (Soy, 2023). For contribution, require credit-bearing service-learning with outcome metrics tied to real community change (e.g., households adopting a health practice, trees surviving after six months, reduction in school absenteeism), verified through community partner feedback and simple before-after indicators (Ranjan, 2021). At a system level, create longitudinal dashboards: alumni civic participation (e.g., voting, volunteering), employment quality (role relevance, stability, ethical climate), and continued community engagement so institutional success is aligned with human development, not just placements (Dutta, 2017; Soy, 2023). Complement these with well-being indicators: attention, stress, belonging supported by routines in contemplative practice, arts, and physical culture that build disciplined will and resilience without pathologizing normal academic struggle (Mishra & Muddgal, 2022). In sum, the measurement paradigm must “see the person,” recognizing progress in purpose, competence, and service as co-equal evidence that education is manifesting the learner’s inner perfection in the world (Talukdar, 2020; Bharadwaj & Pradeep, 2023).

## **Policy Recommendations**

Policy should hard-wire character, competence, and contribution into the architecture of schooling and higher education, translating NEP 2020’s holistic vision into accountable practice while honouring Vivekananda’s dignity-centered humanism (Soy, 2023). First, mandate service-learning credits at the secondary and higher levels, with model MoUs between institutions and local bodies/NGOs, standard rubrics for assessing impact, and workload recognition for faculty mentoring community projects so seva is curriculum, not charity (Ranjan, 2021; Soy, 2023). Second, reform teacher education: require modules on character pedagogy, guided reflection, dialogic facilitation, inclusive and trauma-informed practice, and assessment of values-in-action; create state resource centers that curate context-relevant stories, cases, and project templates aligned with local development priorities (Soy, 2023). Third, redesign assessments to include performance tasks, community-verified projects, and ethics cases weighted alongside exams; align accreditation and rankings to reward institutions for community outcomes, well-being metrics, and ethical climate not just academic throughput (Dutta, 2017; Soy, 2023). Fourth, finance equity: fund bridge programs, bilingual supports, rural learning hubs, and paid service internships that blend earning with learning for first-generation and marginalized youth, operationalizing the “Daridra Narayana” ethic as co-production rather than paternalism (Dutta, 2017; Ranjan, 2021). Fifth, institutionalize humanizing routines: daily contemplative practice, arts and sports, reflective seminars within timetables and teacher workloads, recognizing their contribution to attention, resilience, and ethical discernment that underpin deep learning and life outcomes (Mishra & Muddgal, 2022; Bharadwaj & Pradeep, 2023). Finally, build digital citizenship and civic-tech pathways: invest in vernacular open resources, peer study circles, and student-built data tools for local problems, ensuring scientific temper is yoked to responsibility and pluralism. Vivekananda’s “unity without uniformity” adapted to a platform economy (Talukdar, 2020; Soy, 2023). Together, these policies pivot India from scale-with-standardization to scale-with-humanization, aligning personal excellence with national service so the youth dividend matures into ethical leadership and cohesive development.

## **Discussion: Humanizing Education at Scale**

A Vivekananda-informed system dignifies learners as persons with purpose, not as test-takers racing for scarcity; it binds strength with service, and individual excellence with national uplift.

Humanization is not sentimentalism but design: habits of reflection, meaningful relationships, and responsibility for one's community built into schedules, syllabi, and assessment.

Humanizing education at scale in India requires re-designing systems so that every learner is seen as a person with purpose, not a data point racing through coverage and exams. The synthesis of Vivekananda's man-making ideal with NEP 2020's holistic architecture gives a principled and practical path: anchor daily routines in attention, reflection, movement, and service so strength and empathy are cultivated alongside knowledge, and make community engagement a core site of learning rather than an extracurricular add-on (Bharadwaj & Pradeep, 2023; Soy, 2023). In a globalized, digitally saturated economy where credentialism can eclipse capability, the character-competence-contribution triad aligns classroom rigor with real-world relevance and ethical agency learners solve local problems with scientific method, deliberate values in dialogue, and document impact with community feedback, converting knowledge into service and leadership (Dutta, 2017; Ranjan, 2021). Teacher formation is the fulcrum: when educators are equipped to facilitate reflection, inclusive discussion, and performance assessment and their time tables protect these practices the institutional ethos shifts from conformity to character, from recall to reasoning, and from isolation to co-creation with communities (Soy, 2023; Bharadwaj & Pradeep, 2023). This "scale-with-humanization" demands assessment that recognizes values-in-action and teamwork, mentorship ladders that normalize courage and care, and equity mechanisms bridging, bilingual supports, rural hubs, paid service internships that translate the ethic of "Daridra Narayana" into co-production rather than paternalism (Dutta, 2017; Ranjan, 2021). When graduates are tracked not only on placements but also on well-being, civic participation, and sustained community benefit, institutions are incentivized to form persons who are employable and indispensable to social cohesion, fulfilling Vivekananda's vision of strength, truthfulness, and service as the everyday work of nation-building (Talukdar, 2020; Soy, 2023; Bharadwaj & Pradeep, 2023).

## CONCLUSION

Reclaiming Vivekananda's education for India's youth dividend means treating character as capability, service as curriculum, and nation-building as the everyday practice of learning. The synthesis offered here rooted in his humanism and aligned with NEP 2020 provides a practical pathway to translate demographic potential into dignified livelihoods, cohesive communities, and ethical leadership for a resilient, innovative India.

The operational blueprint is clear: adopt the C3 framework so every course maps to character, competence, or contribution; embed reflective and contemplative practice with arts and physical culture to build disciplined attention and resilience; redesign assessment around performance tasks, ethics cases, and community-verified projects; and finance equity through bridges, bilingual supports, rural hubs, and paid service pathways (Dutta, 2017; Mishra & Muddgal, 2022). Humanizing education is not sentiment but system design: time tables that protect reflection and service, mentors who model courage and care, and dashboards that value civic agency and well-being alongside grades and jobs (Soy, 2023; Bharadwaj & Pradeep, 2023). If institutions move from scale-with-standardization to scale-with-humanization, India's demographic promise can mature into ethical leadership and cohesive development graduates who are strong yet compassionate, skilled yet truthful, ambitious yet devoted to the dignity of the last person, living out the ideal of "unity without uniformity" in a complex, networked world (Talukdar, 2020; Ranjan, 2021). This is how character becomes nation: by aligning what students know with who

they become and what they give back, so personal excellence and public good advance together across a lifetime.

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