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DIVINITY WITH EQUANIMITY: A CASE STUDY OF THE PABBAR VALLEY

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ABSTRACT

The central argument of this article is that divinity has played a crucial and beneficial role in village society in the Pabbar Valley of the western Himalayas. India is renowned for its rich culture, vibrant festivals, and diverse religious ceremonies that are deeply ingrained in daily life. Religion has significantly influenced the everyday routines of individuals. In rural areas, Devta holds an important role in daily life and also in the local judicial system. The village of Devta resolves land disputes, family conflicts, and community disagreements. However, tradition is gradually changing. Nonetheless, this shift also deepens our understanding of cultural evolution. This article aims to explore how divinity helps maintain peace in various situations, especially when community conflicts and mental unrest arise. Researchers collected data through participant observation, interviews with temple committee members, newspapers, and research journals. The data were gathered from the Rohru subdivision of Shimla District in Himachal Pradesh, Western Himalayas.

KEYWORDS: *Devta, Mahasu, Judicial System, Festival, Society.*

INTRODUCTION

The present study primarily focused on the role of the Mahasu Devta in society and how people of the Pabbar Valley resolve their societal issues with the help of the local Devta. The Pabbar valley is located in the Rohru subdivision of Shimla district, in the state of Himachal Pradesh, India. The valley differs from other parts of the region in terms of spatial measurement and social structure. This study area is situated between the coordinates of 25°34'9.38" to 31°19'06" N latitude and 77°59.20" to 78°80'99" E longitude, with an altitude that ranges from 1,000 meters to 4,400 meters. The subdivision comprises two tehsils, which include Chirgaon and Rohru, as well as two sub-tehsils, known as Tikkar and DodraKawar. The scenic and bustling town of Rohru is situated at the confluence of the Pabbar River and Shikri Nullah, extending along the right bank of the Pabbar River. It is renowned for its trout fishing and hydropower projects. The Pabbar River originates from the *Chander Nahar* glacier near *Chanshal* Peak, the highest mountain in the Shimla district. This river rises at an elevation of 4,520 meters above sea level, between Uttarakhand's Pabbar and Supin rivers. The Pabbar River drains the region, with its tributaries categorised under the Pabbar Valley. This valley is situated near the Himachal Pradesh-Uttarakhand border, on the southern slope of the majestic Dhauladhar mountain range.

The *Buran Pass* serves as a vital connection between the Pabbar Valley and the *Gasangro* (Baspas range) of Kinnaur, situated in proximity to the ascent of Rupin Pass, which provides a route over the Himalayas to Sangla in the Baspas Valley. *Gasangro* is strategically located on the right bank of the Tons River; its endpoint is Moral Danda (range). In contrast, the highest elevation of the Pabbar Valley is characterised by the steep, snow-covered inclines of *Shatool Pass*. To the southwest, the view is bounded by the towering *Sirgool Ridge*, characterised by woodland and dark patches interspersed with trees and snow (Lloyd & Gerard, 1840, pp. 215-220).

The geographical expanse extends from Kinnaur's southern region to the eastern side of the Yamuna Valley in the state of Uttarakhand. The principal tributaries contributing to the Pabbar River comprise numerous rivulets and nullahs: *Gumma Khad*, *Pish Gaad*, *Andhra Khad*, *Pejud*, *Mathret*, *Shikri*, *Dougda*, *Bishkulti*, *Shilanti*, *Anu* and *Anti Khad* (P. Sharma et.al, personal communication, June 25, 2023). The primary water sources for this river are the *Chander Nahan* glacier and seasonal precipitation. The river originates from Chanshal Peak, flowing in a southwest direction toward Rohru, and subsequently changes its course to the southeast before converging with the Tons River at Tiuni. The conjoined streams eventually merge into the Yamuna River at Kalsi. This revered river, as referenced in the ancient Indian historical text, the Rigveda, is identified as Yamuna, while in Puranic literature, it is referred to as Kalindi. The people of the valley have immense belief in their Devi and Devta culture.

The term "Devta" has been extensively utilised in the oral literature of the region. While the concept of Devta originated during the Vedic age, it also has roots in the pre-Vedic period. This term has been interpreted by nearly all commentators, both Indian and foreign, ancient and modern, with Yask Nirukt as a primary authority. According to Yask's derivation, whatsoever is *yodevah*, so *Devta* that is the Dev is Devta (Bhatt, 2010). The terms Dev and Devta in Sanskrit literature appear synonymous. Furthermore, the term dev serves as a precursor to Devta. Consequently, the religion practised in the northwestern Himalayas can be viewed as an earlier manifestation of Vedic traditions. Thus, the religious practices in this region represent a seemingly primitive form of animism. Deities are here categorised into distinct types, in which some deities were worshipped during the Vedic age, such as Indra, Varuna, and Usha, among others, and are further referenced in Puranic texts, including Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, and Shakti. Moreover, the devta worshipped in the mountainous villages exhibits notable differences from the mainstream gods and deities due to the distinct names and worship systems of local deities, such as Mahasu, Gudar, Banar, Shilkudiya, and Bakralu, Bondra, Meshar, which diverge from the classical deities mentioned in both the Vedic and Puranic texts.

Devtas represent an integral component of village institutions and are significant in defining the religious boundaries that differentiate them from the deities within the Pan-Indian pantheon. The ritualistic practices associated with these deities are markedly distinct from those of the principal pantheon and deviate from the traditions of classical religions. It may be generally asserted that the prevalent belief systems reflect the convictions held by the local populace. The local Devta has a significant influence on the community's socio-religious, cultural, economic, and political spheres of life. Whether the context pertains to agricultural harvests, marriage ceremonies, the birth of a child, funeral rites, or natural disasters, the Devta remains a pivotal figure for his adherents. The Devta actively participates in the daily lives of individuals, fostering a profound emotional connection with them. Devotees display a deep faith and reverence towards this supernatural entity, commencing all their significant and auspicious undertakings with the

approval of the divine king. Numerous societies occupying the mountainous regions recognise their guardian deities, who are venerated by the populace in return for protection. The kindness and distinct attributes of these guardian deities define their essence. Some individuals inadequately appease these divine entities and try to harm other people through Devtas dosh (curse); subsequently, they face adverse consequences due to dosh (curse).

The way of life and fundamental duties towards society revolve around the Deity called Devta Mahasu in this mountainous region. Is Mahasu a palanquin structure? Mahasu is not just a structure; the term Mahasu is a suffix for four brothers and also one bir (shirkuriya). The identity of Mahasu includes the doria, gurzu, palgi (palanquin), talwar (sword), and the silver round cap. In the mountainous culture, Deity can be regarded as a king in a more accurate way. Like the governance system of kings, the Deity's rule is also supported by the community. The regular management is entrusted to a committee of officers, led by the Motmeen (elected by all devotees of the Deity and sometimes by the Deity himself). The secretary and cashier are also elected by ordinary people. The post of Bandhari is hereditary; it is generally selected from one household. The main body of followers, represented by Kardar (a village representative), communicates with the Deity through an official spokesperson called mali/gur (intermediator between Devta and devotees), mainly from the upper castes. It is indicated that the Deity talks to his devotees through Mali, as Asaf Sharabi noted in his research paper, describing it as an epistemological problem between the Deity and his devotees (Sharabi, 2019, p. 356). Mahasu Devta plays an essential role in all minor and major societal judgments such as justice and healing. The local Deity Mahasu is pivotal in the functioning, shaping, and regulation of society in this region. Societal norms from birth to death are made in accordance with the philosophy of Mahasu Devta. Devta serves as the epicentre of the belief system in the mountainous area. The term Devta typically refers to a specific divine power. The Pahari (meaning 'mountain') people's customs, rituals, festivals, and traditions are centred around the local Deity. Most social and religious events and activities occur with the permission and consent of the Devta. The Devta occupies a crucial position in individuals' daily lives, creating an inextricable link between Mahasu and various social groups of the village. All agricultural activities are closely tied to the Devta. Cultivators consult the Devta and Brahmins for the best times to plough during the Rabi and Kharif seasons, as well as at harvest time, to ensure bumper crops. Even today, cultivators perform rituals such as offering a *rōt* (big-sized wheat bread topped with jaggery and fried in ghee) to all the Devi and Devtas of the village, and place a bunch of crop seedlings and products at the temple doors as offerings to the Devta/Devi of the village.

The people of the hills dedicate significant time and resources to visiting Deities and participating in their religious processions, as these rituals are an integral part of social life. Here, we are specifically talking about Mahasu Devta. The famous festival of Mahasu is referred to as Jagra, which means to stay awake the whole night.



Figure 1 Jagra Photograph of Jailot Village (Chirgaon) taken by the author

A month before the Jagra festival, the Devta's procession takes place, with all committee members travelling from village to village or house to house within the Deity's area of influence. Gala festivities and feasts are organised in every village, where the shamans of the Deity and their subordinates dance alongside locals to the beats of drums. The drummers sing the heroic ballad of Mahasu Devta called Borma. The entire procession is filled with religious fervour and festivities, with participation from all caste groups. As observed in the village of Bhooth, the Deity's procession involves equal participation from two caste groups. The palanquin of the Devta first arrives at the community's thrashing floor of the Koli caste (marginalised group). The procession begins with dancing around the palanquin and the shamans, along with the people. While the distance is maintained by the people and shamans, this is the only time when the palanquin and shamans are so close to each other. The Deity is considered *sarbang*, where persons from any caste are allowed to touch the Deity, but protocols are not always followed; in reality, no one touches the Deity directly, only the garments of the Deity and shamans are touched by people during the procession. Any impurity caused by touch is rectified when the Devta returns to their temple before the Jagra festival. During each village's visit by the procession, the meal offered to the people is usually sponsored by a wealthy individual, members of the same family or clan, a caste group, or the entire village, and this meal is called *Beel (u)*. The members of the committee also collect a fixed amount of seasonal crop produce and oil, known as *Deutha*. It is evident that in the Pabbar valley, the Devta's territory for collecting *Deutha* is clearly defined; consequently, the Devta's procession only passes through specific villages within his domain. *Deutha* functions as a tribute to the Devta, consisting of one *patha* (a measurement unit) of grain (for wheat flour) and one *tambi* (a measurement unit) of oil, collected to celebrate the Jagra festival. This practice transcends mere collection of *Deutha*; it signifies a profound connection between the community and the Devta.

Such festivals and processions of the Devta tie the whole community of the mountainous society with a single thread. Rituals related to Devta Mahasu and other Devta's processions hold

significant religious and political importance for communities. One of their primary objectives is to unify a social group. At the same time, the movement of deities seems to delineate territory. Ohri notes that a thorough analysis shows the primary goal of these processions, beyond merely marking territory, is to assess the subjects' faith. Mahasu's processions and tours are not just a ritual marking of territorial boundaries but a renewal of a relationship with the soil (Ohri, 2019).

Apart from this, Devta is also known for its impartial adjudication; most civil cases, such as land disputes, quarrels among community members, and other civil or fiscal disputes, are resolved in the temple under the jurisdiction of the Devta. Previously, when a person in the village was unable to have an heir due to infertility, they often began worshipping Devta Mahasu in their household. To address the problem of infertility or this issue affecting the society, everyone sought shelter under the sacred parasol of Mahasu Devta. This led to the construction of several temples of Devta Mahasu and the community's acceptance of him as the sole saviour from such problems (Sharma, 2008, p. 222).

The smallest unit of administration is designated as a *Graon* (village). The local civil code at the village level, conducted by the village headman or the village elders group, is referred to as *Saine*; the head of this group is called *Saina*. Moreover, all of them also played a considerable role as cultivators and shepherds. Within the village, judicial disputes and matters were settled by an assembly of elders, comprising male members known as *Khumli*, presided over by *Saina*. If an individual were proven guilty, he would give one rupee to *Saina*. When *Khumli* did not resolve some cases, or the judgments were repudiated by individuals, then those cases were adjudicated by Devta. One of the stipulations of the local civil code states: if there is a dispute regarding boundaries, land conflicts, theft, etc., and the *Khumli* failed to resolve it, then both parties would go with either a goat or a sheep to the Devta temple, known as *Dhunautu*. Both parties, the temple committee, and the *Saine* were required to be present there. Based on measurements, both parties would concurrently sprinkle water onto the goat/sheep until one of them got jolted. The goat or sheep that jolted first would indicate the perpetrator. The goat or sheep would then be offered to Devta, and the feast would be distributed among the attendees at the temple. The guilty party would relinquish the disputed land or compensate the prevailing party. Any disputes not settled by *Khumli* were adjudicated in this manner. If, in any instance, the parties remained dissatisfied with this resolution (M.R. Mehta et al., personal interview, 2024). Another system prevalent in the temple called *Kunjidalna*, in this method, both parties take *Jub* (Bermuda grass or *Cynodon dactylon*) stalk in front of Devta and ask the question to the deity, devta chooses one of them, the matter is discussed in publicly. Third option was that both parties were required to take an oath in front of the Devta, but in this case if someone is a culprit who will not come to temple, so the case gets automatically settled (N. Mehta, personal interview, 2023).

Multiple Methods To Solve Cases by Devta:

Usually most of the cases are related to land disputes between brothers and neighbours. In this dispute, generally, two brothers or neighbours are involved in a land disagreement. Both parties approached the temple management for a resolution. The case is settled using two methods; the first is called *Chithi Faisla*. On a piece of paper, the names of both disputants are written, and one is chosen by the Devta. The Devta's selected chit indicates the innocent party, while the temple committee members are also present. The committee records on paper that this individual has been found guilty. The guilty party is then required to transfer the land to the rightful owner.

If an individual is dissatisfied with the decision made by the *Chithi* system, they may turn to the *neem-kash* system, also known as *loon-lota*. The word '*neem-kash*' is composed of two parts: '*neem*,' meaning salt, and '*kash*,' meaning a sip of water. Similarly, '*loon*' means salt, and '*lota*' refers to a small, round water container of steel or copper. Symbolically, this suggests that just as salt dissolves completely in water, if someone has done something wrong, their entire family should also be dissolved in the soil, as salt dissolves in water. In this system, both parties take an oath in front of Devta. However, the temple committee and other individuals advise against its use due to its harmful effects on the accused's family. If the wrongdoer does not admit guilt, the Kash system becomes the final option. An example from Dali village in the Pabbar valley illustrates this: disputants first perform a purification ritual by bathing near the temple's *baudi* or *bau* (a natural water source). After the bath, they drink *Kash*, taking an oath in the presence of Devta and the temple committee, drinking water in Devta's name. The party that lies faces familial ruin, which ultimately destroys the entire family.

If, after some time, a person realises that what he had done earlier was wrong, then he would go again to the Devta and admit his mistake in front of him. After that, he must return the disputed land that he has occupied. Simultaneously, he must seek the Devta's help to remove the dosh (curse). When he takes the Devta to his home, he has to offer gold and some rupees to the Devta. Before 1996, during the puja, they also offered a *bali* (sacrifice) of a goat or sheep, but currently in Dali village, *bali* is not practised.

There is another practice known as *Gautti-Ghat*, similar to the *Kash* system. In this practice, a person brings a small white stone, throws it in the temple premises, and takes an oath in front of the Devta. They say, "If I am wrong, then destroy my entire family. If my rival party is wrong, then give me justice and let their family be destroyed."

In this method, the locals who visit the Mahasu temple with various personal problems—such as livelihood difficulties, physical ailments, land disputes, getting rid of dosh, and so on—seek help. They do so through a process called *shersha* (seed of rice called *shersha*), which involves an interlocutor guiding the resolution of these issues. An example of the process is recorded by the researcher in Siraji village, involving a man who came to talk with Chalda Mahasu about his problems. First, Mali eased the petitioner and inquired about the problem. The man explained that his children did not perform well in exams despite working hard. Then Mali said it was a matter of *nazar* (evil eye), suggesting some people in their village might have caused this harm. When asked if he suspected someone, the petitioner replied yes, both sides of his house. Mali explained that the left side of his house has an evil eye on his family. During this process, the Mali advised the man, "Next time, when you come to the temple, take some soil from your land." Essentially, the hill community believes they can control their future troubles through the medium of the Devta.

In short, we can say that the local authorities have managed the judicial system at the regional level. However, the Khumli system has become less active since the government introduced the Panchayati Raj system. Conversely, the Devta continues to administer justice to its subjects, often expediting the process compared to formal court proceedings, where many cases concerning land disputes and conflicts are resolved by the Devta. Nevertheless, this process is currently changing due to globalisation and the spread of education throughout society. In a nutshell, we can say that the whole valley has been governed by a divine king since time immemorial. The local Devta is renowned for controlling the weather, dispensing justice, and

ruling as part of society. Devtas diagnose personal and public matters of the community. Although there are some loop holes in the institution, such as caste hierarchy and the monopoly of the higher strata of society in the main designation of the temple management committee. But when we are talking about adjudication, then the higher strata also have fear of not dominating the lower strata because they are also frightened of dosh (curse) of the Devta.

It is an evident fact that the current system of governance and judiciary has much to learn from this system; rather than calling them superstitious and backward, we must learn from them how the deity system smoothly runs the institution with the endorsement of all the communities in society. For instance, the matters solved by the Devta do not take as long as those handled by the present judiciary system. Additionally, an illiterate person does not hesitate to go there, so our judiciary has also focused on promoting regional languages in the courts. Before the tradition completely vanishes from society, we must learn some good things from our traditions. We have to pour old wine in to a new bottle to run the society smoothly and harmoniously.

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CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN THE ON-DEMAND ECONOMY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF Q-COMMERCE IN METROPOLITAN & TIER 2 CITIES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The rapid evolution of India's Q-Commerce is fundamentally reshaping E-commerce landscape of India driven by consumer demand for ultra-fast delivery which has been the main factor in satisfying consumers' appetite for speed, comfort, and tech-savvy access. Through the comparison of consumer behaviour in metropolitan and Tier 2 cities, the research illustrates the differences in adoption, trust and satisfaction related to India's on-demand economy. The study reviews consumer behaviour concepts, provides the necessary contemporary empirical evidence and lists the key factors that attract consumers to the service- like speed, price, comfort and trust-worthiness- and the differences in their levels between major and minor cities. The results point out that the consumers from metropolitan areas mainly look for speed, brand and trustworthy digital payments, whereas those from Tier 2 regions are more sensitive to price, care about the value they get and prefer Cash on delivery (COD) because of the trust issues related to the digital payment and infrastructural inadequacies. The research goes on to assert that the two qualities of service reliability and delivery consistency will be the major ones that determine the long-term relationship of a city category with the firm across the board. The gradual implications suggest a dual-market strategy: boosting personalization and retention in big cities, and nurturing trust, vernacular setting, and affordability in small towns. Hence, this comparative framework not only enrich the knowledge of the digital consumption behaviour in the emerging markets but also gives Q-commerce companies and policymakers the actionable insights i.e. the path to the sustainable and inclusive growth.

KEYWORDS: *Q-Commerce , Consumer Behaviour, Metropolitan Vs. Tier 2 Cities, Digital Adoption, Service Reliability, Delivery Consistency, Trust, Value Sensitivity, E-Commerce Transformation.*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the trend of driving customers towards online essentials with a preference for immediate delivery, resulting in a rise in impulsive purchases among Gen Z and millennials (**Christopher, 2022**)¹.

The Indian Q-commerce sector is experiencing growth in **metropolitan** areas and gradually penetrating Tier 2 cities (**Tripathi, 2024**)². Metro cities like Bengaluru, Delhi, and Mumbai have observed early adoption, which they attribute to their higher digital literacy and established infrastructure. Sporadically, smaller cities are slowly contributing to demand, which is motivated by higher disposable incomes of the individuals, better internet connectivity, and being influenced by urban consumption patterns (**Mehra, 2025**)³. Such kind of a heterogeneous market landscape opens up a vast area for conducting comparative studies on different classifications of cities in terms of consumer behaviour and adoption.

Q-commerce has turned into a lifestyle enabling factor in large metropolitan cities and has made a great fit with the fast paced routines of the urban residents living in such areas. (**Gutgutia, 2022**)⁴. The rapid adoption is also made possible by factors such as greater smartphone use, high population, and excellent logistics networks. In addition, urban consumers tend to pay a higher price for convenience, which can be seen as a reflection of their greater buying power and city lifestyles. Consequently, Companies started prioritizing metropolitan markets for their new product trials, aggressive discounting, and last-mile deliveries with high-tech solutions.

Quick Commerce is reshaping the Indian E-Commerce landscape by introducing ultra-fast delivery services within (10-30 minutes) for essential items such as groceries and personal care products. This sector is on the verge of substantial expansion, with market projections indicating a rise to US\$5 billion by 2025 and US\$9.94 billion by 2029 (**Sharma , 2024**)⁵. This growth is primarily fueled by evolving consumer preferences, increased adoption of e-commerce, and the growing demand for convenience among millennials and Gen Z (**Sachdeva, 2025**)⁶.

Tier 2 cities poses unique challenges and opportunities for digital adoption. Even with the gradual acceptance, which is being driven by the increasing internet penetration and rising aspirational consumption, consumer trust is still highly affected by issues like delivery reliability, affordability, and limited product assortment (**Bhargava, 2024**)⁷. Companies can boost penetration in these emerging markets by tailoring strategies to local preferences, such as implementing lower delivery charges, offering vernacular app interfaces, and fostering trust through community-driven initiatives.

The study is intended to shed light on the diverse interactions of India's Q-commerce ecosystem by contrasting the attitudes and **adoption of consumers in urban areas against those in Tier 2 cities**. Consumer preferences, challenges, and adoption patterns vary significantly between urban and semi-urban environments, calling for tailored strategies for growth. The study is aimed at behavioural drivers across regions, identifying barriers to adoption, and offering actionable recommendations for Q-commerce companies to enhance their national presence (**Ajeya K, Dr. Santhosh M, 2025**)⁸.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **(Ambaliya et al., 2025)⁹** The paper looks into customer satisfaction and the behaviour trends of urban Indian users in Q-commerce platforms. The results show that the majority of the respondents place six or more orders monthly, among which Blinkit and Swiggy are the leading platforms. The main factors of satisfaction are order accuracy (72%), delivery person's attitude (65%), and customer support being attentive (72%). The whole situation is characterized by a great deal of satisfaction, however, the distinctions in service reliability and delivery modes are the problems that worry customers most.
- **(Naik & Girish Kapdi, 2025)¹⁰** The Q-commerce has taken the leading role in the Indian retail market because of the mentioned urbanization, the changing of lifestyles that come along with it, and the technology being adopted. This research focuses on the consumers' preferences and their buying behaviour in case of Swiggy, Instamart, Blinkit, and Zepto. This study discovered that factors such as convenience, speed, promotional offers, and demographic variables (age, income, and geography) shape the adoption of q-commerce. Among them convenience and speed are the key factors, with promotional offers influencing price-sensitive users.
- **(Rajan, 2025)¹¹** The quick-commerce platforms have, in turn, changed the customer behaviour in the FMCG field with Zepto being one of the big players in the online grocery delivery market in India. The study focuses on consumer satisfaction regarding the FMCG products purchased through Zepto by looking at different factors like quality, cost, freshness, efficiency of delivery, and variety of brands. Although a majority of respondents view Zepto's product quality and delivery speed positively, where a significant portion remains neutral. There is a need for improvement in packaging, pricing clarity, and product availability.
- **(Dr.S .Tamilmani & Dr.S. Archana, 2025)¹²** The research indicates that 78% of urban customers recognise Q-commerce sites, with 63% having utilised them, primarily appreciating their speed, ease, and reliability. Awareness significantly impacted uptake, whereas perceptions of service quality and trust influenced sustained usage, despite ongoing worries around pricing and delivery reliability.
- **Sujatha & Dama Sreeja, 2025)¹³** Zepto's research indicates that the rapid delivery and convenience offered by the commerce have changed the cities' food purchasing habits very deeply and widely. The consumers' main attribute is that they give quality to Zepto's fast delivery, which has thus resulted in a positive impact on the loyalty and satisfaction of the customers. Among the most often purchased, fresh fruits and vegetables are the leading ones, which implies good quality, while the amount consumed weekly is a sign of Zepto's getting into the routine of the customers' shopping. The very factors responsible for the quick delivery, cost-effectiveness, and convenience are the ones that have moved Zepto to be a significant player in the ever-evolving digital food market.
- **(Ganapathy & Gupta, 2023)¹⁴** The research indicates that Q-commerce in India is expanding due to its speed and convenience; however, sustainability depends on profitability, efficient dark shop operations, smart inventory management, and the integration of technology. Consumers mostly prefer value of the product quality, and reliability over 10-

minute delivery promises. To survive, firms must reduce cash burn, diversify revenues beyond delivery fees, and collaborate with kirana stores to build trust and long-term growth.

- **(Sheikh & Thakur, 2025)¹⁵** The study reveals that customer acceptance of Q-commerce in India is mostly driven by convenience, time efficiency, and promotional incentives, with the highest engagement observed among younger and urban demographics. Rapid delivery and user-friendliness significantly enhance satisfaction; yet, constraints like high delivery costs and a restricted product range hinder frequent usage. Q-commerce platforms such as Blinkit, Instamart, and Zepto are experiencing significant momentum, with a majority of users expressing a willingness to recommend them, suggesting an increase in confidence and future potential contingent upon enhancements in service reliability and product assortment.
- **(Kaur & Singh, 2024)¹⁶** Quick Commerce is transforming retail through expedited deliveries (10–20 minutes), driven by consumer demand for convenience, urbanisation, and technological advancements. The Indian e-commerce market is predicted to grow significantly, going from USD 3.34 billion in 2024 to USD 9.95 billion in 2029 which means rising above the traditional methods of online shopping. The acceptance is determined by the usefulness, ease of use, and social influences; but still, there are challenges related to high costs, complicated logistics, and environmental impact.
- **(Mukhopadhyay, 2024)¹⁷** The findings point towards a shift from E-commerce to Q-commerce that is mainly the consequence of many factors. The consumers are forced to move to Q-commerce as a result of E-commerce inefficiencies but at the same time the convenience of Q-commerce is also luring them to it. Certain service characteristics like the availability of Cash on Delivery and more relaxed return policies, etc., are also contributing to this pattern.

The majority of scholarly articles regarding the quick commerce industry in India focus mainly on urban locations while making only very minimal comparisons with Tier 2 cities. The current literature acknowledges various factors like convenience, delivery speed, cost, and customer satisfaction but does not consider the differences in these factors across different cities. The socio-cultural practices, digital literacy levels, payment preferences, and infrastructure problems in Tier 2 cities are frequently mentioned, but not comprehensively. Therefore, the comparison through a data-based study is needed that goes deep into the quick commerce sector in terms of both adoption and the underlying factors, challenges, and consumer behaviour across Metropolitan and Tier 2 cities.

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the factors influencing consumer adoption of quick commerce in metro vs Tier 2 cities in India
- To compare the adoption patterns and preferences of consumers in metro vs Tier 2 cities
- To evaluate the challenges encountered by consumers in adoption of quick commerce
- To provide strategic recommendations for Quick commerce companies to boost penetration in Tier 2 cities.

DISCUSSION

The insights from this study highlight the significant **impact of Q-Commerce** on consumer behaviour throughout Indian cities. Our analysis reveals a clear trend: Q-commerce's core promises of unmatched speed and convenience drive its rapid adoption. These two factors are the key reasons why consumers are shifting their habits, especially in busy metropolitan areas, and they play the primary role in shaping customer satisfaction and repeat usage.

The primary **factors driving quick commerce** (Q-commerce) adoption demonstrate a clear segmentation between Metropolitan and Tier 2 cities in India. In the metropolitan areas, the main factors that lead to the adoption of the product or service are convenience, instant gratification, and time saving. These factors are the result of the fast-paced lifestyles and high disposable incomes of the customers, especially Gen Z and Millennials, who are the consumers' group most likely to call for ultra-fast delivery and are willing to pay a premium price for the service, which they expect to be consistent. On the other hand, the consumers in Tier 2 cities are much more price sensitive and adoption to them mostly depends on the product or service being affordable (discounts and offers), as people in those areas usually care for the deals and take them over the speed. Moreover, while metro consumers engage more with digital payment modes and are more brand conscious, the majority of Tier 2 consumers are still not that trustful so they, if not using Cash on Delivery, might prefer the method with the least risk (thus the cash option). The accessibility that the consumers living in Tier 2 cities enjoy thanks to the platforms providing vernacular support indicates that there is a difference in digital maturity and economic factors driving the consumer behaviour towards this on-demand service in the two cities.

Comparison of the consumer adoption patterns show distinct behavioural differences between various city tiers. Metropolitan consumers exhibit a higher purchase frequency and smaller Average Order Value (AOV), driven by time-saving and impulse buying for premium or convenience goods. In contrast, Tier 2 consumers show a decrease in visits mainly driven by price sensitivity (discounts) and the purchase of inexpensive but important goods, which means that their motivation is value-conscious rather than time-conscious. Payment methods vary greatly as Metropolitan customers prefer digital payments while tier 2 cities mostly rely on Cash-on-Delivery (COD), which indicates the differences in trust in financial services and digital sophistication that underlie the different Q-commerce usage models.

The above-mentioned behavioural segmentation which is consumer-perceived risk and service inconsistency leads to unique challenges being posed to quick commerce adoption. Tier 2 buyers, in particular, are dealing with mistrust as they heavily rely on Cash-on-Delivery (COD), great sensitivity to delivery fees, and doubts about the quality of the product. Metropolitan consumers face challenges with Service Reliability, as their high expectations for rapid delivery conflict with logistical obstacles such as traffic and delivery failures. Across both segments, concerns regarding product assortment (limited range) and the perceived trade-off between speed and value limit continuous, high-volume adoption.

The strategic recommendations for increasing Q-commerce penetration in Tier 2 cities must prioritize value and trust over the speed-driven model that is used in metropolitan cities. Because of the price sensitivity of the Tier 2 consumer, the first strategy is to adopt a "Value-First" model. This means taking away or reducing delivery fees (for suitable AOV criteria) and offering localized, competitive prices on important products to really compete with traditional local stores. Besides, to deal with the long-lasting trust issue and heavy reliance on Cash-on-

Delivery (COD), platforms need to invest heavily in localization by providing mountain interfaces and customer support in local languages and using local influencers for social approval. Platforms should prioritise dependable 20-30 minute delivery windows over ambitious 10-minute commitments, as service reliability is a more significant long-term loyalty factor than slight speed improvements in non-metropolitan infrastructure.

Ultimately, companies build a thriving Q-commerce platform over time, not overnight.

Getting new customers rapidly via speed as well as discounts is a feasible tactic but nevertheless the profit-making and sustainable business model is an essential approach in the long run. The future winners in this market will be those companies that not only provide prompt delivery guarantees but also work on building a solid reputation for overall reliability and quality in the customers' perception. This entails better inventory management, more efficient operations at "dark stores" and customers' loyalty that is real and goes beyond just fast delivery.

IMPLICATIONS FOR Q-COMMERCE PLATFORMS AND MARKETERS:

Adoption of a dual market approach: Firms have to come up with two different strategies instead of one strategy to be applied to all markets. The main target in the metropolitan cities should be the service optimization, hyper-personalization, and retention through loyalty programs. On the other hand, the Tier 2 cities should be dealt with by educating the market, building trust, and acquiring customers based on the value.

Hyper-Localization of a "Value-First" Model: In the case of Tier 2 cities, the marketing messages focusing on the speed of delivery are not as powerful as those messages which talk about cost saving, giving priority access to brands, and reliability. This means that local promotions should be developed, support in the local language should be provided, and delivery fees should possibly be eliminated to be able to sell better than local shops.

Re-evaluation of Performance Metrics: Different markets cannot be measured by the same KPIs for success. The delivery time and customer lifetime value may be key metrics in metros. However, the market penetration rate, COD-to-prepaid conversion ratio, and first-order satisfaction score would be more relevant metrics in Tier 2 cities.

Building Trust through Operational Transparency: To bridge the trust gap in Tier 2 markets, platforms should give priority to reliability instead of fast delivery promises. A 20-30 minute delivery window, transparent pricing, and assuring high product quality can create a loyal customer base more easily than a 10-minute gimmick.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND URBAN PLANNING:

Regulation of the Gig Economy and Worker Welfare: The delivery partner is always exposed to the danger of being burned out, especially in the case of Q-commerce, and the "10-minute delivery" model is the worst in this regard. The question of delivery partners' safety, income stability, and working conditions is a huge concern. Regulators will then need to come up with practices that will protect the workers and be guided by the principles of fairness and justice.

Zoning and Regulation of Dark Stores : The Q-commerce model relies on a network of "dark stores" (delivery-only warehouses). Urban planning authorities need to develop clear zoning regulations for these establishments, as they impact commercial real estate, local traffic patterns, and the character of neighbourhood retail spaces.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

Longitudinal Studies on Tier 2 Market Evolution: This study provides a snapshot in time. Longitudinal studies in the future should follow the changes in the behaviour, preferences, and digital maturity of Tier 2 consumers corresponding to the maturity of the market. Will their behaviour be the same as that of urban users ultimately, or will it be different still?

The Socio-Economic Impact on Traditional Retail: The investigation of Q-commerce's impact on local Kirana stores in the big cities plus Tier 2 ones is going to be an important topic for the future research. At the very beginning, the study needs to determine how big the disruption is then, it will proceed to investigate the different models that can enable the cooperation or the merging of Q-commerce with the traditional retailing.

Sustainability and Environmental Impact Assessment: The Q-commerce model that prioritizes rapid delivery and selling of a single item at a time could potentially cause a negative impact on the environment in the form of rise in carbon emissions and packaging waste. Future research should therefore conduct a thorough sustainability assessment on the Q-commerce supply chain that would not only bring about the identification of the environmental friendly models but also the suggestion of the same.

CONCLUSION

The study has disclosed that the consumer behaviour in India's Q-commerce market has not been uniform but rather distinctly different between the Metropolitan and the Tier 2 cities. This research reveals that consumer behaviour in India's Q-commerce market is not monolithic but is sharply segmented between metropolitan and Tier 2 cities.

The study tries to wrap up with the understanding that Metropolitan consumers are driven by time-saving and convenience, treating ultra-fast delivery as a baseline expectation. Their loyalty is transactional, and their behaviour is characterized by high-frequency, low-value impulse purchases. Tier 2 consumers are motivated by value, access to product variety, and trust. Their price sensitivity is very high and thus their adoption significantly depends on discounts, trust in payment methods (credit card is least preferred), and the presence of local support. Their loyalty is more emotional and long lasting. This difference in consumer behaviour necessitates different strategies for each segment; therefore, a "one-size-fits-all" approach is not going to work. Success in Metropolitan cities heavily depends on smooth operations and digital optimization, while success in Tier 2 cities is based on trust factor of the consumers, price, and long lasting relationships through localised strategies.

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BEYOND THE HYPE: ARE MICRO-INFLUENCERS THE GAME CHANGERS TACKLING INFLUENCER MARKETING FATIGUE?

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the growing importance of targeted influencers as campaigners for restoring audience engagement within saturated marketing landscape. By investigating consumers view across varies social media platforms, the paper explores how authentic imparting and credibility of message affect interaction criteria and virtual relationship. The finding illustrates that micro influencers provide commitment, emotional impact and conversion rate than macro influencers. This states these influencers are closely associated to audiences and match the expectation of the audiences which in turn builds long term trust. These aspects altogether helps build better relationship with audiences in addition helps in bringing down disengagement and improve interaction in digital marketing. This study pin points that marketers need to construct a partnership driven procedural approach instead of single marketing campaigns which enhance honesty, authenticity and relevance to the context rather than pivoting visibility metrics. This research adds to novel perceptions and applicable policy that fosters brand to stay in context, build credibility and enhance brand resilience in the virtual platform.

KEYWORDS: *influencer marketing fatigue, authenticity, trustworthy, communication transparency, collaborations, audience engagement, engagement metrics, brand resilience, market saturation.*

INTRODUCTION:

In contemporary digital world, influencer marketing has turned out to be a major player and has changed the way brands communicate with customers via social media. The industry, which has already surpassed the \$21 billion in 2024, is expected to see an enormous growth mainly driven by the rise of user-generated content and influencer marketing replacing traditional advertising (Aspire, 2024)¹.

This trend shows that more and more brands are relying on influencers to build trust and generate sales, as 85% of the brands surveyed reported that they were able to improve engagement through influencers (**Daniels, 2024**)². The surge in influencer marketing has brought along issues like market saturation and diverse consumer expectations regarding the honesty of sponsored content.

At the moment, influencer marketing is encountering new obstacles, such as the return on investment for products that have already been marketed heavily and a growing number of viewers who are doubtful about the credibility of the promotions. A report indicates that 60% of the marketers are ready to invest more money in the year 2024, but the consumers are already getting tired of it as the same type of promotions goes on, thus resulting in a fierce competition between the industries for the consumer's attention and a whopping predicted growth of 35.63% (³**DMI, 2025**; ⁴**Santora, 2024**). This paradox points to the necessity of new strategies since, on other hand, social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok are enhancing the brand's visibility, while, the brands are under more scrutiny which is causing more partnerships to be reassessed as the brands are trying to maintain their relevance in an already overcrowded market.

Influencer marketing, like the use of a skilled tactician, takes advantage of social proof and peer acceptance to persuade consumers, which in many cases results in a greater ROI than standard advertising. It is a partnership where influencers do recognition to brands, and through their supposed tie and power, they influence selling choices (⁵**Kenan, 2025**). Research indicates that effective campaigns can yield \$5.78 for each dollar invested, highlighting their significance in fostering brand loyalty amidst digital noise (**DMI, 2025**). However, its effectiveness depends on alignment with audience values, as misalignment can intensify distrust in an age of algorithmic content distribution.

Micro-influencers, generally having 10,000 to 100,000 followers, represent a niche segment that provides targeted outreach and elevated engagement rates, frequently exceeding those of macro-influencers by up to 60%, due to their authentic, community-orientated material (⁶**Kowalewicz, 2024**; ⁷**Bahadur, 2024**). Their cost-effectiveness—identified by 44% of marketers as a primary advantage—makes them suitable for firms seeking authentic relationships without the high expenses associated with celebrity endorsements (**Chen et al., 2024**)⁸. The relationship-building aspect of this marketing strategy is profound because the micro-influencers are being perceived as friendly experts, which in turn leads to the sales multiplication in niche areas such as beauty and technology.

Influencer marketing fatigue results from excessive exposure to sponsored content, causing audience indifference and diminished campaign effectiveness, while hype increases inaccurate expectations regarding influencer impact. Affected aspects consist of trite, monotonous promotions that exhaust almost half of the buyers, together with non-stop intrusive advertisements and absence of genuineness (**Concannon, 2023**)⁹. The effects are manifested in poor participation and brand rejection, as these people are wanting more profound connections in times of severe economic demands (**Kleona Amoyo, 2022**)¹⁰. Hype, often generated by viral trends, makes this problem even worse by setting unattainable expectations, thus breaking the trust when results fall short of the promises.

The incorporation of influencer marketing with micro influencers is, however a long way to go out of the hype and fatigue cycle and it is a way to bring back customers' thoughts through

authenticity and thus supporting the digital branding initiatives. Brands are to rely on trustworthy content from micro-influencers, whereby they would make the fatigue loss take place through targeted and trust-enhancing partnerships that would also reduce the risk of market saturation (Innity, 2024¹¹; Zakowicz, 2024¹²). This research is committed to the exploration of these dynamics with the aim of revealing the consumer's viewpoints and suggesting rules for the inevitable influencer partnerships that would be sustainable in the changing market.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

- A study that featured 327 social media users from Istanbul as its subjects disclosed the Micro Influencer (5.92K followers) to be rated as more natural, trustworthy, and persuasive than the Mega Influencer (2.9M followers) thus causing stronger purchase intentions among older, more educated, and wealthier people. It was suggested by the study that Micro Influencers would more effectively reach these consumer segments whereas Mega Influencers could attract the younger or less-educated groups (Furtana & Necat Ögüt, 2024)¹³
- The investigators concentrated on the placement of influencers on Instagram, where the micro-influencer not only led to the higher perception of being credible, authentic, and reliable but also generated stronger consumer engagement and purchase intention. The macro-influencer was more effective in generating a broad reach but was always regarded as less authentic. The study indicates that micro-influencers might eventually prove to be more powerful than the prevailing marketing fatigue by gaining the trust and bonding the audiences closer (Alassani & Göretz, 2019)¹⁴
- The shift in Influencer marketing is taking place towards micro and macro influencers due to the factors of their higher engagement rate, realness, and trust of the audience. The use of short-form video, AI influencer selection, and immersive tech are the primary reasons for the trend, however, the issues of authenticity doubts, scams, and algorithm changes are still around. The brand's success will rely on the acceptance of data-driven strategies and partnerships that are socially responsible (Krisma Tumalle, 2025)¹⁵
- The findings of the study indicates that micro-influencers are becoming very popular among Indian consumers due to them being perceived as credible and down-to-earth. The vibrant advertisements which is in the shape of posts and stories not only affect the followers but also make them more likely to purchase and share the product. The research elaborates on the role of micro-influencers in social media consumer development in India. The area is under-researched, and even fewer studies have considered Instagram as a medium. (Gupta & Mahajan, 2019)¹⁶
- Micro-influencers are trustful by the means of authenticity, consistency, and relatable self-presentation which makes them very effective for the self-expressive products. Their main audience is created and maintained by high engagement, niche content, and consistent messaging, which also leads to high customer relationship and therefore they are proved to be cost-effective and importantly digital branding source (Dhingra et al., 2025)¹⁷
- Among all the different types of influencer marketing the one with the strongest influence on consumption decisions, especially among consumers from the Millennial and Gen Z cohorts, is the combination of influencers and their followers. This can be attributed to the over-commercialization factor in influencer marketing which might soon lead to fatigue but at the same time micro-influencers by virtue of their specific target audience, credibility as well as

even closer tie with their audience they can never fail to be very consistent. (Vijaya kumar, 2025)¹⁸

- Brands that rely on macro influencers get not only brand awareness but also good brand visibility, while micro influencers get us to the point where consumers take action such as buying mainly because of their high interaction with consumers, right targeting, and how real they seem. More than 94% of the survey participants are following at least one influencer and in their purchasing are under the influence of that influencer. Fashion branding is increasingly becoming dependent on micro-influencers for their reliability, cost-efficiency, special skills and close relationships with consumers (Escourido-Calvo et al., 2025)¹⁹
- The study examines the function and current trends of micro-influencers in promoting the brand successfully. They tend to have a high engagement rate by targeting specific niches and are more trustworthy and relatable than larger influencers which results in high brand awareness, improved website traffic and increasing sales. Collaborating with micro-influencers is more cost effective than macro influencers. (Saravana Kumar S, 2025)²⁰
- The micro influencers are proven to be more effective than macro in building a cordial relationship thereby increasing emotional attachment which leads to increased loyalty and perceived to be more transparent and honest also influencing purchase decision results in high conversion rate (Mujianto et al., 2025)²¹

Micro-influencers, with their offered benefits, are considered more truthful and less distanced from the common people by the majority of the current research. These benefits are mentioned to include, among others, greater trust and engagement. However, the previous studies were either limited to the general trends in the industry, mainstream engagement of consumers, or were comparing such influencers but did not carefully observe how authenticity and content reliability led to the decline of influencer marketing fatigue of the audiences who participated. Besides, there is a lack of empirical research that links consumers' understanding of micro-influencers' content on different digital platforms to actionable brand strategies. Thus, the main problem is to discover the direct connection between perceived authenticity/reliability and the **mitigation of marketing fatigue**, furthermore to offer strategic guidelines that can be used by brands to build **long-term partnerships** with micro-influencers to maintain **engagement of audience**.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the consumers' opinion on the impact of the micro influencer's content on the different digital platforms.
- To study the influence of micro influencer's authenticity and content credibility in the decline of influencer marketing fatigue.
- To advocate strategic recommendations to enhance influencer partnership and the decrease in influencer fatigue in the domain of digital branding.

DISCUSSION

The research provides strong evidence that micro-influencers are the strategic revolutionary required in today's widespread influencer marketing fatigue. It drives marketers not only to address the traditional dependence on quantifying reach but also to prioritize the variables of authenticity, reliability, and trust.

The study aimed to analyze how consumer perception towards the effectiveness of micro-influencers across digital platforms and managed to provide solid evidence in combating influencer marketing fatigue. The key findings interpret that the public favors micro-influencers as their content is more real and trustworthy than that of mega-influencers. Followers assume they are highly knowledgeable and friendly, resulting in a connection where product recommendations are seen as personalized and honest, rather than commercial advertisements. This results in an engagement rate of up to 60%, thus leveraging against marketing fatigue. Their niche and authentic characteristics are the long-term method to overcome digital overstimulation and tackle conversion rates.

The research states that credibility is an important aspect in the virtual space. In today's world, audiences can easily recognize false sales pitches, which leads to fatigue. Although mega-influencers have a wide range of audiences, which benefits them with great brand exposure, it can also be less authentic, as they can also run marketing strategies down. On the other hand, micro-influencers construct a strong relationship with their followers. They are seen as more reliable and trustworthy, as they have knowledge of the product and are more transparent than macro-influencers in brand collaborations. This transparency is a new change from over-advertised content that turns away audiences, as it directly counteracts the disbelief that arises from saturated advertisements. This factor is important, as it changes brand content from annoyance to trustworthy, thereby offering a vital solution to market fatigue.

Companies with partnerships that reduce consumer skepticism should adhere to three main rules. Firstly, select celebrities based on authenticity rather than the number of followers. The second rule is to shift the campaign objective to achieving high conversions, targeting consumers, and engagement rates. The last rule is to build long-term partnerships and ultimately build trust. In essence, the evidence shows that micro-influencers are the game changers who fight against marketing fatigue, thus increasing engagement and conversion.

Hence, this can be a new tunnel for brands, where their focus is shifted towards niche communities in long term sustainable partnership in virtual space.

IMPLICATIONS

The explanatory implications through the study provide a glimpse of the topic to marketing practitioners, academic theorists and the future researchers who are agitated with digital branding and influencer marketing

Implications for Theory:

- The research “The Influence of Source Credibility on Communication Effectiveness”(Hovland & Weiss, 1951)²² highlights that “relatability” and “perceived authenticity” are the prime components of trustworthiness in the digital era. In context of influencer marketing, this tells that influencer must demonstrate reliable and transparent. This helps in building strong relationship with audience and retain them.
- Creating a model for influencer marketing fatigue: the theory “ad fatigue” is well known in the literature but this study focuses on the idea “influencer marketing fatigue” where the audience recognize the depletion in authenticity and also it is an aftermath of both the high repetition of messaging and audience’s reducing accurate insight. So this interprets a new

theory that relates the point where influencer development and audience disengagement are connected.

Implications for marketing practice of Marketers

- Strategic re assessment of influencer election: The influencer election test should be based on the authenticity, relevance to the engagement and interaction parameters instead of the count of the follower rate. So every brand must have their distinctive value for example macro influencer for perception and micro influencer for enhancing customer loyalty, their interaction and conversion rate.
- Redefinition of campaign KPIs and ROI measurement: The campaign's success can also be ascertained through the count of impression and the reach. Key performance indicator's determined by the marketers need to be more revolutionary. In particular metrics like conversion rate, audience sentiment analysis, interaction rate and the content quality should be considers as a predominant metrics for their campaign. The return on investment (ROI) should be calculated according to the lifetime value of a customer acquired through a trusted recommendation, not just the initial sale.
- Cultivation of Long-Term, Authentic Partnerships: In order to gain the trust of the consumers, brands should avoid using the transactional, one-time collaboration method. Rather, they should set in motion a long-term ambassador program with the micro-influencers. Giving them the creative freedom to blend the brand into their native content style will not only keep the authenticity that the audience appreciates but will also prevent the content from appearing as a forced ad.
- Selective Influencer Portfolio: Brands can create a bigger effect with better accuracy by dividing the budget for micro-influencers among different niche markets and allocating only a small part of the budget to the macro-influencer. The "always-on" practice is not only cost-efficient but also trusted and potent because it affords brand visibility through various consumer groups and the whole market.

Implications for Future Research:

- Longitudinal studies on the authenticity lifecycle: this research presents a prevalence study. Rise of the micro influencer must be pursued by the future longitudinal research. What exactly is the timeline of a micro influencer's perceptibility of losing authenticity? Is there a follower or sponsorship, they must track what is the shift in audience insight from "peer" to "advertiser".
- Quantitative study of interaction and conversion: establishment of the subject area, future quantitative study can accurately estimate the correlation between credibility and conversion rate, click through rate and customer acquisition cost among varied products.
- The influence of platform algorithms: the upcoming study must look into how platform algorithm like Instagram, Tik Tok and YouTube may benefit micro influencer content. The study must focus on whether the algorithms keep rewarding viral or high end content. So this algorithm might contribute to the very fatigue that micro influencer supposed to fix.

- **Cross culture area of influencer fatigue:** this research focus on general digital landscape. The upcoming study can look into how the influencer marketing fatigue and the credibility varies among different culture. This could add to a significant global branding strategies.

CONCLUSION

The study focuses on finding whether the micro influencer are the cure to marketing fatigue which has been a common trend that is going to vanish. Micro influencer are therefore a strategic revolutionary in the present market. They are effective elixir for the audience skepticism caused by over advertised content and counterfeit of the macro influencer realm. The study states that through credibility, trustworthy and long term partnership there can accurate influence in the saturated virtual space.

The conclusion is gathered from strong evidence. Audience believe suggestions and reviews given by micro influencer are more credible than macro influencer. Also the authenticity is a direct encounter against skepticism, which is the main reason for the influencer marketing fatigue, thus it helps to cure it. Micro influencer who focus on niche marketing with an credible brand message will lead to getting authentic high interaction rates, therefore demonstrating strength of the audience relationship is influential than just the count of the followers one has.

The effect of these findings is important and brands have to shift their thinking in two fold manner which is strategy and philosophy. The time where vanity metrics were the prime metrics of influence has slip by. The upcoming digital branding will include a major changeover from campaigns that are of short duration and hang on to those that provide long term reach

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STRATEGIC USE OF DIGITAL MARKETING TECHNIQUES BY UTTAR PRADESH TOURISM AUTHORITY: OPPORTUNITIES, BARRIERS, AND STRATEGIC PATHWAYS”

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ABSTRACT:

This study explores the strategic use of digital marketing techniques by the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Authority (UPTA), focusing on opportunities, barriers, and pathways to strengthen tourism promotion. The objectives are to examine the digital marketing techniques currently employed by UPTA, identify their strengths and opportunities in enhancing tourism competitiveness, analyze weaknesses and threats limiting effective implementation, and propose strategic pathways for future digital promotion. Using a secondary data-based methodology, including government reports, policy documents, academic studies, and credible news sources, the research applies a SWOT framework to evaluate UPTA's initiatives. Findings reveal key strengths such as Uttar Pradesh's rich cultural and spiritual heritage, centralized tourism portals, active social media campaigns, and the successful Digital Mahakumbh 2025, which demonstrated global engagement. Opportunities include leveraging India's expanding digital ecosystem, emerging technologies like AI and VR/AR, and partnerships with international agencies. Barriers comprise limited digital literacy, infrastructural constraints, resistance to change, and weak global integration. Based on these insights, the study proposes a strategic roadmap emphasizing capacity building, technological enhancement, immersive experiences, and sustainable practices. The research concludes that while UPTA has achieved notable progress, a structured, technology-driven, and globally integrated approach is essential to position Uttar Pradesh as a leader in digital tourism, promoting economic growth and global visibility.

KEYWORDS: Digital Marketing Techniques, Tourism, Uttar Pradesh Tourism Authority, Swot Analysis, Strategic Pathways, Tourism Promotion, Digital Transformation.

INTRODUCTION:

Tourism has always been more than an industry; it is a bridge that connects cultures, people, and economies. In the Indian context, tourism represents not only a vital source of income and employment but also an instrument of cultural diplomacy that shapes how the country is perceived globally. Uttar Pradesh, with its rich tapestry of history, spirituality, and culture, has for decades been one of the most visited states in India. From the serene ghats of Varanasi, where spirituality flows endlessly with the Ganga, to the timeless beauty of the Taj Mahal in Agra, and from the bustling alleys of Lucknow to the sacred cities of Ayodhya and Mathura, the state offers a rare blend of heritage, devotion, and vibrant traditions. This diversity gives Uttar Pradesh a natural advantage, positioning it as a powerhouse of domestic tourism and an emerging hub for international travelers.

Yet, in the twenty-first century, destinations cannot rely on their inherent beauty and cultural wealth alone to attract visitors. The global tourism marketplace has become fiercely competitive, with travelers spoilt for choice and influenced increasingly by the digital world. Here, the role of marketing becomes paramount. For long, tourism marketing in Uttar Pradesh, as in many other Indian states, relied heavily on traditional methods such as brochures, fairs, and word-of-mouth. While effective to an extent, these methods are no longer sufficient to capture the imagination of the modern tourist, who now turns to Google searches, Instagram reels, YouTube travel vlogs, and influencer recommendations before deciding where to go. In this context, digital marketing emerges not simply as a complementary tool but as a transformative force capable of reshaping how destinations are imagined, promoted, and experienced.

Digital marketing differs from traditional marketing in its ability to reach wide audiences with precision, create interactive experiences, and sustain engagement even after the tourist returns home. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) allow tourism boards to tell stories in compelling ways, while search engine optimization (SEO) ensures that Uttar Pradesh's monuments, festivals, and circuits appear in global travelers' search results. The rise of mobile technology has further personalized the travel journey, with apps, online booking systems, and virtual tours allowing tourists to plan, visualize, and even preview their experiences. For a state like Uttar Pradesh, which receives millions of visitors annually, the strategic use of such techniques is not merely an option—it is a necessity to remain relevant in an increasingly digitalized world.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this shift dramatically. When physical mobility came to a standstill, the tourism industry was forced to innovate digitally. Uttar Pradesh Tourism responded with campaigns like *"UP Nahi Dekha Toh India Nahi Dekha"*, leveraging online platforms to keep the destination alive in the minds of potential travelers. Virtual tours of the Taj Mahal, social media storytelling around the ghats of Varanasi, and online promotion of festivals like Deepotsav in Ayodhya were among the innovative measures used to maintain visibility. These efforts demonstrated that digital marketing is no longer a supporting strategy but the very backbone of destination promotion in times of disruption. Even after the reopening of borders, the lessons learned remain critical: the future of tourism marketing lies in digital adaptability and innovation.

The importance of digital marketing for Uttar Pradesh becomes even clearer when one considers the scale and diversity of its tourism landscape. According to the Ministry of Tourism, the state attracts more than 200 million domestic visitors annually, making it consistently the top state in

terms of domestic tourist arrivals. Spiritual circuits—such as the Ramayana Circuit connecting Ayodhya and Chitrakoot, the Krishna Circuit spanning Mathura and Vrindavan, and the Buddhist Circuit linking Sarnath and Kushinagar—form the backbone of religious tourism. Heritage destinations like Agra and Fatehpur Sikri cater to history enthusiasts, while eco-tourism in areas like Dudhwa National Park adds variety to the portfolio. Mega events such as the Kumbh Mela and the Taj Mahotsav amplify the state's profile globally, drawing millions in short spans of time. Harnessing digital platforms to promote such diverse offerings allows Uttar Pradesh to position itself simultaneously as a land of devotion, heritage, culture, and natural beauty.

The opportunities created by digital marketing are vast. With internet penetration in India crossing 800 million users in 2023, the domestic tourist market itself has become deeply digital. Campaigns designed for YouTube or Instagram can influence the travel decisions of young urban Indians, who often seek short spiritual getaways or cultural experiences. At the international level, targeted advertisements and collaborations with influencers can project Uttar Pradesh as a must-visit destination for history, faith, and cultural exploration. Imagine a virtual reality preview of the Ganga Aarti in Varanasi, an AI-powered chatbot guiding a foreign tourist through visa and travel queries, or a gamified app that rewards visitors for exploring lesser-known heritage sites—these are not distant possibilities but immediate opportunities enabled by digital tools.

At the same time, however, the strategic use of digital marketing techniques in Uttar Pradesh tourism is not without barriers. The digital divide continues to be a challenge, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas where many potential stakeholders in the tourism ecosystem—such as local guides, handicraft sellers, and homestay owners—lack digital literacy or access to technology. Budgetary constraints often limit the scale and consistency of digital campaigns. Moreover, while a few high-profile campaigns have made headlines, the sustainability of such efforts is questionable without systematic strategies, training, and infrastructure. Content creation itself poses a challenge; poor-quality visuals or outdated websites can damage rather than enhance the brand image. Another persistent issue is the difficulty of measuring the real impact of digital marketing: while a video may garner millions of views, converting that visibility into actual tourist arrivals and revenues is not always straightforward.

These barriers underline the need for a strategic pathway that balances opportunities with realities. Learning from best practices across India and globally is crucial. Kerala, for instance, has effectively used digital storytelling and influencer marketing to position itself as “God's Own Country,” while Rajasthan has successfully blended heritage branding with social media campaigns. Internationally, destinations such as Dubai and Singapore have demonstrated how integrating artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and real-time data analytics into tourism marketing can redefine visitor experiences. Uttar Pradesh, with its unmatched cultural depth, can adapt and innovate in similar ways, but it requires a well-structured strategy that combines government initiatives, private partnerships, and local community engagement.

This is where the academic relevance of the present study lies. While India's “Incredible India” campaign has received scholarly attention and other states' tourism marketing efforts have been evaluated extensively, relatively little research has focused specifically on Uttar Pradesh's strategic use of digital marketing techniques. Much of the existing literature emphasizes heritage management, spiritual circuits, or policy frameworks, leaving a gap in understanding how digital strategies are being implemented, what challenges remain, and what future directions are

possible. This paper, therefore, seeks to address that gap by exploring the opportunities, barriers, and strategic pathways for digital marketing strategic use by the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Authority.

Literature Review:

Digital marketing has emerged as a critical driver in the tourism industry, transforming how destinations promote themselves and interact with tourists. Unlike traditional marketing methods such as brochures, newspapers, and billboards, digital marketing offers interactive, measurable, and cost-effective channels like social media, websites, mobile apps, and email marketing (Sharma & Sharma, 2023). For culturally and spiritually rich states like Uttar Pradesh (UP), leveraging digital marketing is essential to enhance visibility, attract diverse tourists, and improve the overall travel experience. This review synthesizes relevant literature on digital marketing in tourism, with particular emphasis on its strategic use by the UP Tourism Authority, opportunities created, barriers faced, and strategic pathways for effective implementation.

- The conclusion of Strategic Innovative Marketing and Tourism by **Mahour, Pankaj & Garg, Payal. (2025)** emphasizes the transformative impact of digital technologies on the tourism sector. It underscores the necessity for tourism businesses to adapt to rapid technological advancements, such as Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Everything, to remain competitive. The book highlights that integrating innovative marketing strategies, including effective use of social media, is crucial for enhancing customer engagement and satisfaction. Furthermore, it discusses the importance of sustainable practices and ethical branding in building long-term relationships with customers. The authors advocate for a holistic approach that combines creativity, technology, and sustainability to drive growth and resilience in the tourism industry.
- **Anuj, Upadhyay, Kargeti, and Sharma (2023)** examine the adoption of digital marketing within Uttarakhand's tourism sector. The study utilizes the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) to analyze factors affecting adoption, including perceived usefulness, ease of use, competitive pressure, and attitudes toward digital marketing. Results indicate that these factors strongly influence tourism organizations' intentions to implement digital marketing strategies. The research highlights the importance for tourism businesses to adopt digital marketing to improve competitiveness and operational efficiency and presents a model to guide the adoption process, providing practical insights for industry practitioners.
- **Kavoura, Niki&Briciu, Victor-Alexandru & Briciu, Arabela. (2025)** concluded that Uttar Pradesh's tourism industry, endowed with rich cultural and historical assets, faces significant challenges that hinder its growth. Addressing issues like infrastructure deficits, environmental concerns, and safety will require concerted efforts from both public and private sectors. Implementing sustainable practices and strategic reforms is essential for the sector's long-term success and global competitiveness.
- The research Strategic Marketing in the Development of the Tourism Economy: **Meleura Beach by Hermawan et al. (2025)** highlights the crucial importance of strategic and digital marketing in boosting the tourism economy of Meleura Beach in Muna Regency, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. It finds that although local Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) offer distinctive products and cultural attractions, their development is constrained by inadequate digital marketing expertise and infrastructure. The study emphasizes the need

to improve digital literacy among MSMEs through collaborative efforts between government bodies and private organizations to expand market access and enhance competitiveness. Key recommendations include leveraging digital marketing, promoting community participation, and forming partnerships with international agencies to support sustainable growth and long-term development in the global tourism sector.

- The study by **Singh and Bishnoi (2020)** on the tourism prospects and marketing of the Meerut region in Western Uttar Pradesh highlights the area's considerable yet underutilized potential as a tourist destination. Despite its rich historical landmarks, diverse culture, and culinary heritage, the region has not achieved significant tourist inflow. The research points out that weak marketing strategies and low public awareness are major obstacles to tourism growth. Based on a survey of 250 respondents, the study emphasizes that well-planned marketing and promotional initiatives are essential to attract visitors to Meerut's historical sites. The authors recommend that policymakers prioritize strategic marketing efforts to enhance the visibility of the region's tourism offerings, thereby supporting economic development and preserving its cultural heritage.
- **Sudhakar and Murugan (2025)** examine the incorporation of sustainability into tourism marketing strategies for pilgrimage destinations in Vellore District, Tamil Nadu. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study identifies crucial strategic elements, including environmentally friendly infrastructure, active community participation, cultural branding, and the use of digital platforms for outreach. The findings highlight that aligning marketing initiatives with sustainability principles is essential for maintaining the long-term viability and cultural significance of pilgrimage sites.
- **Ray and Das (2024)**, in *Tourism Marketing: A Strategic Approach*, provide an in-depth analysis of effective strategies for tourism marketing. The work highlights various practical tools, skills, models, and approaches that have demonstrated success in promoting tourism. It also emphasizes the role of infrastructure, socioeconomic conditions, and contemporary tourism business frameworks in determining the effectiveness of marketing strategies and their contribution to business performance and economic development.
- **Vequist (2025)** examines the significant role of digital marketing and artificial intelligence (AI) in transforming the health tourism sector. The study indicates that healthcare providers increasingly use social media platforms—such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook—to connect with international patients through various content types, including short videos, professional visuals, educational materials, and interactive engagement. The research also highlights that a majority of medical tourists rely on social media as a primary or secondary source of information before making cross-border healthcare decisions, with visual and video content achieving the highest engagement. Additionally, AI is shown to enhance patient acquisition by helping healthcare facilities overcome geographical limitations, establish trust through transparent communication, and design targeted marketing campaigns tailored to specific patient demographics seeking medical services abroad.
- **Singh (2015)** investigates the adoption of digital marketing practices among Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Western Uttar Pradesh. The study explores the factors influencing the uptake of digital marketing tools and strategies, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges faced by MSMEs in leveraging online platforms for business growth. Findings suggest that while digital marketing offers significant potential for

expanding market reach and enhancing competitiveness, constraints such as limited technological knowledge, inadequate infrastructure, and financial limitations hinder its effective adoption. The research underscores the need for targeted interventions and support mechanisms to help MSMEs integrate digital marketing effectively into their business operations.

- **Jamwal, Frederick, and Vijay (2025)** examine the role of modern digital marketing strategies in the Indian tourism sector. Their study, featured in *Empowering Sustainable Performance and Competitive Advantage in Tourism*, emphasizes how digital tools and platforms can enhance destination visibility, attract a diverse tourist base, and improve competitiveness. The authors highlight the integration of social media, mobile applications, and data-driven marketing approaches as key drivers for sustainable growth in tourism. The research underscores that adopting digital marketing not only strengthens market presence but also supports long-term performance and resilience in India's tourism industry.
- **Global and Indian Trends in Digital Marketing for Tourism:** Sharma and Sharma (2023) conducted a systematic review of literature between 2015 and 2020 on digital technology in tourism. They highlighted the increasing importance of social media, online travel agencies (OTAs), and search engine optimization (SEO) in influencing tourist behavior. Their analysis revealed that interactive content, online engagement, and personalized recommendations are now central to tourism marketing strategies globally. Dhankhar, Gaur, and Singh (2023) examined the influence of digital marketing practices on tourist buying behavior in India. Their study emphasized that social media, websites, and mobile applications significantly shape tourists' decisions. Features such as user reviews, visual content, and real-time updates enhance credibility and increase the likelihood of visiting a destination. These findings demonstrate the potential of digital marketing tools to influence tourist intentions and behaviors, which is crucial for regions like UP with diverse attractions.
- **Strategic use of Digital Marketing in Uttar Pradesh Tourism:** Uttar Pradesh, known for spiritual destinations such as Varanasi, Ayodhya, and Mathura, has recognized the need for digital promotion to compete with other domestic and international tourist destinations. Sharma et al. (2024) studied the Braj region (Mathura and Vrindavan) and found that digital marketing strategies, including social media promotion and online content creation, significantly enhanced tourist engagement and business performance. Their research demonstrated that culturally relevant and visually appealing content encourages higher online interaction and positive perceptions of the region. The UP Tourism Authority has implemented initiatives like QR code-based audio tours at more than 100 destinations. These audio tours provide visitors with information in multiple languages, supporting both cultural education and an enhanced tourist experience (Uttar Pradesh Tourism, 2022). Such initiatives align with global trends of using technology to provide immersive, informative, and interactive tourist experiences. Online campaigns targeting potential domestic and international tourists help shape perceptions, generate interest, and facilitate planning.
- **Opportunities Presented by Digital Marketing:** Digital marketing provides Uttar Pradesh Tourism with the ability to reach a wider, even global, audience, overcoming geographic limitations. Through search engine marketing, targeted advertisements, and social media campaigns, the state can effectively showcase its rich cultural and heritage assets (Sharma & Sharma, 2023). Compared to traditional marketing channels such as print or broadcast media,

digital marketing is more cost-efficient, enabling targeted promotions through email campaigns, content creation, and social media with measurable outcomes (Dhankhar et al., 2023). Additionally, digital platforms facilitate personalized, data-driven marketing by analyzing visitor behavior, preferences, and demographics, allowing UP Tourism to deliver tailored content and offers, thereby increasing visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Social media and other digital tools also enable real-time engagement, allowing immediate responses to inquiries, addressing complaints, and providing timely updates, which builds trust and enhances the overall tourist experience.

- **Barriers to Strategic Use of Digital Marketing Techniques:** Despite increasing smartphone penetration, a significant portion of UP's population, particularly in rural areas, lacks digital literacy, which constrains both tourism promotion and the effective use of digital tools by local operators (Sharma et al., 2024). Many tourist destinations in the state also face infrastructural limitations, such as poor internet connectivity and inadequate technological facilities, restricting online promotions, real-time engagement, and the deployment of tools like QR code tours or mobile applications (Uttar Pradesh Tourism, 2022). Resistance to change among tourism operators, who often rely on traditional marketing methods, further hinders the adoption of digital technologies; awareness programs are necessary to demonstrate the benefits of digital marketing (Sharma & Sharma, 2023). Moreover, resource constraints—including limited skilled personnel, financial investment, and technical infrastructure—impede the development and maintenance of effective digital marketing campaigns.
- **Strategic Pathways for Effective Digital Marketing:** To overcome these barriers, capacity-building initiatives, including training programs for tourism staff, operators, and local communities, are essential to enhance digital skills and improve promotion of tourism assets (Sharma et al., 2024). Strengthening infrastructure, such as internet access and mobile network coverage in underserved areas, through public-private partnerships, is also critical (Uttar Pradesh Tourism, 2022). Collaborative engagement with local communities, businesses, and tourism operators ensures that campaigns are culturally sensitive, inclusive, and sustainable (Agarwal et al., 2021). Utilizing data analytics allows UP Tourism to monitor campaign effectiveness, track visitor preferences, and optimize strategies for improved outcomes (Dhankhar et al., 2023). Finally, leveraging policy support, such as incentives provided under the UP Tourism Policy 2022 for digital content creation and marketing, can facilitate structured advancement toward digital transformation (Government of Uttar Pradesh, 2022).

Objectives of the Study:

1. **To examine** the digital marketing techniques currently adopted by the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Authority (UPTA).
 2. **To identify** the strength and opportunities created by these techniques in enhancing the competitiveness of Uttar Pradesh tourism.
 3. **To analyze** the weakness and threats that hinder the effective implementation of digital marketing strategies in the state.
 4. **To propose** strategic pathways that can guide the future of digital tourism promotion in Uttar Pradesh.
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5. Research methodology:

This study adopts a secondary data-based research methodology to investigate the strategic use of digital marketing techniques by the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Authority. The research relies on official government reports, UP Tourism portals, policy documents, academic studies, industry white papers, and credible news articles. Data from these sources were systematically reviewed to trace the Authority's digital initiatives, marketing campaigns, and online promotional activities. The analysis is structured using a SWOT framework, which helps to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the adoption of digital marketing in Uttar Pradesh's tourism sector. This approach enables a comprehensive evaluation of existing practices and provides strategic insights without the need for primary data collection.

6. DISCUSSIONS:

The secondary data analysis demonstrates that the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Authority (UPTA) has taken significant steps toward integrating digital marketing into its tourism strategy. By leveraging its vast cultural heritage, state support, and digital infrastructure, UPTA has been able to design campaigns that capture both domestic and international audiences. The most visible success in recent times has been the **Digital Mahakumbh 2025**, which attracted global attention through live-streaming, online engagement, and virtual participation tools. This event not only positioned Uttar Pradesh as a leader in blending tradition with technology but also validated the potential of large-scale digital initiatives.

However, the discussion also indicates a need for sustained innovation and strategic refinement. Weaknesses such as inconsistent content management, limited analytics use, and lack of integration with international tourism platforms threaten to reduce the long-term impact of UPTA's efforts. Furthermore, cybersecurity risks and growing competition from digitally advanced states demand greater preparedness. The SWOT framework confirms that UPTA is at a crossroads where future success depends on institutional strengthening and strategic vision.

7. Results and Findings:

The results of the study, framed through SWOT analysis, highlight both the achievements and challenges of UPTA's digital marketing journey:

8. 1. Strengths:

- a) **Rich cultural and spiritual destinations:** Uttar Pradesh boasts globally recognized cultural and spiritual hubs like Ayodhya, Varanasi, Mathura, and Prayagraj, which naturally attract tourists. These destinations provide UPTA with unique content and experiences that can be showcased digitally, creating strong engagement potential through videos, virtual tours, and storytelling. The historical and spiritual significance also strengthens branding efforts.
- b) **Digital Mahakumbh 2025:** The Digital Mahakumbh 2025 initiative was a landmark achievement demonstrating UPTA's capacity for global digital outreach. Through live streaming, online registrations, and social media campaigns, UPTA successfully engaged both domestic and international audiences, showing the potential of large-scale digital events to enhance visibility and tourism participation.
- c) **Centralized tourism portal:** UPTA's centralized portal acts as a one-stop platform for tourists, offering information, booking services, and itineraries. Such accessibility improves user experience, boosts online engagement, and facilitates easier promotion of new tourism

packages. A centralized platform also ensures consistent messaging and branding across the state.

- d) **Active social media campaigns with influencer collaborations:** Regular social media engagement, especially with collaborations with influencers, helps UPTA reach younger audiences and digitally active travelers. Influencers create authentic content that resonates more with potential tourists, enhancing brand recall and promoting Uttar Pradesh as a vibrant tourism destination.
- e) **QR code-enabled services and mobile-friendly content:** With the growing adoption of smartphones, QR code-enabled services and mobile-optimized content simplify access to information and services. Tourists can scan codes at destinations to access history, maps, and guided tours, creating a seamless and interactive digital experience.
- f) **Strong policy backing:** Government initiatives like Digital India and Incredible India 2.0 provide strong policy support, funding opportunities, and strategic frameworks. This backing ensures that UPTA has access to technical infrastructure, promotional channels, and collaborative programs that strengthen its digital marketing efforts.

2. Weaknesses:

- a) **Inconsistent content updates and limited multilingual accessibility:** While the portal exists, updates are not always regular, and content is mostly in Hindi or English, limiting reach to non-Hindi speaking international tourists. This inconsistency can reduce engagement and diminish the overall digital experience.
- b) **Absence of advanced data analytics and AI-driven personalization:** UPTA currently lacks AI tools and predictive analytics, which can help understand tourist preferences, predict trends, and deliver personalized recommendations. Without these, campaigns may be generic and less effective in attracting repeat visitors or targeting niche tourist segments.
- c) **Dependence on outsourcing due to lack of in-house expertise:** Reliance on external agencies for content creation, campaign management, and technical support can increase costs and reduce agility. Lack of internal digital marketing expertise also slows quick response to emerging trends or crisis situations. **Weak integration with global tourism platforms:** Currently, UPTA has limited presence on global platforms like TripAdvisor, Booking.com, and Expedia, which are widely used by international tourists for planning trips. This weak integration reduces visibility and potential bookings from global audiences.
- d) **Lack of real-time monitoring systems:** Without real-time tracking tools, it is challenging to evaluate campaign performance instantly or respond to issues quickly. This prevents data-driven decisions, limiting optimization of digital marketing strategies.

3. Opportunities:

- a) **India's growing digital ecosystem:** With over 800 million internet users in India, digital marketing can reach a massive audience. Increasing smartphone penetration and online payment adoption allow UPTA to offer convenient digital services, including booking, virtual tours, and immersive campaigns.
- b) **Rising demand for spiritual, wellness, and heritage tourism worldwide:** Globally, travelers are seeking experiential tourism like spiritual retreats, wellness vacations, and

heritage exploration. UPTA can leverage this trend to design targeted digital campaigns for specific tourist profiles, attracting international visitors.

- c) **Potential use of AI, VR/AR, and immersive storytelling:** Emerging technologies such as AI chatbots, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) can offer personalized experiences, virtual tours, and interactive storytelling. This enhances engagement and encourages pre-visit planning, extending tourist reach beyond physical limitations.
- d) **Strategic collaborations with airlines, OTAs, and international influencers:** Partnerships with airlines, online travel agencies, and global influencers can boost Uttar Pradesh's visibility internationally, creating co-branded campaigns that enhance tourist inflow and increase the state's competitiveness in digital tourism.
- e) **Scope to establish Uttar Pradesh as a model state for digital tourism:** With proper execution, UPTA can emerge as a benchmark for digital tourism in India, inspiring other states and positioning Uttar Pradesh as a tech-savvy, globally connected tourism destination.

4. Threats:

- a) **Competition from digitally stronger states:** States like Rajasthan and Kerala have already developed strong digital marketing frameworks, including well-maintained websites, apps, and global campaigns. UPTA must innovate continuously to compete with these digitally advanced states.
- b) **Cybersecurity risks:** As online bookings and digital campaigns increase, threats like data breaches, phishing attacks, and fraud could compromise tourist trust, creating reputational and financial risks.
- c) **Misinformation and negative online narratives:** False reviews, negative social media posts, or viral misinformation could adversely affect perceptions. Managing online reputation is crucial to maintaining tourist confidence and brand credibility.
- d) **Rapid technology cycles:** Digital tools and platforms evolve rapidly. Systems or content that are effective today can become obsolete quickly, requiring constant upgrades and investment to stay competitive.
- e) **Rural connectivity challenges:** Many cultural and spiritual sites are located in remote areas with poor internet connectivity, limiting the reach and effectiveness of online campaigns. Bridging this digital divide is essential for comprehensive marketing.

The findings reveal that while UPTA has achieved significant visibility particularly with the Digital Mahakumbh 2025 but its future success will depend on addressing structural gaps, enhancing innovation, and ensuring global competitiveness.

Policy Recommendations and Strategic Roadmap:

Short-Term (1–2 years):

- **Content Overhaul:** Regularly update portals and social media pages with multilingual, culturally sensitive content.
- **Data Analytics Integration:** Begin with basic tools for monitoring digital campaigns and audience engagement.

- **Cybersecurity Measures:** Implement secure payment gateways and fraud-detection systems on portals.
- **Training Programs:** Upskill existing staff in digital marketing basics through workshops.

Medium-Term (3–5 years):

- **AI and Personalization:** Deploy AI-based chatbots, predictive analytics, and recommendation engines for personalized travel planning.
- **VR/AR Applications:** Develop immersive experiences for heritage sites, museums, and religious circuits as in Kashi Vishwanath Temple.
- **Global Integration:** Partner with OTAs, global influencers, and content creators to increase visibility abroad.
- **Brand Reinforcement:** Use recurring digital events modeled after the success of the Digital Mahakumbh.

Long-Term (5+ years):

- **Digital Tourism Innovation Hub:** Establish a dedicated hub for research, testing, and scaling of new tourism technologies.
- **Sustainable Digital Ecosystem:** Align campaigns with eco-tourism and responsible travel principles.
- **International Collaborations:** Sign MoUs with global tourism boards for cross-promotion and knowledge sharing.
- **Smart Tourism Infrastructure:** Need more investment in IoT-enabled smart guides, real-time visitor management systems, and integrated travel platforms.

Through this roadmap, UPTA can move beyond basic adoption and achieve global recognition for innovation in digital tourism, positioning Uttar Pradesh as both a cultural and technological leader in the 21st century.

CONCLUSION:

The study concludes that UPTA has effectively initiated digital marketing practices but needs to evolve toward a more structured, technology-driven, and globally integrated model. Strengths such as cultural heritage and government support provide a solid foundation, while the success of the Digital Mahakumbh 2025 illustrates what can be achieved with innovative campaigns. Yet, limitations in analytics, expertise, and international presence indicate that strategic pathways must be carefully planned. By adopting a forward-looking approach, UPTA can transform digital marketing into a primary driver of tourism-led economic development, ensuring that Uttar Pradesh not only remains India's cultural heartland but also emerges as a global leader in digital tourism.

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DYNAMICS OF AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Arunachal Pradesh, which lies in northeastern India, is distinguished by its varied and challenging geographical landscape, which significantly impacts agricultural productivity in the state. The region is marked by substantial precipitation, fostering a robust tropical forest ecology that sustains a diverse array of plant species. The distinctive biodiversity of these forests represents the region's natural wealth, while simultaneously posing obstacles for sustainable agricultural advancement. A significant element affecting agricultural production in Arunachal Pradesh is the prevalence of shifting cultivation, referred to as "jhum" farming. This conventional method entails the deforestation and burning of woodland, followed by a phase of agriculture and eventual abandonment as soil fertility diminishes. The jhum system has been an enduring element of the region's cultural and economic framework, with many tribes implementing it in unique manners. This agricultural system's long-term viability is seriously threatened by the decrease in soil fertility and environmental degradation brought on by population pressure that has reduced the fallow period. The evolving dynamics of agricultural production in Arunachal Pradesh are further intensified by the state's diversified topography and varying slope conditions. This heterogeneous landscape poses unique challenges for the adoption of modern agricultural techniques and technologies, often requiring site-specific interventions to address the specific needs of each region. Additionally, the land tenure system and cultivation practices in Arunachal Pradesh vary across different tribes and communities, further complicating the task of implementing efficient and sustainable agricultural strategies. Despite these challenges, there have been efforts to address the issues surrounding agricultural production in Arunachal Pradesh. These efforts have focused on promoting alternative farming systems, such as agri-horticulture agroforestry, which aim to integrate perennial crops and tree species with annual agricultural crops. Such systems have the potential to enhance the productivity and resilience of the region's agriculture, while also mitigating the environmental impact of traditional shifting cultivation practices.

KEYWORD: *Jhum Cultivation, Agriculture Diversification.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has long been the backbone of human civilization, providing the essential resources required for sustenance and economic growth. However, the dynamics of agricultural production are complex, driven by a myriad of factors ranging from environmental constraints to legal and socio-economic considerations (Emon, 2020). One of the primary challenges facing the agricultural sector is the need to increase crop production to meet the demands of a rapidly growing global population. This challenge is exacerbated by the limited availability of resources such as land, water, and nutrients, as well as the pressing need to reduce the environmental impact of agricultural practices. (Coulter, 2020) In this context, technological innovations in areas such as precision farming, genetic engineering, and soil management have emerged as potential solutions to enhance agricultural productivity. (Elmi, 2017).

India's agricultural sector has long played a crucial role in the country's economy, contributing significantly to its gross domestic product and employing a substantial portion of the population. The sector's importance extends beyond its economic impact, as it also serves as a provider of food security, an instrument for poverty alleviation, and a source of community income (Gina et al., 2023). Likewise, the agricultural sector plays a crucial role in the economy of Arunachal Pradesh, a northeastern state of India. This region, characterized by its diverse topography and climatic conditions, presents both opportunities and challenges for agricultural development (Kadirvel et al., 2020).

The state is home to a wide range of ethnic tribal communities, each with their unique farming practices and traditions. The jhum system has been a longstanding part of the cultural and economic fabric of the region, with various tribes practicing it in distinct ways. The importance of shifting cultivation goes beyond mere economic concerns, as it is closely tied to the cultural identity of the tribal people. The persistence of shifting cultivation in Arunachal Pradesh can be attributed to its deep-rooted cultural significance for the tribal communities. However, the reduction in the fallow period due to population pressure has led to a decline in soil fertility and environmental degradation, posing a significant threat to the long-term sustainability of this agricultural system. The area under shifting cultivation in Arunachal Pradesh has been a topic of debate, with inconsistent estimates. However, the general trend suggests an increase in the area under settled cultivation and a decline in the area under shifting cultivation. (Teegalapalli & Datta, 2016). The transition towards settled cultivation has been gradual, with some tribes like the Apatanis, Singphos, and Khamptis adopting it earlier. However, the majority of the tribes in Arunachal Pradesh continue to rely on shifting cultivation, which still occupies a significant portion of the net sown area in the state.

2. Statement of the Problem

The farming community in Arunachal Pradesh holds an area of 9.79 lakh hectares, which is run by 8.63 lakh farmers out of the total geographical area of 55.673 lakh hectares. The majority of the holdings, 87.03%, are owned by small and marginal farmers, indicating the predominance of subsistence-based agriculture in the state. (Kumar et al., 2016) However, the state also harbours several 'niche' or specific situations/products, with potential comparative advantages over plains, leading to a transformation and diversification of agriculture in certain valleys and mountain areas (Kumar et al., 2016). The changing dynamics of agricultural production in Arunachal Pradesh are further exacerbated by the diverse terrain and varying slope conditions found throughout the state. This heterogeneous landscape poses unique challenges for the adoption of

modern agricultural techniques and technologies, often requiring site-specific interventions to address the specific needs of each region. Additionally, the land tenure system and cultivation practices in Arunachal Pradesh vary across different tribes and communities, further complicating the task of implementing efficient and sustainable agricultural strategies.

3. Objectives

This research article aims to explore the dynamics of agricultural production in Arunachal Pradesh, examining the land use pattern in Arunachal Pradesh and the trends in the productivity of selected crops in Arunachal Pradesh. Further, the last part of the paper deals with the challenges faced by farmers, and the potential for future growth and development followed by the conclusion.

4. Data Base and Methods of study

The present study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The study used the secondary data collected from government reports, academic publications, and relevant databases. The data collected from the secondary sources is analysed using descriptive statistics and qualitative thematic analysis.

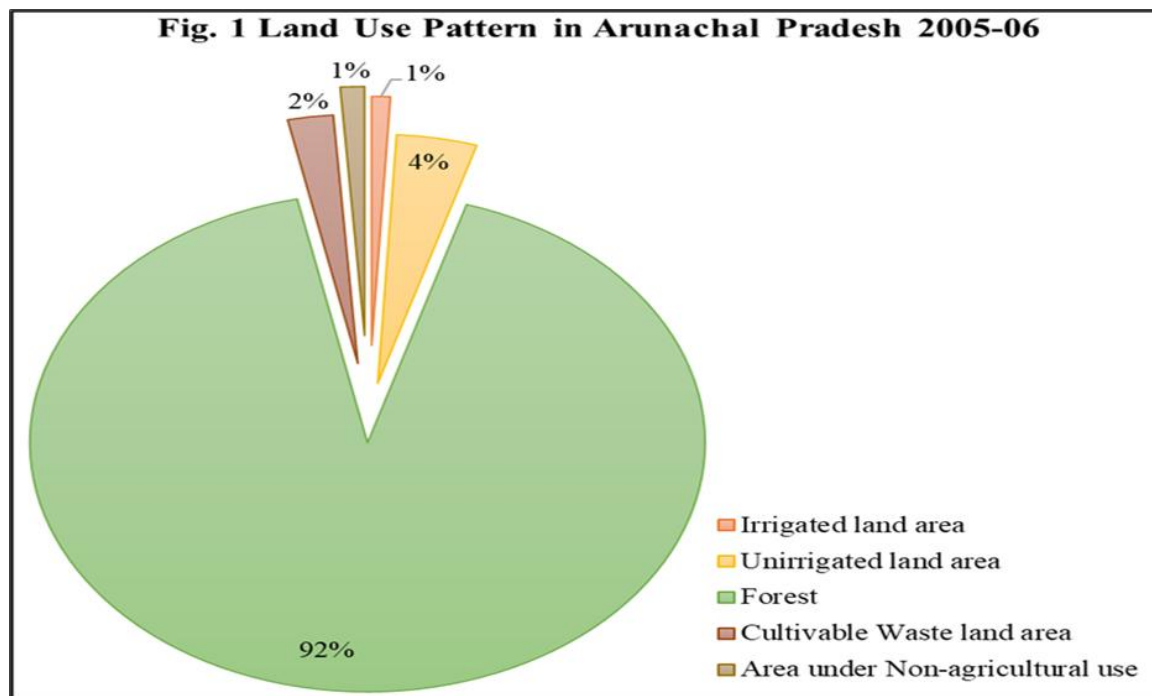
5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Land Utilisation Pattern in Arunachal Pradesh

The land use patterns in Arunachal Pradesh between 2005–06 and 2020–21 reveals significant shifts in land allocation, notably a substantial increase in forest cover and a relative decline in agricultural land. Forest area expanded by 14,890 sq. km (28.9%), from 51,540 sq. km to 66,430 sq. km. This corresponds with a proportional increase in forest cover from 91.92% of the total area in 1991 to 92.96% in 2011, suggesting successful conservation or reforestation initiatives.

Table 1, Land Utilisation Pattern in Arunachal Pradesh

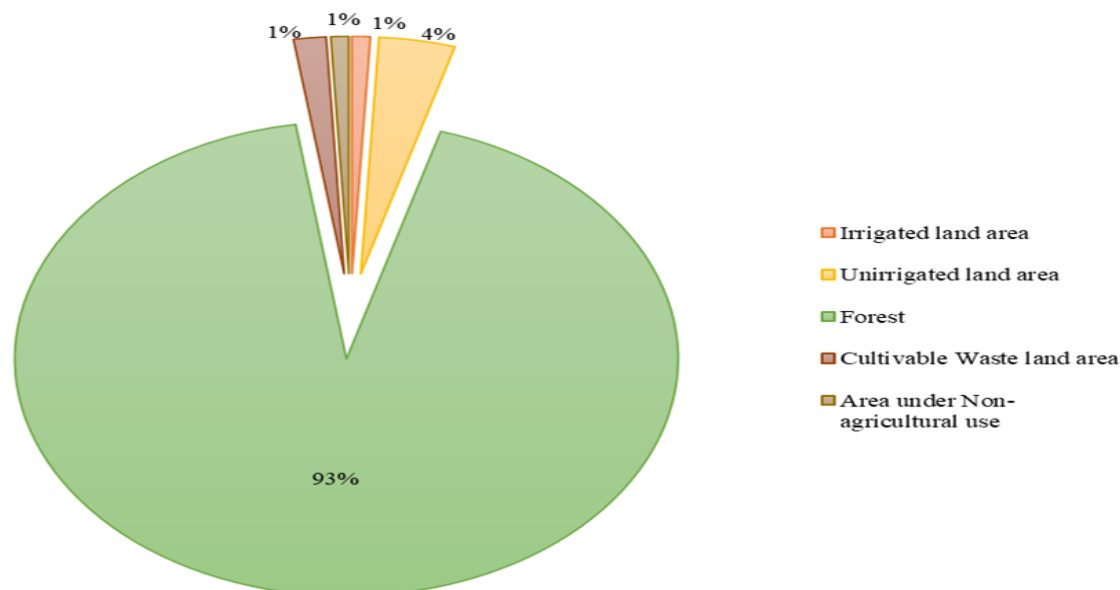
Land use categories	Area (sq. km)		% to total area	
	2005-06	2020-21	1991	2011
Irrigated land area	500	630	0.89	0.88
Unirrigated land area	2160	2650	3.85	3.71
Forest	51540	66430	91.92	92.96
Cultivable Waste land area	1220	1130	2.18	1.58
Area under Non-agricultural use	650	620	1.16	0.87
Total	56070	71460	100	100



Source: Land Use Statistics at Glance (Various Years) Govt. of India, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare

Source: Source: Land Use Statistics at Glance (Various Years) Govt. of India, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare

While agricultural land experienced growth in absolute terms—irrigated land by 26% and unirrigated land by 22.7%—its proportional contribution to the total area decreased slightly. This observation indicates that agricultural expansion did not keep pace with the overall increase in the total land area, which rose by 27.5% from 56,070 sq. km to 71,460 sq. km. This substantial rise in total area warrants further investigation into potential boundary modifications, improved survey techniques, or the incorporation of previously unmapped territories.

Fig. 2 Land Use Pattern in Arunachal Pradesh 2020-21

Source: Source: Source: Land Use Statistics at Glance (Various Years) Govt. of India, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare

Cultivable waste land decreased by 7.4% (from 1,220 sq. km to 1,130 sq. km), accompanied by a proportional reduction from 2.18% to 1.58% of the total area between 1991 and 2011. This decline likely reflects improved land management strategies, including land reclamation or conversion to agricultural or forested land. Non-agricultural land use also saw a minor decrease in both absolute and proportional terms, possibly indicating constraints on urbanization or a policy shift towards sustainable land management.

These trends highlight a focus on ecological preservation, particularly forest expansion, alongside moderate agricultural growth. Further research should explore the socio-economic and environmental consequences of these changes, including the potential trade-offs between forest conservation and agricultural productivity, and the efficacy of land use policies. Understanding the drivers and implications of these land use dynamics is crucial for informing sustainable development strategies in Arunachal Pradesh.

5.2. Trends in Production of Major Crops in Arunachal Pradesh

Table 1 illustrates the evolving dynamics of agricultural production in the state over a 16-year period, highlighting both growth and shifting priorities in food and non-food crops. Between 2005–06 and 2020–21, total food crop production rose by 56% in absolute terms, climbing from 241 thousand tonnes (69.2% of total agricultural output) to 377 thousand tonnes (65.5%). While this represents a substantial increase in volume, the slight decline in its share of total agricultural production (from 69.2% to 65.5%) suggests a gradual diversification of the state's agricultural sector toward non-food crops.

The growth in food crops was driven predominantly by rice, maize, and millet, though their contributions varied in magnitude and significance. Rice emerged as the cornerstone of food security, accounting for 42% of total food crop production in both 2005–06 (146 thousand tonnes) and 2020–21 (247 thousand tonnes). Its production surged by 100 thousand tonnes (a 69% increase in absolute terms), though its proportional share grew only marginally by 0.9

percentage points. This underscores rice's continued dominance in the state's agrarian economy, likely due to stable demand, irrigation investments, or high-yield hybrid varieties.

Maize output expanded from 58 thousand tonnes to 80 thousand tonnes (a 38% absolute increase), yet its share of total food production declined by 2.7 percentage points, signalling that its growth lagged behind overall sectoral expansion. Similarly, millet production rose by 5.2 thousand tonnes (to an unspecified total) but saw a proportional decline of 1.6 percentage points. Wheat, though a smaller contributor, mirrored this trend: a modest 1.6 thousand tonne increase (absolute) paired with a 0.5 percentage point decline in share. These shifts may reflect changing dietary preferences, competition from high-value crops, or climate adaptations.

In contrast, pulses demonstrated robust growth, with production doubling from 8 thousand tonnes (2.4% of food crops) to 14 thousand tonnes (2.5%) a 75% absolute increase and 0.1 percentage point rise in share. This aligns with broader national or regional efforts to promote protein-rich crops to address nutritional deficits, though their overall contribution remains modest.

5.2.1 Non-Food Crops: Diversification and Market-Driven Growth

The state's agricultural landscape increasingly prioritized non-food crops, with production soaring from 107 thousand tonnes (30.8% of total output) in 2005–06 to 199 thousand tonnes (34.5%) in 2020–21—an 86% absolute increase. This shift highlights farmers' responsiveness to market opportunities and export-oriented cultivation.

Ginger, potato, and oilseeds were primary drivers of this growth. Ginger production surged from 33 thousand tonnes (9.6% of non-food crops) to 55 thousand tonnes (9.7%), maintaining its proportional share despite a 67% absolute increase. Potato output rose from 30 thousand tonnes (8.6%) to 45 thousand tonnes (7.8%), while oilseeds grew from 24 thousand tonnes (6.8%) to 37 thousand tonnes (6.5%). Notably, while all three crops expanded in volume, their declining shares within the non-food category (potato: -0.8 pp; oilseeds: -0.3 pp) suggest even faster growth in other high-value crops.

The most striking transformation occurred in turmeric, chilli, and sugarcane. Turmeric production doubled from 2 thousand tonnes (0.5%) to 4 thousand tonnes (0.7%), while chilli output skyrocketed by 267% (from 3 thousand to 11 thousand tonnes), elevating its share from 0.8% to 1.8%. Sugarcane experienced exponential growth, leaping from 16 thousand tonnes (4.6%) to 46 thousand tonnes (8%), a 188% absolute increase and the largest proportional gain (3.4 percentage points) among non-food crops. These trends likely reflect rising domestic and international demand for spices and biofuels, incentivizing farmers to shift land use toward these lucrative crops.

The data reveals a state in agricultural transition: while food crops (especially rice) remain vital, non-food crops are gaining prominence, driven by market forces and diversification strategies. However, the declining proportional shares of certain crops (e.g., maize, oilseeds) despite absolute growth underscores the competitive pressures within evolving agricultural systems. Further analysis could explore underlying factors such as policy incentives, climate resilience, or global price fluctuations shaping these trends.

Table 1. Trends in Production of Major Crops in Arunachal Pradesh (in 000 Tonnes)

Years	Rice	Maize	Millet	Wheat	Pulses	Total Food Crops	Oilseeds	Potato	Ginger	Turneric	Chilies	Sugarcane	Total Non-Food Crops
2005-06	146.2 (42.0)	57.9 (16.6)	22.4 (6.4)	6.1 (1.8)	8.3 (2.4)	240.9 (69.2)	23.7 (6.8)	29.8 (8.6)	33.3 (9.6)	1.6 (0.5)	2.6 (0.8)	16.2 (4.6)	107.3 (30.8)
2006-07	146.2 (39.1)	63.5 (17.2)	21.4 (5.8)	6.3 (1.7)	8.3 (2.2)	244.2 (66.1)	29.3 (7.9)	31.7 (8.6)	42.8 (11.6)	2.0 (0.5)	2.7 (0.7)	16.8 (4.6)	125.3 (33.9)
2007-08	158.1 (41.1)	57.4 (15.1)	19.4 (5.1)	5.3 (1.4)	8.6 (2.3)	248.9 (65.2)	28.6 (7.5)	29.2 (7.6)	47.4 (12.4)	2.1 (0.6)	3.6 (1.0)	21.8 (5.7)	132.7 (34.8)
2008-09	164.5 (41.4)	58.8 (14.8)	18.9 (4.8)	5.2 (1.3)	9.0 (2.5)	256.5 (64.2)	31.0 (7.8)	33.4 (8.4)	47.2 (11.9)	2.4 (0.6)	4.0 (1.0)	23.4 (5.9)	141.4 (35.5)
2009-10	143.9 (37.2)	60.1 (15.5)	18.4 (4.8)	4.8 (1.2)	9.7 (2.2)	236.9 (61.2)	31.1 (8.0)	36.1 (9.3)	49.7 (12.8)	2.6 (0.7)	3.5 (0.9)	27.1 (7.0)	150.1 (38.8)
2010-11	156.0 (38.2)	64.7 (15.8)	20.0 (4.9)	5.9 (1.4)	9.1 (2.4)	255.7 (62.6)	29.3 (7.2)	35.8 (8.8)	52.3 (12.8)	2.7 (0.7)	3.9 (1.0)	29.0 (7.1)	153.0 (37.4)
2011-12	159.5 (37.0)	68.5 (15.9)	22.0 (5.1)	6.5 (1.5)	10.5 (2.4)	267.0 (61.9)	33.0 (7.7)	40.0 (9.3)	54.0 (12.5)	2.8 (0.6)	4.3 (1.0)	30.0 (7.0)	164.1 (38.1)
2012-13	174.7 (39.2)	68.2 (15.3)	23.4 (5.3)	4.4 (1.0)	10.6 (2.4)	281.2 (63.2)	31.3 (7.0)	38.9 (8.7)	56.0 (12.6)	2.9 (0.7)	4.6 (1.0)	30.2 (6.8)	163.8 (36.8)
2013-14	184.1 (40.0)	69.0 (15.0)	23.8 (5.2)	4.5 (1.0)	11.1 (2.4)	292.5 (63.6)	31.6 (6.9)	40.7 (8.8)	55.1 (12.0)	3.1 (0.7)	6.7 (1.5)	30.4 (6.6)	167.5 (36.4)
2014-15	190.0 (38.3)	75.0 (15.1)	27.0 (5.4)	7.5 (1.5)	14.5 (2.9)	314.0 (63.3)	34.0 (6.8)	42.0 (8.5)	60.0 (12.1)	3.5 (0.7)	7.5 (1.5)	34.9 (7.0)	181.9 (36.7)
2015-16	204.0 (39.5)	75.2 (14.6)	27.6 (5.3)	7.7 (1.5)	13.0 (2.5)	327.5 (63.3)	35.3 (6.8)	44.8 (8.7)	56.6 (10.9)	3.8 (0.7)	8.3 (1.6)	40.8 (7.9)	189.5 (36.7)
2016-17	220.0 (40.9)	75.5 (14.0)	27.0 (5.0)	7.7 (1.4)	13.1 (2.4)	343.3 (63.8)	36.6 (6.8)	43.1 (8.0)	56.8 (10.6)	3.6 (0.7)	9.9 (1.8)	44.4 (8.3)	194.4 (36.2)
2017-18	233.3 (42.0)	77.2 (13.9)	27.3 (4.9)	7.7 (1.4)	13.5 (2.4)	359.1 (64.7)	37.0 (6.7)	44.0 (7.9)	55.8 (10.1)	3.7 (0.7)	10.3 (1.9)	45.2 (8.1)	196.0 (35.3)
2018-19	240.0 (42.7)	78.0 (13.9)	27.4 (4.9)	7.7 (1.4)	12.0 (2.1)	365.2 (65.0)	37.0 (6.6)	44.1 (7.8)	55.9 (10.0)	3.7 (0.7)	10.3 (1.8)	45.8 (8.1)	197.0 (35.0)
2019-20	244.7 (42.8)	79.2 (13.9)	27.5 (4.8)	7.7 (1.4)	14.2 (2.5)	373.3 (65.4)	37.1 (6.5)	45.0 (7.9)	55.5 (9.7)	3.8 (0.7)	10.5 (1.8)	46.1 (8.1)	197.9 (34.6)
2020-21	247.0 (42.9)	80.30 (13.9)	27.6 (4.8)	7.7 (1.3)	14.3 (2.5)	377.0 (65.5)	37.5 (6.5)	45.1 (7.8)	55.6 (9.7)	3.8 (0.7)	10.6 (1.8)	46.3 (8.0)	198.9 (34.5)

Note: Figure in the parenthesis shows the percentage of total crops.

Source: Source: Source: Land Use Statistics at Glance (Various Years) Govt. of India, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare

6. CONCLUSION

The dynamics of agricultural production in Arunachal Pradesh are influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including cultural, environmental, and economic considerations. The state's diverse tribal communities have traditionally practiced shifting cultivation, or jhum cultivation, which is deeply rooted in their cultural identity and livelihood strategies(Ovung et al., 2021). While the area under shifting cultivation has seen a decline, with a corresponding increase in settled cultivation, the practice still occupies a significant portion of the net sown area in the

state. The persistence of shifting cultivation can be attributed to its cultural significance, as well as the challenges posed by the state's rugged terrain and undulating physiographic conditions.

Further, the dynamics of agricultural production in Arunachal Pradesh highlights the unique challenges and opportunities that the state faces. (Singh et al., 2021) One of the major constraints to increasing farm productivity and improving the livelihoods of rice-farming households is the lack of a wide range of varietal choice suitable for diverse production environments. This, coupled with a very low seed replacement rate, poor water management, and poor drainage systems, has contributed to the stagnation of rice-based agriculture in the region. The diversification of agriculture towards high-value cash crops, such as fruits and vegetables, has been suggested as a viable solution to stabilize and raise farm incomes, increase employment opportunities for small and marginal farmers, and boost exports. This concept of diversification is particularly relevant to Arunachal Pradesh, where the state's comparative advantages in certain niche products could be leveraged to drive agricultural transformation.

The fertility of the soil is a crucial factor in determining agricultural productivity in the region. Research has highlighted the importance of applying essential plant nutrients, particularly major and micro-nutrients, in the right proportion and at the appropriate time, to enhance and sustain crop production. The deficiency of micronutrients has been identified as a major constraint to the productivity, stability, and sustainability of the soils in Arunachal Pradesh (Bora, 2018) (Ovung et al., 2021) (Singh & Haribhushan, 2018). Studies conducted in the neighbouring state of Mizoram, which shares similar physiographic conditions with Arunachal Pradesh, have highlighted the importance of developing policies and strategies aimed at sustainable jhum farming systems or other sustainable farming alternatives to minimize deforestation and loss of soil fertility.

To address the challenges faced in the state's agricultural sector, a multifaceted approach is required. Developing policies and strategies that promote sustainable jhum farming systems or other sustainable farming alternatives can help minimize deforestation and loss of soil fertility. Simultaneously, efforts to incorporate innovative measures into shifting cultivation practices can make the system more ecologically sustainable, while still accommodating the value system and needs of the tribal society. Researchers have also highlighted the importance of addressing the lack of necessary backward and forward linkages, which have limited the process of diversification of agriculture to a narrow production-base. Additionally, the absence of electricity in many rural areas of the Northeast region, including Arunachal Pradesh, has been identified as a significant constraint to the development of agriculture, particularly in terms of groundwater pumping for irrigation during the dry season.

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