

***Editorial***

Dear Readers,

This edition of International Journal of Research in Business Studies is concomitant to the yearly International Conference on Research in Business (ICRB) held virtually on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2021 under the theme titled “Digital Empowerment and it’s Comprehensive Possibilities”. This edition is coming out with 14 selected papers those had been presented in the conference.

Together, we have completed a journey of six years with great learning experiences. We are so grateful to receive different research works across the distinctive fields. Many of these studies document good treatment modalities and scientific findings. This edition of journal is coming out with Cosmos Impact Factor, CITE Factor, DRJI, RJI and ESJI.

I am obliged to the editorial members for showing interest, sharing their ideas, and knowledge with the team. I also appreciate the contributors for their immense work and sharing.

We are making efforts to make this journal more aligned with your expectations and norms of the domain. Your feedback and suggestions are always welcome.

Arun Kumar  
Editor-in-Chief  
IJRBS



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## **Analyzing Trends in Variations of Dow Jones Stocks and Cryptocurrency Prices**

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### **Abstract**

A cryptocurrency is a digital asset that is designed to work as a medium of exchange where ownership records are stored in a public or private ledger. Blockchain technology is the fundamental technical basis of some of the most common cryptocurrencies, including Bitcoin. Cryptocurrencies, including Bitcoin and Ethereum, have been adopted as a store of value and a conduit for transactions by an increasing number of individuals and financial institutions. As cryptocurrencies have an increased total market capitalization, the potential for cryptocurrencies to impact the traditional equity markets increases. This analysis aims to determine the correlation between the value of Bitcoin and the individual equities present in the Dow Jones Industrial Index.

### **Keywords**

Bitcoin, Ethereum, Cryptocurrency, Crypto-exchanges, Crypto-wallets, Dow Jones Industrial Average, and Correlation-trends Analysis.

### **1. Cryptocurrencies**

A cryptocurrency is a digital or virtual currency that is nearly impossible to counterfeit or double-spend since it's secured by cryptography. Blockchain based decentralized networks create the distributed ledgers that form the backbone of cryptocurrency to ensure the integrity of transactions.

The decentralized structure allows cryptocurrencies to exist outside the control of governments and central authorities. Cryptocurrencies offer considerable security for online transactions since they are safeguarded by techniques such as elliptical curve encryption, public-private symmetric keys, and secure hashing functions. With there being considerable push towards online transactions for large ticket items, cryptocurrencies are primed to be a significant player in corporate business planning and profitability.

Payments are processed with the movement of secure tokens which are managed in a distributed ledger system. Cryptocurrencies offer the advantage of making parties to directly transact business and transfer funds without the need to invoke the services of a trustee like a bank or escrow agencies. Rather, the cryptocurrencies secure transactions through the use of private-public keys. A user is identified by a unique address or a “wallet” that has a public key while the private key is maintained secretly by the wallet owner and used to sign transactions. This allows the transfer of funds to occur between parties without the transaction fees normally charged by the intermediary banks.

## **2. Bitcoin**

Launched in 2009, by an individual under the pseudonym of Satoshi Nakamoto, Bitcoin was the first blockchain-based cryptocurrency. With approximately 20 million Bitcoins in circulation, it is the most popular and valuable cryptocurrency today with an overall capitalization of over USD 1 trillion as of February 2021. There are thousands of alternate cryptocurrencies available today including some that have forked from stable currencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum. The alternate currencies offer their unique niche and sometimes a target business niche.

## **3. Cybercurrency Wallets and Exchanges**

In this section, we discuss the two key components of the cryptocurrency financial system that essentially make these a viable alternative for a prevalent use in the future.

### **3.1 Wallets**

A cryptocurrency wallet is generally a service or program or can even be a physical device that stores the public and private keys. These keys are necessary to encrypting and initiate transactions and sign smart contracts. Electronically using the keys stored in the wallet legally binding effect and is essentially akin to signing a documentary contract.

From an analogical perspective, the public key of a cryptocurrency owner is like an email identifier, which may be used to retrieve all the transactions of that user has participated in by searching through the blockchain. Thus, the public keys are used to search through and track all the cryptocurrencies transacted by the owner and used to send cryptocurrency to a specific user. In order to send

cryptocurrency to a specific recipient, the cryptocurrency owner uses their private key, the transaction is encrypted by the recipient's public key. Thus, the public key is used for sending payments to someone, and the private key is used for spending the cryptocurrency stored in one's own wallet.

In determining how the owner will store their wallet, it must be considered as to who will have access to a copy of the private key. The owner of the private key has the signing authority and thus access to the cryptocurrency. If the private key is located on the web, it will be subject to vulnerabilities of the cyberspace. It is therefore important to review the exchange's policy regarding the storage of an owner's private key.

### **3.2 Exchanges**

The exchanges, as the name implies, are the hub for transacting with cryptocurrency. The exchanges send cryptocurrency to a user's cryptocurrency wallet. An exchange can convert a cryptocurrency into a fiat currency, or sometimes offer the capability of providing ATM cards that work anywhere in the world.

The creators of digital currencies, which are sometimes even backed by fiat capital such as gold or USD, are often independent of the digital currency exchange that essentially focuses on enabling its registered users in transacting cryptocurrency trades.

Some exchanges are traditional brick and mortar businesses, while many are online and use decentralized exchange protocol. Traditional stock market exchange principles are applicable in making cryptocurrency trades. Users place buy and sell orders, limit or market orders, sell long or short, and the exchange makes that possible. It should be noted that the currencies stored in exchanges are not protected by governmental insurance schemes, as are the funds stored in banks which are subject to governmental regulation.

## **4. Representing Time**

Since the valuation of the cryptocurrencies is a time series, a proper representation of time is of critical importance.

### **4.1 POSIX Time**

It's simply the time expressed as the number of seconds that have passed since January 1, 1970. That zero moments, known as the

epoch, is simply the start of the decade in which the Unix operating system (which first used this time representation) was invented. Most of the cryptocurrency exchanges provide this value for the OHLCV (Open, Low, High, Close, and Volume) data being queried.

#### **4.2 CCXT Time**

The language Python has gained considerable prominence in the field of financial data analysis and technology, often referred to as FinTech. Most cryptocurrency exchanges provide Application Programming Interfaces, or APIs, to directly perform transactions where the users can place trades as well as obtain historical financial information. A prominent language used for designing applications around these APIs is Python since it provides capabilities for performing analysis using competent data structures such as Pandas, visualization libraries such as Matplotlib, powerful statistical munging with NumPy, and the ability to develop machine learning algorithms using the libraries such as Sci-Kit Learn.

A powerful library which has a Python API, in addition to being accessible from many other languages, is the Cyber Currency eXchange Trading (CCXT) library. In addition to allowing for real time trades, the CCXT also offers the capability for retrieving historical trading data.

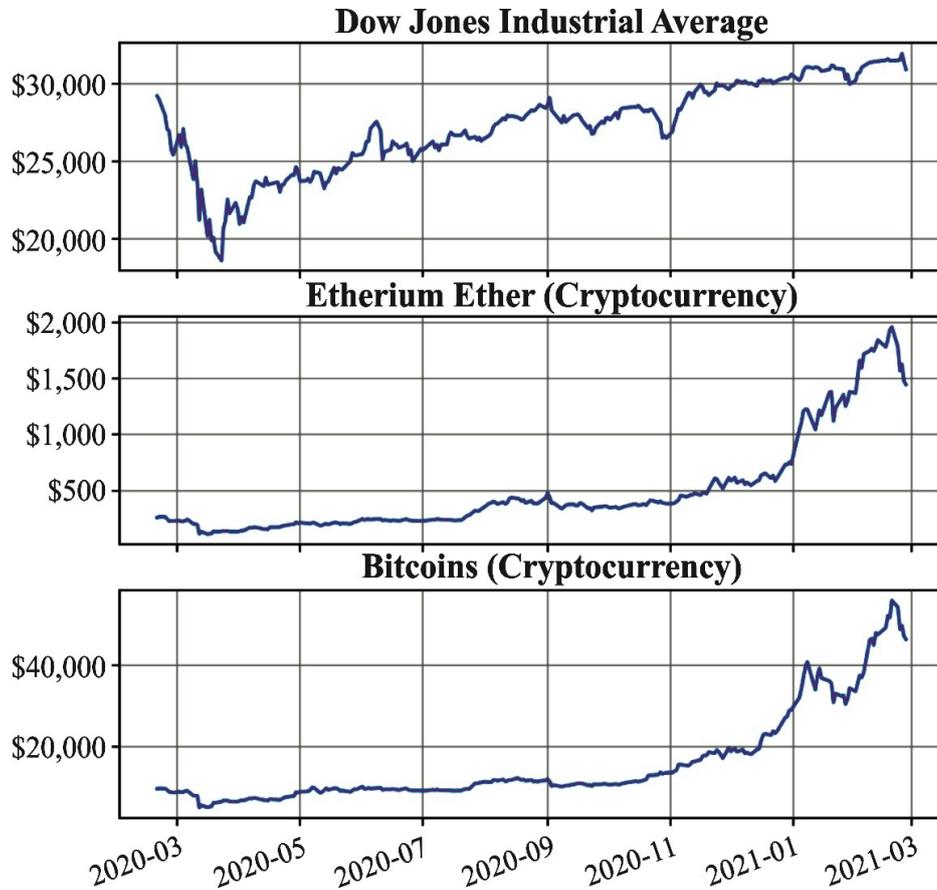
It will be appreciated that the cryptocurrencies are a brainchild of computers and their ability to make trades within a matter of microseconds. The time slice used in CCXT is therefore much more precise and noted at the micro-second level. The OHLCV data obtained from CCXT has to be rationalized with the data that is obtained from other sources such as Morning Star and Yahoo Finance where the data resolution is accurate to the level of 1 second and based on POSIX timestamp, or Unix Epoch.

### **5. Data Acquisition and Visualization**

As a first step towards building a framework for statistical analysis, the data is downloaded from Yahoo finance, and plotting using the Matplotlib package in Python.

### 5.1 Cryptocurrency Trends

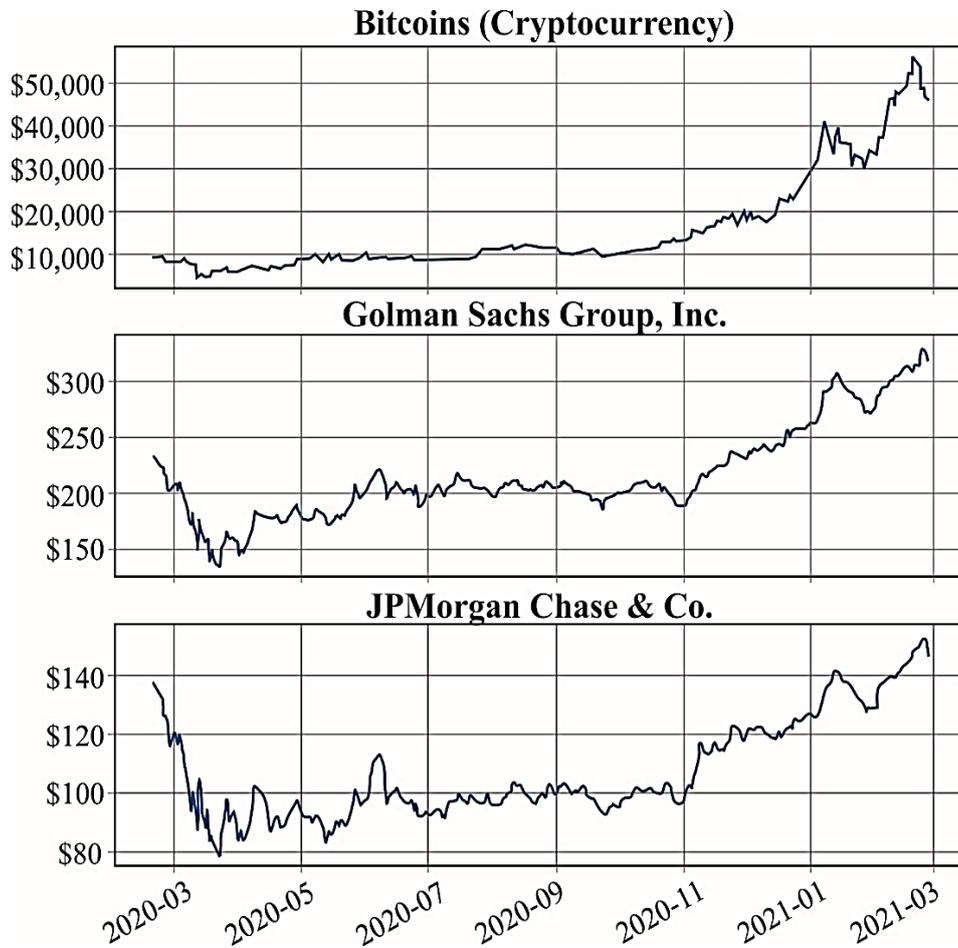
Figure 1 depicts the growth of two major cryptocurrencies, Bitcoins and Ether, over the period of last 12 months. The trends in both these cryptocurrencies show a similar trend in growth.



**Figure 1: Dow Jones Average and Cryptocurrencies Comparison**

### 5.2 Cryptocurrency and Stock Trends

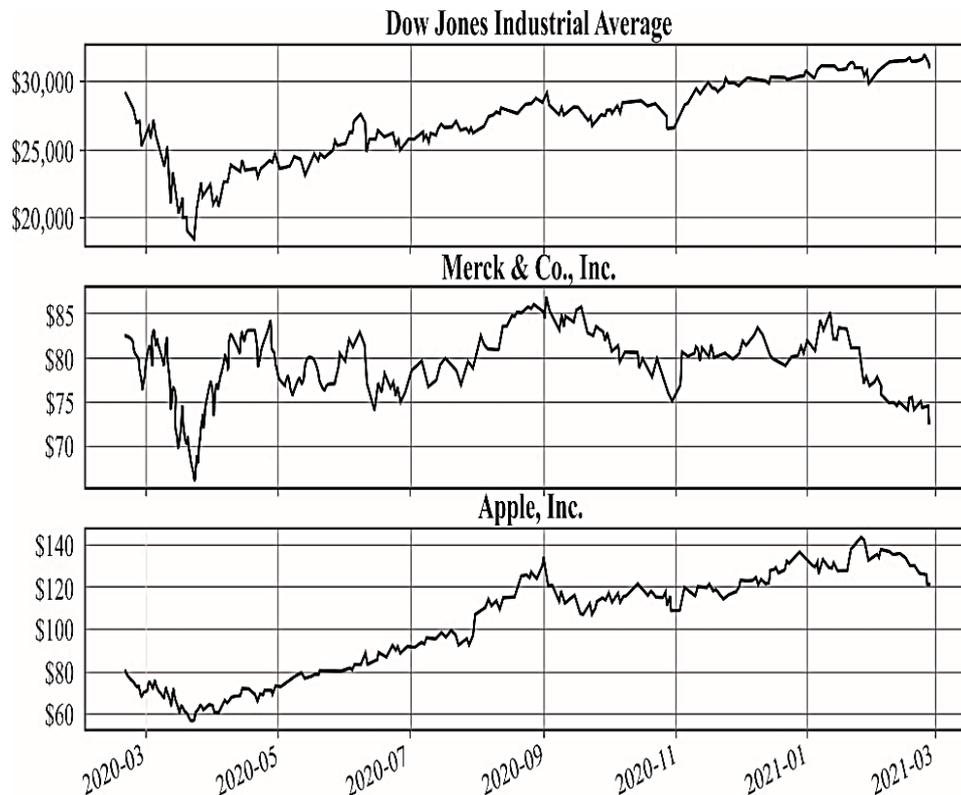
Figure 2 depicts the growth of the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) which is a composite of the values of stocks computed over 30 stocks covering technology, financial and other sectors, and the Bitcoin cryptocurrency. From the period of February 20, 2020 to February 20, 2021 the cryptocurrency Bitcoin grew by 300 percent while the DJIA appreciated by 15 percent.



**Figure 2: Cryptocurrency and Financial Stock Variations**

### 5.3 Stock Trends

In Fig. 3, the stock prices of two of the 30 components DJIA, namely the technology giant Apple, and pharmaceutical giant Merck.



**Figure 3: Variations between Dow Jones Average and Two of its Components**

As is evident from this illustration, the variation of the stock prices of these two companies is markedly different from each other. Similar trends will be observed if the stock prices for other constituents of DJIA were plotted. The aggregate behavior of DJIA is generally quite different from the behavior of individual stocks.

To see if there is any correlation between the valuation of DJIA and the cryptocurrency, we find that the correlation between DJIA and Bitcoins is approximately 0.75. This is somewhat remarkable since it indicates that the trends in the stock market and Bitcoins were in unison. When the Bitcoins were appreciated, so did the US stock market in general, and vice versa.

The correlation coefficient of the various individual stocks is next computed to determine if any of the individual stocks has a greater correlation with Bitcoins appreciation.

## **6. Trend Analysis**

One of the key issues surrounding cryptocurrency is the lack of knowledge associated with its ups and downs. Investors have gained a level of experience in being able to predict how a specific stock will perform based on how well the company is doing financially, what goals have set for expansion, what product is it introducing into the market, what expensive litigation it might get embroiled in, or the specific governmental regulations are likely to impact its revenue and profit potential. For the most part there is some degree of predictability as investors are owners of a business, and at least to a certain degree, the success of the business enterprise translated into the success of its stock. Predicting the rise and fall of cryptocurrencies on the other hand is not driven by such palpable factors as those that dictate the performance of stocks. It is quite different from the rise and fall of foreign currencies either since those exchange rates are governed by international trade and the strength of a country's economy. Cryptocurrencies have no such surrogate that an investor can look at to make buy or sell decisions.

## **7. Correlation Results**

We examined the relationship of the cryptocurrency with the largest market capitalization, namely the Bitcoin, with the companies that constitute the Dow Jones Industrial Average—a market indicator widely utilized in assessing the relative health of the stock market. The purpose of this study is to see if there is a correlation between any of the stocks and the movements of the Bitcoin pricing.

Our focus for this study is not so much to compare the actual gains of the stocks, but more so to determine if the “trend” of the stock movement is related to the “trend” of the movement of the Bitcoins pricing. If we do find that such a correlation persists, we can begin to explore its causality. Regardless, the trends in the stock price will provide an additional data point to the cryptocurrency investors to perhaps assist them in making somewhat more informed buy or sell decisions.

To estimate these trends, Pearson's correlation coefficient was utilized. It should be noted that while the stock market is closed over the weekend, the cryptocurrency exchanges operate 7 days a week. Therefore, the time series gathered from Yahoo finance for the Bitcoin closing prices had

several more data points when compared to the data points for DJIA stock prices. The two-time series were normalized so that only the data points that were common to both series being compared were used to compute the correlation coefficient using the equation below.

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2} \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \bar{y})^2}}$$

Figure 4 presents the results of this correlation between the stock prices and Bitcoin price when viewed over a period of 365 days starting from February 20, 2020 through February 20, 2021. The bar chart illustrates that the stock prices of Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., and investment broker was most strongly correlated with Bitcoin, while companies such as the pharmaceutical giant Merck were negatively correlated.

Table-1 provides the detailed numerical values of the correlation coefficients obtained from this analysis. It is noteworthy that the correlation coefficient of 10 of the 30 stocks used in computing DJIA correlated more with Bitcoins than the remaining 20. This may be an indication that the type of market forces and investor confidence that causes a change in these stocks is perhaps related to the price changes in Bitcoins.

It was also interesting to note that these 10 stocks included companies from various market segments. While two of these top-10 were financial services companies, namely JP Morgan Chase, and American Express, the other companies ranged from insurance businesses like Travelers, to heavy machineries like Caterpillar and everything in between.

It was worth noting was those technology companies like Apple, Microsoft, IBM, Intel or Verizon did not place in this top-10 highly Bitcoin correlated stocks. And the company Pfizer – one of the pioneers of the COVID vaccines also had a relatively low level of correlation of 0.3 with Bitcoin price.

This would indicate that the volatility experienced in Bitcoins is generally not tied to the technology stocks, or stable pharmaceutical stocks, as they are generally more robust to the swings of the market. It's probably worth pointing out that in this trend analysis, our concern was with the direction of movement. The actual appreciations of Bitcoin really dwarfed the gains made by the stock market.

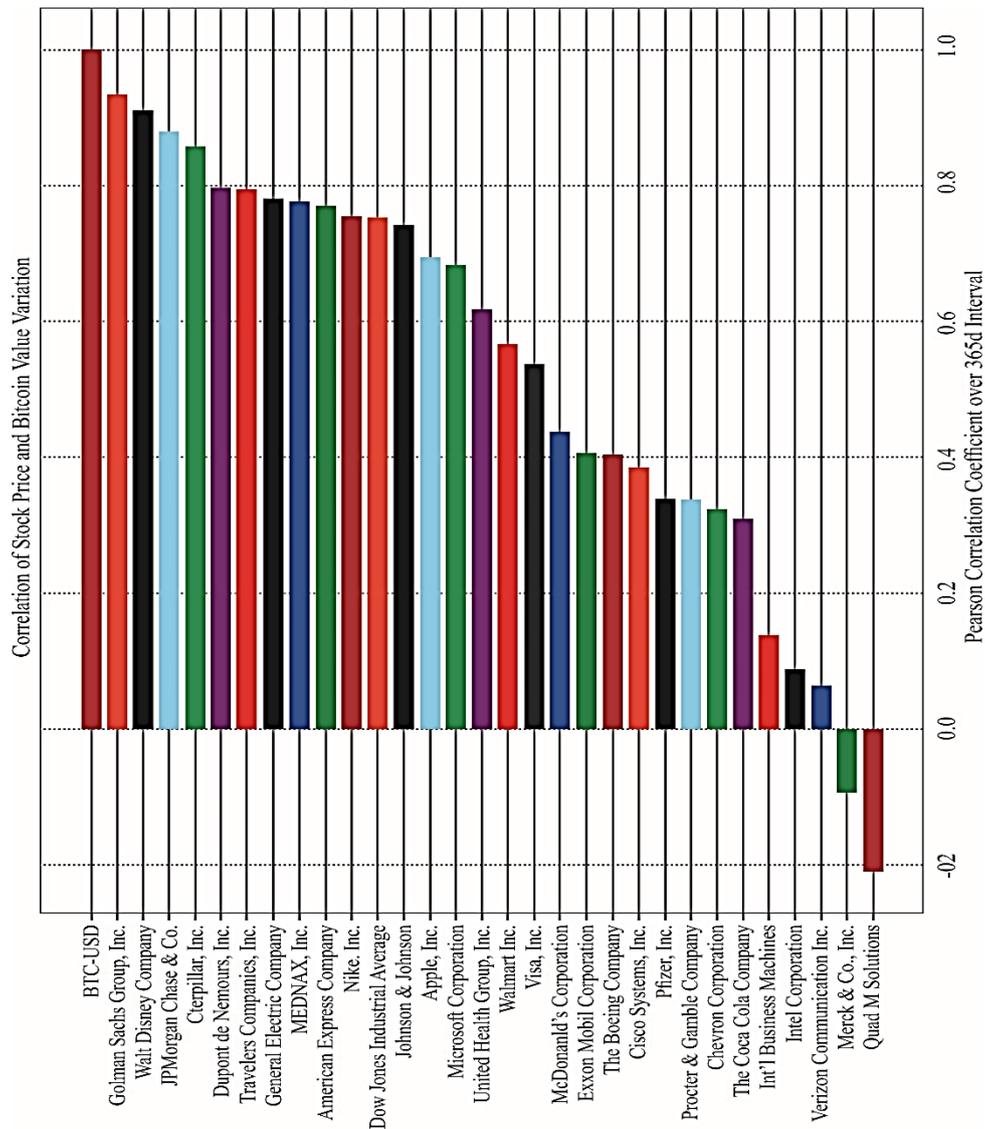


Figure 4: Correlations of DJIA Stocks and Cryptocurrency

## 8. Correlation or Causality?

Our next objective was to determine if there was perhaps a causal relationship between the highly correlated stocks and the Bitcoin price changes. That is, did the change in the price of one of the correlated stocks had a cascading effect and caused the increase (or decrease) in the Bitcoin prices. To analyze this effect, which we refer to as a causality effect, we moved the Bitcoin time series by plus and five days to see if there was an appreciable gain in the correlation coefficient. Fig. 5 provides the results of this analysis.

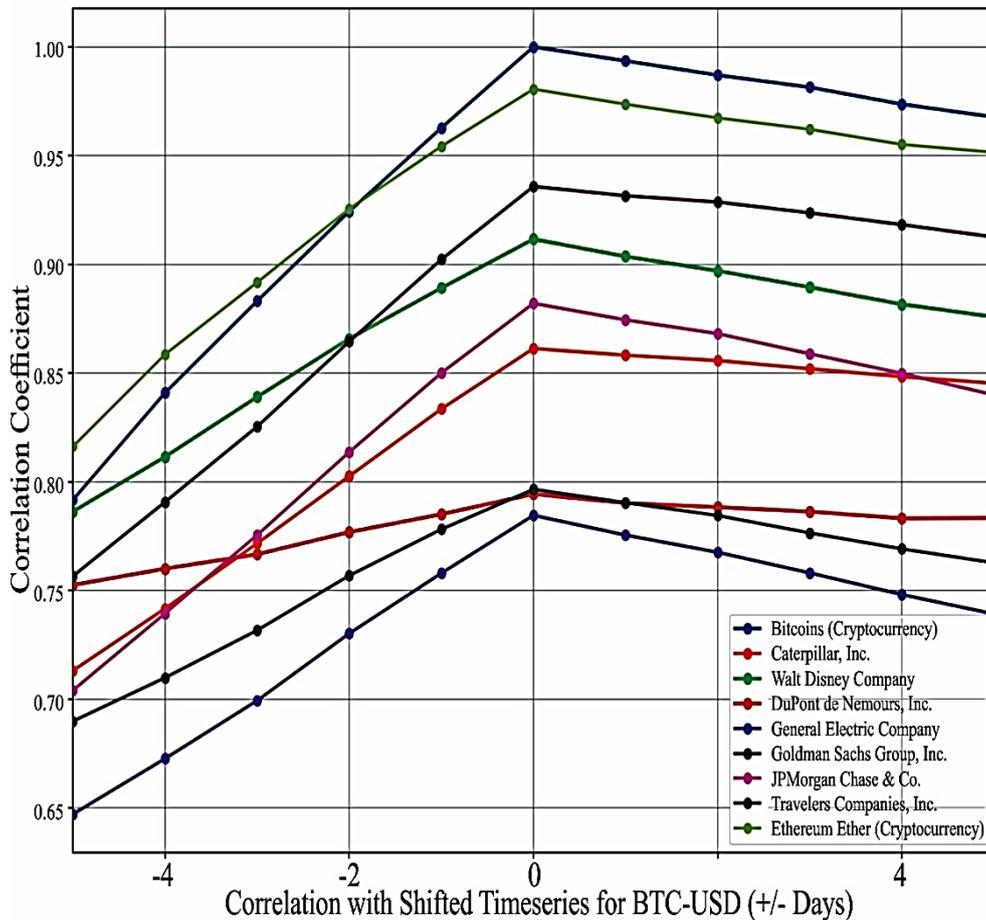


Figure 5: Measuring Correlations with Time Series Shifts

## 9. Conclusions

This paper provides an overview of issues related to trading volatile cryptocurrencies. The research was focused on determining if there exists a strong correlation between any of DJIA stocks and the prices of the cryptocurrency Bitcoin. We did find a strong correlation with a handful of stocks which indicates the viability of watching these representative stocks as a way for timing an entry and exit strategy for investing in cryptocurrencies. However, a causal link implying that the changes in the price of a stock causes the change in the price of cryptocurrency could not be established.

**Table 1: Correlation of DJIA Stocks and Bitcoins over a 1-year Period from February 2020 through February 2021.**

	<b>Correlation with Bitcoin Price</b>
Bitcoins (Cryptocurrency)	1.00
Ethereum Ether (Cryptocurrency)	0.98
Goleman Sachs Group, Inc.	0.94
Walt Disney Company	0.91
JPMorgan Chase & Co.	0.88
Caterpillar, Inc.	0.86
Travelers Companies, Inc.	0.80
DuPont de Nemours, Inc.	0.79
General Electric Company	0.78
MEDNAX, Inc.	0.78
American Express Company	0.77
Nike, Inc.	0.75
Dow Jones Industrial Average	0.75
Johnson & Johnson	0.74

Apple, Inc.	0.69
Microsoft Corporation	0.68
United Health Group, Inc.	0.62
Walmart Inc.	0.56
Visa, Inc.	0.54
McDonald's Corporation	0.44
Exxon Mobil Corporation	0.42
The Boeing Company	0.41
Cisco Systems, Inc.	0.39
Chevron Corporation	0.33
Procter & Gamble Company	0.33
Pfizer, Inc.	0.33
The Coca Cola Company	0.30
Int'l Business Machines	0.13
Intel Corporation	0.10
Verizon Communications Inc.	0.05
Merck & Co., Inc.	(0.11)
Quad M Solutions	(0.21)

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## **Contract Risk Influence Factors in Power Transmission Project in India**

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### **Abstract**

Contract risk management is an approach of recognizing factors, classifying and assessing contractual risk in any project, including a power transmission project, which helps make the project successful. Power transmission project is significant to develop the socio-economic condition of any nation. Several studies had been done to assist in managing the contractual risk organizations that execute the power transmission projects. This study used the Analytical Hierarchy Process to normalize uncertainty estimates and ranking of contract risk factors, especially in power transmission projects in India, starting from bidding to project closing. A questionnaire survey was conducted to get feedback and opinions from power transmission project experts in India. The AHP method was used to provide a pair-wise analysis of all contract risk factors and then rank them. Results show that the financial risk is the most critical contract risk, followed by technological, legal, external, and execution. The degree of impact of the contract risk factor will provide a clear picture of what choice is better for the PT project execution business.

### **Keywords**

Engineering-Procurement-Construction (EPC), Power Transmission (PT), Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), Contract, and Risk.

### **1. Introduction**

Risk influences starting from concept to finishing off any projects. The power transmission project is commonly large-scale, complicated in admire of various stakeholders' involvement, excessive reliance on socio-economic and external factors, government bureaucracy, economic limitations, and quasi-regulatory and legal contexts. As the power transmission project's risk, the EPC type contract is used to address the risk. Under the EPC contract, a contractor is legally bound to deliver the complete project to the owner, who needs a turn-key to start operating the facility.

The purpose of PT projects (Transmission line and Substation) is to direct the power flow in an electric system by installing equipment. Several activities involve foundation, control building, cable trench, firewall, and equipment erection. Recent challenges (almost all sectors,) including transmission and substation projects, are standstill for the Covid-19 crisis.

The capacity addition and CAPEX in the transmission segment may additionally go through in the brief term; however, the long-term drivers stay intact. As per the national infrastructure pipeline, CAPEX is as below Table-1, is expected in the transmission segment between FY-2020 and FY-2025.

**Table 1: Investment in Transmission Sector**

<b>Capex Over FY-20-25 (Rs. In Crore)</b>						
<b>FY-20</b>	<b>FY-21</b>	<b>FY-22</b>	<b>FY-23</b>	<b>FY-24</b>	<b>FY-25</b>	<b>Total</b>
54875	53897	50712	51522	51522	41522	304,050
<b>Major Share</b>				<b>In percent</b>		
State				62		
Powergrid				22		
Private				16		
<b>Transmission Lines</b>				86000 Ckt. KM		
<b>Substation</b>				314875 MVA		

Project risk is an incalculable event or situation that positively or negatively influences one or maybe more project objectives, such as scope, timelines, budget, and quality if they occur (PMBOK 2013). There are three types of risk in the project, i.e., manageable known risk, unmanageable known risk, and unknown risk (Kendrick, T. 2015). Without thinking about the risk and its management, the project may turn into an encounter of failure. However, risk management has been considered in many studies. Some of the studies have discussed Risk factors differently. No previous studies have defined and evaluated the contract risk management of the EPC contract in the PT project in India.

## **2. Objective of the Study**

This study aims to identify the critical problems in EPC contract risk factors of PT projects and prioritizes them using risk mapping.

The following section provides a brief description of the past literature followed by methodology, analysis, and conclusion.

## **3. Review of Literature**

The essence of the risk has become so? That it could risk one person an opportunity for another? The risk or opportunity relies solely upon whom perspective the project is being assessed, i.e., selecting potential effects, individual implications, and likelihood (Wang et al., 2004). Power projects deal with an inherently high degree of risk because of unpredicted variations in work activities, processes, (an environmental organization?) and different stakeholders (Ibrahim 2017). According to PMI 2004, risk management is appropriately understanding, identifying, analyzing, and administering risk.

Usually, internal and external are two types of risks belonging to any project. The kind of risk is understood from the source of risks. Internal risks are found from the inside of organizations and can be controlled under specific conditions. On the contrary, extended factors are found outside the organizations that the organization cannot control. An EPC contract implements by replacing the conventional type of contract, considering project risk. The EPC contract implement presumes that completion time and cost will be less than the earlier traditional contract system. The extensive use of EPC contracts in emerging economics resulted in cost reduction and fast delivery of the project (Shen et al., 2016). So, to set up the roles, commitments, rights, and responsibilities among all the different organizations, a contract is needed to be created among them, establishing a collaborative environment to get a project (Pawar, C. S. et al., 2015).

Contracts play a vital role in any project to deliver a successful project. The contract documents help as a tool to control risk by assigning risks to the different agencies via the established contract (Flanagan, R. and Norman, G. 1993). The contract is essential for the owner to properly communicate the project purpose in designing a contract strategy to ensure that the most suitable risk approach has been chosen (Stam, D.W. 2005). Some essential contracting factors that become important across the project's life are managing risk, relationship, resource, responsibility,

record keeping, and acting ethically (Jamil, M. 2008). The contractual stability factor is one of the critical factors that affect project performance to achieve project success (Wu et al., 2018).

Some previous studies identified various risks and analyzed the impact of risk factors on project success, such as technical, human, usability, project teams, project organization, and strategic (Pare et al., 2008). Six risk factors for construction projects' performance have been identified: natural, design, resource, financial, legal, regulation, and construction risk (Chandra 2015). Thirty-nine are identified in the power transmission project and divided into five groups: policy and law, technology, natural environment, society, and management risk (Zhao and Guo, 2014). Five risk factors for the construction project's success have been identified: design, financial, technical, labor, and external (Khan and Gul, 2017). Some risks are identified and grouped into eight categories: physical, economic, legal, construction, political, design, environmental, and contractual risk (Shen L. Y., 2001).

The present study deals with risk management in the PT project construction EPC contract and aims to find an actual problem in PT project, which can be a barrier to project success in terms of project goals. The following contractual risk factor is considered in the present study in Table-2.

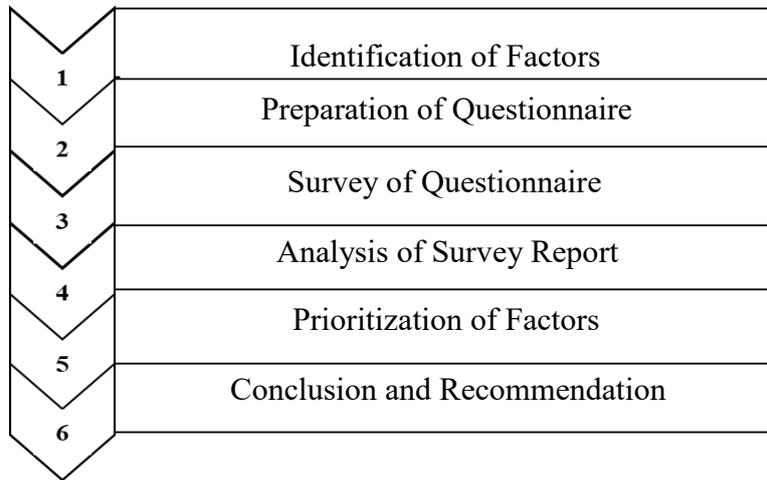
**Table 2: Contract Risk Factors of PT Projects**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Factors of Contract Risk</b>
<b>External (ET)</b>	<b>R1</b>	Suspension of Work
	<b>R2</b>	Opposition from Social Bodies
	<b>R3</b>	New Government Law
	<b>R4</b>	Political
<b>Technical (TE)</b>	<b>R5</b>	Changes in Design
	<b>R6</b>	Tests List with Frequency
	<b>R7</b>	Valid of Test Report
	<b>R8</b>	Adequate Conceptual Design
<b>Execution (EX)</b>	<b>R9</b>	Construction Facilities
	<b>R10</b>	Proper Communication
	<b>R11</b>	Proper Planning
	<b>R12</b>	Opposition from Social Bodies
	<b>R13</b>	Availability of Labor, Material, and Equipment

<b>Financial (FI)</b>	<b>R14</b>	Extension of Time
	<b>R15</b>	Penalty for Delay
	<b>R16</b>	Extra Works Claim
	<b>R17</b>	Advance Payment
	<b>R18</b>	Price Variation Clause
<b>Legal (LE)</b>	<b>R19</b>	Labour Regulations
	<b>R20</b>	Environmental Safeguard
	<b>R21</b>	New Government Law
	<b>R22</b>	Safety Regulation

#### 4. Research Methodology

Risks associated with a contract of PT projects are identified using literature reviews and important ones based on the survey from 75 PT project experts from India. These risks are prioritized using AHP as the decision tool. At last, a structure is created outlining the connection between each risk. The itemized steps are mentioned in Figure.1



**Figure 1: Research Methodology**

Twenty-two factors into the five categories questionnaire survey were sent to 85 PT project experts through e-mail, and 75 valid responses were received. The first step in the AHP procedure is to make pairwise comparisons between each criterion.

Following the construction of the AHP model, the next step is to measure and collect data, which entails gathering a group of experts and assigning pairwise comparisons to the different risks, using a table of five-point scales (known as the Saaty Scale), and creating a questionnaire collection

that includes all of the factors and sub-factors. The questionnaire is organized based on such that for each question, ratings from 1-5. The expert will assign a score to each risk compare to other risks from the range of 1 to 5 (Table-3).

**Table 3: Scale for Rating**

<b>Intensity of Importance</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
1	Equal importance	Two factors play an important role in achieving the goal.
2	Somewhat more critical	One has a small advantage on the other in terms of experience and decision.
3	Much more critical	One has a significant advantage on the other in terms of experience and decision.
4	Very much more Critical	One has a significant advantage of the other in terms of experience and decision. In reality, its significance is illustrated.
5	Most Critical	The proof that supports one side over another is of the greatest degree.
	Reciprocal	When evaluating one risk to another in reverse, the value will be 1/initial contrast.

The fundamental strides in the detailing of an answer for a choice issue with the guide of AHP are not monotonous:

1. Equal importance
2. Somewhat more critical
3. Much more critical
4. Very much more critical
5. Most important critical

The risk factors (RF) are recognized through related studies and discussed with PT project professional views from Indian organizations. The survey results are then analyzed using a matrix to determine the main risks specified by all the experts. For each question, the survey results from each expert are different. The experts' relevant scores are noted in the table for each question, and the total Weightage is calculated.

## 5. Analysis and Discussion

In this study, various contract risk factors are prioritized by using of AHP model. The Table-4 has shown pairwise comparison results.

**Table 4: Pairwise Comparison Matrix**

Factors	ET	TE	EX	FI	LE
ET	1.00	1/3	2.00	¼	½
TE	3.00	1.00	4.00	½	2.00
EX	½	¼	1.00	1/5	1/3
FI	4.00	2.00	5.00	1.00	3.00
LE	2.00	½	3.00	1/3	1.00
<b>SUM OF COLM</b>	10.50	4.08	15.00	2.28	6.83

There are a few techniques for figuring the eigenvector. Making every section of the matrix standardized by isolating each estimation of the segment by the amount of a segment would standardize the qualities as demonstrated in Table-5.

**Table 5: Normalized Matrix**

Factors	ET	TE	EX	FI	LE
ET	0.10	0.08	0.13	0.11	0.07
TE	0.29	0.25	0.27	0.22	0.29
EX	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.09	0.05
FI	0.38	0.49	0.33	0.44	0.44
LE	0.19	0.12	0.20	0.15	0.15

As indicated by Eigenvector and Principal Vector, the elements are positioned as demonstrated in Table-6. Here Financial is the most basic factor, and afterward Technical, Legal, External, and Execution.

**Table 6: Average Value Matrix**

Factors	Eigen Vector	Principal Vector	Rank
ET	0.10	0.23	4
TE	0.26	0.62	2
EX	0.06	0.15	5
FI	0.42	1.00	1
LE	0.16	0.38	3

To ascertain  $\lambda_{max}$  (max Eigen Value), duplicate on the privilege the framework of decisions by the eigenvector, getting another vector as demonstrated in Table-7.

**Table 7: Average Eigen Value**

Factors	New Vector	$\lambda$ (New Vector/PV)
ET	0.49	5.02
TE	1.34	5.10
EX	0.31	5.03
FI	2.13	5.11
LE	0.81	5.06

In Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) strategy Finally, a Consistency Index can be determined utilizing the formula  $(\lambda_{max}-N)/(N-1)$ . That should be surveyed against decisions made totally aimlessly, and Saaty has determined huge examples of arbitrary lattices of expanding request and the Consistency Indices of those frameworks. A legitimate Consistency Ratio is determined by isolating the Consistency Index for the arrangement of decisions by the Index for the relating irregular grid, as demonstrated in Table-8.

$$\text{Consistency Index (CI)} = (\lambda_{\max} - N)/(N - 1)$$

$$\text{Consistency Ratio (CR)} = \text{CI/RI corresponding to N}$$

$$\lambda_{\max} = \text{average of the RFs of } \lambda. \text{ (see Table-7)}$$

Where RI: Random Consistency Index (see Table-8) and N: Number of RFs

**Table 8: Random Consistency Index**

N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
RI	0	0	0.58	0.9	1.12	1.24	1.32	1.41	1.45	1.49	1.51	1.48	1.56	1.57	1.59

$$\lambda_{\max} = 5.06$$

$$N = 5$$

$$\text{CI} = \frac{\lambda_{\max}}{N-1} = 0.0158$$

$$\text{CR} = \frac{\text{CI}}{\text{RI}} = 0.0141$$

As per the most elevated prime vector, the level of consistency of pairwise examination risk is positioned as a count of consistency proportion (CR), which is viewed as consistency if a worth is under 10 percent. In this investigation, CR esteem is 0.0141 (1.41 % < 10%) implies risk factors are consistent. Saaty proposes that if that proportion surpasses 0.1, the arrangement of decisions might be too conflicting to possibly be dependable. By and by, CRs of more than 0.1 in some cases must be acknowledged. Assuming CR rises to that implies that the decisions are totally predictable.

Along these lines, it is proposed that the EPC Company appropriately oversee and control risk variables to be finished effectively.

## **6. Conclusion, Limitation, and Recommendation**

The Power Transmission (Line and Substation) projects represent a dynamic environment where various activities are done simultaneously as agreed contracts between contractors and owners. Several contract risk factors are found in PT projects. This study discusses five contract risk factors: External, Technical, Execution, Finance, and Legal, along with 22 sub factors, from related studies and experts. The questionnaire survey was done to collect data from PT experts of different companies in India, and 75 valid responses were received. In this study, the AHP method is used to priorities the most critical contract risk factor. According to rank, Finance is the most critical contract risk factor, followed by Technical, Legal, External, and Execution.

The degree of impact level of contract risk factor will give a clear idea, which gives maximum benefit to PT project execution company.

The limitation of this study is a smaller number of responses, and survey was done from India only. Further research can develop a decision-making framework that can give optimal solutions for identifying and mitigating the most critical factors in PT projects.

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## **Understanding the Rule-Following Behavior of Professional Managers at a Workplace: An Ethical Approach**

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### **Abstract**

The roles and corresponding obligations of professional managers at a workplace appear to be well-established and if at all a conflict in competing obligations arises, then the concerned manager is generally advised to consult and apply rules as they exist in the form of various laws, policies, and guidelines in the country, in the profession or in the industry, and in his organization. These three levels of rules are formulated in a complementary manner to help explain the working of an organization to managers and other people so that they may understand and arrive at judgments to appropriately act in the given fact situations.

However, the rule-following of managers, it is argued, ought to be ethically correct for their own sake and for the sake of an ethical environment in the organization. The managers, for this purpose, are required to rationally interpret the rules for their correct applications in fact-situations instead of just following the rules. They ought to look for a rational interpretation of rules in such a way that they do not compromise their managerial responsibilities as it is a question of understanding not only letters of rules but the spirit of rules. This managerial approach becomes possible, the argument continues, in understanding the nature and purpose of rational interpretation of rules because there are, for example, various other shades of interpretations possible such as blind or malicious obedience to rules, which apparently distort the rule-following of managers.

In view of the above, I argue in the paper that the rule-following of managers at a workplace is ethically required to be rooted in their rational interpretation of rules. I also suggest in the argument that a manager may understand the rational interpretation of rules from a philosophical perspective that is to say from a virtue-based approach. This implies that the cultivation of virtues enables him to interpret and apply the rules at a workplace in a rationally defensible manner.

## **Keywords**

Professional Managers, Ethical conflicts in obligations, Rule-following at a Workplace, Interpretations of rules, Rational interpretation of rules, Virtue-based approach.

### **1. Introductory Remarks**

The systematic nature of roles and corresponding obligations of professional managers at a workplace enables a conducive environment for managerial work to provide products or services to customers. And if a manager gets into a situation where he experiences a conflict in obligations, then he is generally advised to consult relevant rules which exist in the form of laws policies, and guidelines in the country, in the profession or industry, and in his own workplace. Indubitably, it is a good idea to follow rules but I wish to maintain that merely following rules at a workplace is not really helpful particularly when managers are ethically required to fulfill their managerial responsibilities. The point of contention is that they ought to rationally interpret the rules.

In view of this, I begin with a discussion of the roles and obligations of managers and go on to examine the issue of rule-following of managers with an emphasis on the complexity of the issue. I continue with the argument that managers need not to simply interpret the rules because there are chances that managers may interpret the rules in a morally incorrect way. The managers ought to rationally interpret the rules for the sake of fulfilling managerial responsibilities in a workplace, which means they ought to take into account not only the correct meaning and purpose of rules but also the context of a situation in the workplace.

### **2. Making Sense of Roles and Obligations of Professional Managers**

It is well-known in the business world that professional managers receive intellectually dominant extensive training to provide service in a society and for this purpose, they acquire appropriate credentials of training from educational institutions. At a later stage; they become members of professional groups to protect and promote professional values relevant to their specific professions and alongside they increasingly learn to exercise a reasonable level of autonomy in their work-judgments. (Bayles, 2003, pp. 56-62)

This all gets reflected as they start working in different fields to provide products and services to customers. In this endeavor, they happen to play various roles of managers in a reasonably sized company as first-line managers, middle-line managers, and top-line managers, which like other roles in the society, embody certain obligations and “we cannot understand the role obligations of managers without knowing more about their specific role. (Boatright, Smith and Patra, 2018). A manager, for example, has an obligation to balance price and quality of the product on the one hand and paying fair wages to employees on the other. In this example, he is well expected to work efficiently and effectively. That is to say, he must thoughtfully use man, money, and machine in the making of a product to maximally attain the goals of his company that is largely concentrated in the creation of customer and earning of profits.

However, to begin with, such roles and obligations of managers may appear to be straightforward but on many occasions, managers do find it difficult to resolve the conflict between obligations. (Rowan and Zinaich, 2003, p. 2) A manager’s obligation to adjust the new recruit in the same room where three employees sit and work or to ask for a new room may create an issue of efficiency and effectiveness. Or else, a manager wanting to protect and promote the interests of customers may end up experiencing the conflict in obligations pertaining to compromising the financial interests of his employees in the company. These sorts of conflicting obligations occur in the working of a manager because, “Managers of corporations have obligations to their shareholders, but they have obligations to other stakeholders as well. In particular, they have obligations to consumers and the surrounding community as well as to their own employees. The purpose of the corporation, after all, is to serve public, both by way of providing desired and desirable products and services and by not harming the community and its citizens.” (Solomon, 2003, p. 361)

It doesn’t seem to be appropriate to critically and logically analyze such conflicting obligations in the given problem situations as and when the need arises because this process is time consuming and the manager is not generally able to invest the time required. One solution for a manager to make this process easy is to refer to ethical rules as they appear in varied sorts of formal rules. A manager gets to know about such formal rules as laws and policies of a country that govern his society; as rules of his profession and industry that control and guide his conduct in a

desirable direction; and as rules, policies and guidelines in his own company that inform him about relevance of his conduct in his own company. It goes without saying these formal rules get framed in such a way that rules of a profession and industry must be consistent with the rules of a country and the rules of a company must be consistent with rules of a country and the rules of profession and industry. (Ibid, pp. 2-3)

### **3. Developing a Perspective of Rule-following Behavior of Professional Managers**

It seems professional managers have access to three levels of rules as indicated above, which is why they can follow rules to sort out any conflicting obligations as and when they arise in their workplace. However, on the surface, it looks simple that a manager has to follow the rules and that is the end of the matter but it is not so easy to act in an ethically correct manner. If a manager adopts a simple approach of just following rules, then that may not be helpful or even harmful in certain situations. There are rules in place but rules are to be interpreted for ethical correctness and equally important rules are to be examined whether rules themselves are ethical. (Kant, 2021; Mill, 1993)

A manager ought to cultivate the ability to rationally analyze the given problem-situations and for this purpose the applications of rules in the given problem-situations are to be correctly interpreted and judged to be ethical. Sometimes, a manager may be tempted to look for a solution to a problem-situation with reference to the relevant law of the country. Or else he may look for a solution in the common-sense judgment of co-workers in his company. In both the given options, he may be able to arrive at a solution but it remains uncertain whether the solution is ethically correct. The possibilities of doing something right or wrong remain. The reason being whether the law itself is ethical or whether the generality of law permits its correct application. And as far as, the common-sense judgment of co-workers is concerned, the judgement may or may not be compatible with the ethically correct application of rule in the problem-situation because common-sense judgement generally favors the interests of employees or employers in the garb of collective interests.

In continuation, we may note that the rule-following of managers also get moderated by certain factors: stage of moral development, individual characteristics, structural variables, organizational culture and issue intensity, which brings into focus the possible impact of one's ability to act morally free from external influences, his belief in himself, clarity and purpose in rules and policies of the company, risk tolerance and conflict tolerance to overcome unrealistic and undesirable expectations, the likely outcome of harm on the number of people. (Robbins and Coulter, 2002, pp. 141-144)

These observations do imply that the thinking and behavior of managers in problem-situations to apply rules is not a simple affair. (Hartman, 2003, pp. 1-3) It is a complex one that requires an active participation of managers as far as their abilities to think and behave in a logical and critical manner are concerned. They need to rationally interpret the rules in order to fulfill their managerial responsibilities. Because, more often than not there are chances that they move away from the need to rationally interpret the rules.

#### **4. Understanding Rational Interpretation of Rules and Managerial Responsibilities**

It makes sense to maintain thus far that a manager needs to follow rules in a given situation but simply following rules is not something desired for as far as managerial responsibilities are concerned. And more so because one of the essential meanings of responsibility is to live through values, which may or may not be possible if simply following rules appears to be the solution. The reason being, there are different possible interpretations of rules that a manager may opt for. It all depends upon his wit and training on the one hand and his intentions and willingness on the other. We may consider in this connection several possible interpretations of rules in obedience of rules that Davies notes in his paper: blind obedience, strict obedience, malicious obedience, negligent obedience, accidental obedience, stupid obedience and the last interpretative obedience, which is correct one for rational interpretation of rules. (2003, pp. 62-69)

Blind obedience of rules occurs when there is no concern for context or consequence. It is a mechanical response and the result may or may not be desirable. And strict obedience happens to take place as if there is a separation of judgement and performance and in following of rules the

performance comes into play whereas the judgement stays with higher authorities. There may be compensation for such a separation in the form of respect for authority in the company but then it doesn't seem to be a rational approach except in defence forces. If at all it is followed as a practice in a company, it gets reduced from following of rules to obeying of orders. (Ibid, pp. 63-64)

Working to rule or malicious obedience on the surface appears to be correct in application of rule but internally it is a planned strategy of a manager to work without goodwill that is generally available from the employee to the employer, to harass the senior manager or the employer. The goodwill of a manager helps him to use his common sense to interpret the general language of rules for the purposes of their applications in particular situations. But in case of malicious obedience of rules, the employee manager owing to his conscious misunderstanding interprets the rule literally or he goes a step further and looks for the most damaging interpretation of the rule that the language of the rule may permit in the given situation. (Ibid, pp. 65-66)

If unconscious failure to exercise reasonable care in the interpretation of rules is the basis of malicious obedience then unconscious failure or the failure to exercise due care define the other three possible interpretations of rules, namely negligent, accidental and stupid. Negligent obedience is a case of obedience as far as the subjective side of the manager is concerned but objectively it may not match with the ordinary practical intelligence of a manager. (Ibid) And if her judgment matches with that of objective judgment without really knowing or intending to do it, then it is a case of accidental obedience. "Unlike the negligent, the stupid fail because they do not know better." (Ibid, p. 67) The cause of not knowing may be lack of wit or training but it cannot always be offered as an excuse of not following the rules correctly. This point holds ground especially in case of professional managers. (Ibid.)

David rightly observes that except for blind obedience of rules, all other varieties of obedience that are pointed out thus far acknowledge some sort of interpretation and even in case of strict obedience the task to interpret occurs at the level of higher authorities. (Ibid, 67) He further maintains, "In malicious obedience interpretation is deliberately abused; in negligent or accidental obedience, interpretation is not given the attention it deserves; and, in stupid obedience, interpretation is done skillfully enough, whether from lack of wit or training." (Ibid)

We may infer from the above that a manager cannot assume managerial responsibilities on the pretext of maintaining that he is just following the rules or even he is interpreting the rules in the given situation to follow rules. He may fail to correctly interpret the rules for different reasons as we have noted above. And to emphasize, in the face of all these possible interpretations, the importance of rational interpretation appears to be an attractive option but not at all an easy option to choose particularly when this level of interpretation requires quite a few things on the part of the manager concerned.

In a rational interpretation, a manager is supposed to ensure that a rule in the given situation or the document fits in with other rules and the manager in his interpretation of the rule sticks to the same meaning of each term. There may still be a need to go outside the situation or the document to look for the intention of rule-making authority, the perspective of a rational well-informed manager, or even the perspective of a common man to arrive at a workable interpretation of the rule. Apart from all this theoretical exercise, a manager is well expected to understand the purpose and context of the rule, work-culture, and expectations of other managers in the company, consequences of certain mistakes in interpretation of rules to understand the critical importance of interpretation of rules. And keeping in view that rules are man-made, a manager can always aspire for review in the rules themselves or for that matter he can always be open to revision in his own interpretation of rule, if for example, new information comes in. This whole theoretical and practical exercise of interpretation of rules finally comes to the point of success of interpretation of rule when it results in workable courses of action. (Ibid, pp. 67-68)

I may contend on the basis of the above discussion that a manager is ethically required to rationally interpret the rules in order to follow the rules not only in letter but also in spirit. This may appear to be a metaphor but as we have noted the rational interpretation requires a great deal of manager's input to make sense of a rule in the given fact situation. He needs to cultivate virtues of competence and care to fulfill the above mentioned requirements of rational interpretation of rules. (Ibid, pp. 68-69)

## 5. Conclusion

The professional managers perform in their well-established roles and obligations at a workplace and if they experience any conflict in obligations, then they consult appropriate rule or rules in the given problem situation. However, as we have noted, simple following of rules most often do not result in fulfilling one's managerial responsibilities particularly in the ethically correct sense. This further implies that a manager ought to learn to interpret the rules and that too in the rationally appropriate manner given the fact that there are complexities in the problem situation at a workplace that he has to understand and address, which anyway is the best option for him to perform his role as an ethical manager at his workplace.

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## **Managing Migrations with Digital Empowerment for Sustainable Development**

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### **Abstract**

Migration leads to the movement of inhabitants to find work while the development is advanced industrial growth. A qualitative cum subjective research analysis is presented to illustrate factors responsible for migrations and to focus upon its developmental outcomes. Primeval history of different types of migrations based on Indian ethos has been cited with the recent example of pandemic spread of COVID-19 across states. The problems of immigrants are concerning the entire business world. In migration, people move from their native place to a new place or country for livelihood and better career perspective abroad, irrespective of their demographic constructs such as their country of origin, religion, age, gender, marital status, and nature of profession whether skilled, unskilled artisans, casual labors, medicos, engineers and scientists, etc. in order to increase their wealth, to develop themselves and becomes more advanced and also for strengthening country's economy and growth. The digital empowerment initiatives seem to be the only workable solution required to fix accountability, to control the corruption and to establish the balance between growth and distribution network through the use of present available and future resources and to develop the trained and committed professionals to ensure consistent growth in order to provide a joyful and hassle free working environment, corruption free work culture in the country to fulfill the government responsibility of providing an easy, clean and transparent work culture to the citizens, where all the people of our country can live and work together fearlessly from the present era of living and working anxiously.

### **Keywords**

Covid-19, Good governance, Migrant laborers, Social inclusion, and Sustainable development.

## **1. Prelude**

Today the development has become a key factor in ranking emerging economies, while its outcomes can be directly linked with issues related to the migration. The known history of forced migrations along with ten number of case based factors found responsible were exemplified for academic purpose only. These were related to survival guilt and steep ignorance of migrant laborers, partition, livelihood, demographic, regional, fear, political and were legal in nature. To measure the developmental outcomes that crop up due to migration has been linked with sustainable development of the country's economic growth. The digital empowerment initiatives utilizing the latest technologies are the innovative workable solutions required to be adapted for paying immediate attention to the inland migrant laborers problems to concentrate on achieving the sustainable developmental outcomes of the nation.

## **2. Theoretical Discussions**

Cambridge dictionary defines Migration as the process by which people travelling at a new place to live, usually in large numbers or being moved from one place to another to a new place or country in order to find work and live there temporarily or permanently. Development is cited as a process in which someone or something grows or changes and becomes more advanced it is defined as the organized increase of a country's industry and wealth in terms of its economy, it is also termed as the process of producing plan, idea, improvement of a skill, ability, and quality, of its human resources (Adapted from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>).

## **3. Qualitative Discussions**

It is an established fact that Qualitative research is an umbrella term used to describe ways of studying perceptions, experiences or behaviors through their verbal or visual expressions, actions or writings, whereas Qualitative e-research is an umbrella term used to describe methodological traditions for using information and communication technologies to study perceptions, experiences, or behaviors through their verbal or visual expressions, actions, or writings (Janet Salmons,

2016). In traditional qualitative research the data is collected through observation, document analysis, archival and narrative research or through discourse analysis while in e-qualitative research it involves Interviews, Observations, and Document or archival analysis using available online methods. The same methodology has been utilized.

#### **4. Case-Based Discussions**

To establish that there exists a direct relationship between migration and development outcomes, ten case-based examples are selected to discuss the theoretical part behind the theme of the subject for its qualitative analysis for academic purpose only.

##### **4.1 Historical Factor**

The known history of migration in Arabic literature is described as Hijrat and origin of World Hijri Calendar is a momentous example cited for the development of a religion of Islam across the globe from the arid deserts of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which clearly specifies and establishes that there exist a direct relationship between the act of migration of people and its resulted developmental outcomes in terms of growth of religion, trade, business, and economic wealth of a particular community, party, industry, region of a country as a whole.

##### **4.2 Pandemic Factor**

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic from the city of Wuhan in China is one of the most perfect examples of recent times to understand the direct relationship between migration and development outcomes across the globe. The top ten affected countries out of 192 regions with 11,37,46,166 global cases and 25,24,133 global deaths are the USA, India 1,10,79,979 cases 1,56,938 deaths, Brazil, Russia, United Kingdom, France, Spain, Italy, Turkey, and Germany (Retrieved from <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>, on 28/02/2021, 07.53 AM).

##### **4.3 Migrant Laborers Factor**

Possibilities of the spread of the deadly virus from tens of thousands of Migrant Laborers, who migrated after first lockdown announcement by the Govt, to their native adjoining states on barefoot in the fight against hunger from East Delhi, Anand Vihar

Terminus in search of life at home, cannot be ruled out? The inland migrant laborers were again found gathered in huge numbers at Bandra Terminus Mumbai, Surat, Gandhi Nagar, Ahmadabad, and Hyderabad on 14 April 2020, after the second lockdown was declared for returning to their native places to fight against acute hunger by defying prohibitory lock down orders, in hope that they will return home safely if rail transport resumes from tonight. The fear of death by hunger due to lack of work and wedges at work place of migrated cities of their own country of origin was mainly responsible for forcing them to return back to their native place by any means in search of life at home by defying the threat of life due to pandemic spread of COVID-19.

#### **4.4 Partition Factor**

An archaic example in the Indian context is undoubtedly the unfortunate partition of India on 14 August, 1947. The world has witnessed one of the biggest migrations from the Asian sub continent, where people migrated from both countries to each other's land as per their faith and choice in pursuit of their overall development issues. Similarly, the other prehistoric examples of migration of people were reported between North America, Western Europe, Oceania, Gulf Co-operation Council Nations and Developed parts of East and South-East Asia (McKinsey Global Institute Report, Oct. 2016).

#### **4.5 Livelihood Factor**

Brain Drain is also a perfect example of migration and development outcome issues, one can find Indian IT professionals, medicos, engineers, and scientist across the American, European and Australian subcontinents, while Indian origin businessmen can be prominently seen in the African and commonwealth countries and the unskilled laborers and artisans work force are generally found migrating to the gulf countries in search of their livelihood and better career prospects abroad. Other top listed international migration corridors are Mexico-US, Russian Federation-Ukraine, Russian Federation-Kazakhstan, China-Hong Kong, Syria-Turkey, Syria-Lebanon, Myanmar-Thailand, Palestine-Jordan, India-Kuwait, and India- Saudi Arabia (World Economic Forum Report, Oct. 2017).

#### **4.6 Demographic Factor**

Demographic factors are also responsible for initiating migration within the country as it is pertinently noticed in the peoples of North Eastern Region that they develop an inherent character to migrate to Delhi-NCR in search of better career prospects, for fulfilling their higher education, advance sports related coaching, up skill training and employment needs irrespective of their gender and marital status due to better facilities, infrastructure, connectivity, career, working environment and higher pay and emolument structures (Mohammad Iqbal, 2019).

#### **4.7 Regional Factor**

The long pending issues of Migrant Kashmiri Pundit's and the revocation of Article 370, on 05 August 2019, for the overall development of Jammu, Kashmir, and Laddakh regions also establishes a direct relationship between migration of people and development outcomes. (Adapted from, the Gazette of India, 2019).

#### **4.8 Fear Factor**

Migration due to fear has also been reported in India during 2014-2016, and owing to its significance, it was described by Wikipedia as Kairana and Kandhla Migration Controversy (also known as Kairana-Exodus), where due to some religious controversy few hundred families of this village situated in the Shamli District of UP near Delhi-NCR, migrated out of fear. This migration initiated a very strong political development outcome in the country's political scenario. This proves that there exists, a direct relationship between migration of people and its development outcomes (<https://wikipedia.org>).

#### **4.9 Political Factor**

A political trend, which is prevailing nowadays where large number of elected people representatives of lower or upper houses of a political party migrates for affiliation to another political party and as a result of this development, the new government takes over the administration of the state or parliament as witnessed recently in cases of change of guards in the states of MP and earlier in Karnataka, in both cases Hon. Supreme Court of India has to

intervene to establish the rule of law. These types of political migrations also prove that there exists a direct relationship between migration and development outcomes (<https://sci.gov.in>).

#### **4.10 Legal Factor**

The enactment of the CAA-2019 Bill by the Parliament of India on 11 Dec 2019 to facilitate the migration of persecuted minorities of specific communities of other neighboring countries and the National Register of Citizenship exercise which was carried out in the Assam under the supervision of Hon Supreme Court of India was aimed to actually identify the permanently settled Bangladeshi Migrants in the region, hampering the development of actual native citizens of Assam also proves the relationship between migration and development outcomes (Adapted from, the Gazette of India, 2019).

### **5. Literature Survey and Related Discussions**

Development is an organized increase of a country's industry and wealth in terms of its economy. Resulted developmental due to migration has to be systematically assessed. The governance is a method of decision making and good governance is the process by which good decision can be put into the system (Sheng, Yap Kioe, 2013). Thus a good governance system focusing on digital empowerment has to be adopted to monitor the sustainable development. In absence of any such system in place, implementing the uniform policies and codes within the organizations will be quite difficult, thus it is necessary to measure the sustainability of developmental outcomes stimulated due to migration of people. The good governance system with eight prominent characteristics of accountability, consensus, efficiency, equity, participation, responsiveness, Rule of Law, and transparency, can improve the process of administration as it is in the proportion of corruption. If there is less corruption, of course, there will be good governance (World Bank Development Report, 1989). In working together to build stronger communities by implementing effective and sound good governance systems, the present challenges faced in the service delivery sector can be significantly reduced up to a greater extent (GDN Publication, 2011).

The administration is a process of decision making and good governance is the processes by which good decision can be implemented. It influences the overall design, procedures and operational techniques of the administration. The digitally empowered system can mutually control corruptions, reinforces accountability, and is capable of establishing a balance between growth and distribution network by use of present and future available resources required for monitoring sustainable development. Nations that persist with bad governance will have to tolerate with the slower growth and private players' involvements in the infrastructure development area will require more accountability and transparency (Emerging Asia: Changes and Challenges, 1989). Thus implementing digitally empowered public policies for managing forced migrations is inevitable for achieving the nation's development.

## **6. Implementing Digitally Empowered Public Policies for Migrants**

We must understand the inland migrant laborers problems and provide effective remedies by Implementing digitally empowered public policies through proper care and courtesy, initiative and innovations, integrity and transparency, showing promptness and perfection, by devotion and dedication towards our duties. Every government servant must be committed to respect the rights of their masters i.e. every respectable citizens and peoples of their country, whether residents or migrants to provide a joyful and hassle-free working environment, corruption-free work culture to provide an easy, clean and transparent working environment. Thus Implementation of digitally empowered public policies has become inevitable to reduce the number of public complaints, personal grievances leading to an increase in PIL. Implementing good governance system in a planned manner will provide clean working environment, built corruption-free employees, and develop a highly transparent service culture as per ethical standards of the good governance systems. It will ensure zero public complaints and will provide a hassle-free work culture in the country (Mohammad Iqbal, 2015). Therefore all service delivery managers are provided with innovative hands on experiences on the latest digital transformational technologies (Geoffrey Cann et al, 2019) to achieve excellence in enhancing efficient, prompt, courteous, and selfless service delivery to

the public for improving their performances by implementing digitally empowered public policies to achieve the sustainable development of the nation in terms of its economic growth.

### **6.1 Visualizing Future Comprehensive Possibilities for Migrants**

The recent example of migrant laborers gathering, noticed after lockdown, in the cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Surat, Ahmadabad, Gandhi Nagar, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Chennai, parts of Punjab and UP where tens of thousands of migrant casual laborers from Bihar, Odhisa, WB, UP and Andhra got stranded without food and shelter as fear of death due to hunger.

It has forced them to migrate back to their native place in search of life, and they started to leave barefoot, empty stomach with family by putting their luggage on the head, bearing the true load of life, and defied the fear of death due to Covid-19. Lessons from these types of painful incidents must therefore be seriously taken up by the policy makers, regulators, economists, labor reformers, and specially business researchers in order to provide harmonious solutions.

### **6.2 Solving Problems of Migrants**

Solving Inland Migrant Laborers Problem is the sole responsibility of the Govt. Migrants basic rights has to be protected in the interest of the nation and bare minimum facilities like food, pure drinking water, shelter, health care, wedges, and day today sundry livelihood expenses must be taken care of. To start with Social Welfare Department of State Govt. shall initiate a mandatory digital registration procedure for all migrants at every Revenue District, Tehsil Head Quarter and at every Gram Panchayat Level, where each and every type of migrants irrespective of their monthly income, profession, and origin of states get registered with their present local occupation, local address and local contact details so that they can be easily evacuated in case of any emergency through contact tracing and financial mapping methodologies to provide every possible relief in disastrous types of situations to save them from dying due to acute hunger and starvation as noticed in the aftermath of lockdown, where migrant laborers were left with no choice but to die either by hunger or by COVID-19. Issues related to

providing Social, Health and Emotional Securities to all affected migrants must be addressed by the policy makers and Govt. agencies like NITI Ayog, RBI, Town Planners, DMs, CMOs, Labor Commissioners, Employment Exchange Executives, DSOs and PDS Authorities, instantaneously by taking suo-motu cognizance in the larger interest of the nation.

### **6.3 Encouraging Digital Mode of Payments for Migrants**

These digitally registered migrants must be advised to give at least their local address and local contacts and their personal bank accounts of their home branch along with their permanent residence identification details so that they can be provided financial help, shelter, food, water, essential life-saving drugs, ambulances, etc and can be rescued during a pandemic, disaster, flood, tsunami and fire and explosion types of situations in the region, where they are presently lodged by the local district authorities. They must be motivated for enrollment to direct benefit transfer schemes of the Govt. using their native place bank account details and at the same time, they must be appropriately trained to use the digital mode of payments by encouraging the use of ATM Debit Card, Kisan Card, and Rupay Credit Cards, etc.

### **6.4 Providing Basic Civic Facilities to Migrants**

The mandatory digital registration of migrants at their new place of work city as suggested must get them eligible to use free health facilities, free public toilets and baths, and free night stay at shelter homes, free clean drinking water, free electricity units, free DTH facilities, free incoming voice call and free data usage facilities up to some bandwidth or free Wi-Fi facility, free city bus transportation where they are presently residing. For the BPL category of migrants free ration through PDS and free LPG gas cylinders, free pathological test facilities, free family planning facilities, free menstrual and dental hygiene kits, free post-pregnancy and delivery expenses, free immunization and vaccination to their new borns and free school admission, free tuition and hostel fees for their children, free municipal crematory facility to perform last rites of any deceased family members at the migrated place.

### **6.5 Protecting Basic Rights of Migrants**

As inland migrant laborers are also the respectable citizens of our country and to protect their rights as migrants, save them from death due to hunger, starvation, pandemic, pollution and other disastrous situations are the constitutional duties of the state and at the same time it is a prime responsibility of every citizen of our country to extend every possible help to save the life of fellow citizens at the time of crisis. To cater the expenses for the welfare of migrants, special provisions in the annual budget may be made under eradication of poverty head, Tax Payers money up to some extent may be used, and proactive services of SHG and NGOs may be explored, Community Kitchen services like of Gurudwara's Lungar, Temple's Bhandara and Akshaya Patra Foundation's Mid-day Meals types of arrangements may be planned by engaging Asha workers of all the Aganwadee Kendras of the country on the pattern of Amma's Kitchen, as initiated by the Tamil Nadu Govt. for feeding people in need during disastrous situations, which was witnessed in the country during the series of lockdowns.

## **7. Conclusion and Recommendations**

In order to achieve sustainable development goals, it is advisable to seriously resolve the migrant laborers problems first, as qualitatively it has been proved that migration is directly related to the developmental outcomes and migrants are the only available human resource to execute the developmental work required for industrial, agricultural and financial growth Thus it can be finally concluded that operational effectiveness and superior performance in the infrastructure development required for sustainable development can be very well achieved through managing migrant laborers by offering variety of services to them through digital platform by implementing better public policies for their social inclusion. Digital empowerment initiatives, to name a few like CC, IA, ICT, IIOT, IOT, IT, ITBPM, ITES, ML, VR and instantaneous communication technologies like 5G, High Speed Networking, Digital Reality, Digital Analytics, Robotics, Bioinformatics, 3D Printing, Sensor and Autonomous Technology, Digitalized ERP, Gamification Technologies, Remote Sensing Technologies, Intelligent Geo Spatial Data Analysis and Block Chain Analysis or combination of these real time Hybrid and Nano

Based Data Science Technologies can certainly provide workable solutions required for attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Therefore, it is recommended to significantly improve our monitoring system and implement better public policies on digital platforms by understanding core principles of good governance systems for effectively managing the challenges ahead and to focus on the emerging problem of inland migrant laborers to create basic awareness amongst them, by implementing digitally empowered public policies in the larger interest of the nation's development as adopted by the other emerging economies.

## **8. Disclaimer**

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## **India's Engagement with Southeast Asia: Role of Physical Connectivity**

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### **Abstract**

Connectivity is an absolute necessity for regional cooperation. Development of connectivity between any two regions-physical, institutional, cyber, and people-to-people facilitates faster and greater interaction, thereby minimizing transaction costs, and enabling cohesiveness and convergence. India's connections with Southeast Asia dates back to historical times. Southeast Asia has become one of the prime regions of the world with steadily expanding production networks and as such providing an opportunity for India to integrate itself with the region's manufacturing networks. India's upgraded ties with Southeast Asia can be corroborated by its shift in policy from 'Look East' to 'Act East', trade figure touching \$142 billion in 2018, signing of multilateral and bilateral FTA in trade and services among others. The relationship could be taken to another level if physical connectivity between India and Southeast is enhanced. Realising the importance of connectivity, India is undertaking projects like the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project with countries of Southeast Asia. Certain projects like the Mekong India Economic Corridor are also being planned. However, building a strong connectivity relationship between India and Southeast Asia requires strong policy initiatives and greater political will. This paper seeks to throw light on the ongoing physical connectivity initiatives between India and Southeast Asia, their present status, probe challenges related to them, and assess their potential benefits. It also argues that improved connectivity between India and Southeast Asia can inspire greater dynamism in regional production networks, would boost trade, and promote greater foreign direct investment.

## **Keywords**

Connectivity, Southeast Asia, Act East, Free Trade Agreement (FTA), and Kaladan.

## **1. Introduction**

Connectivity, since antiquity, has been one of the prime drivers of relationships between any geographical regions. However, in the dynamics of modern international relations, its importance has assumed greater significance. Expansion of the production network to multiple locations owing to the necessity of reducing production costs has made connectivity all more important. Developing connectivity infrastructures between two regions such as transport lines, digital connectivity among others leads to a significant reduction in transaction costs as well as helps in achieving greater regional integration, attracting greater foreign direct investment. Connectivity promotes interaction and integration in almost all spheres-economic, political, and cultural. The Asian Development Bank Interim Report suggests that connectivity between South Asia and Southeast Asia opens the market for goods and services thereby promoting economies of scale and greater competition. Regional competitiveness also receives a boost since the regionally competitive industries generate more efficient production structures.

With all the above-listed benefits attached to improved connectivity, India has its own reasons to improve the status of connectivity with Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia, as a region, has attracted huge significance in the last three decades, with the interests of almost all major powers of the world converging in this region. India's own exchange with Southeast Asia has grown multiple times. Promoting trade in goods and services, and people-to-people, contact with ASEAN is one of the principal pillars of India's 'Look East Policy'. ASEAN has emerged as an important trade partner of India and trade figures have risen steadily since 2000, and stood at around \$142 billion in 2018. India-ASEAN trade comprises 10 percent of India's total external trade, and India is one of ASEAN's top ten trade partner countries. India is also responsible for supplying an important part of Asia's primary resources. India's FTA with ASEAN in goods and services is central to its economic engagement with its Southeast Asian neighbours. Its trade with ASEAN is expected to increase by double, the aim being \$300 billion by 2025. Hence, this growth in engagement will see an increasing demand for national as well as international infrastructure for production,

consumption, and international trade purposes. Better connectivity between India and Southeast Asia can infuse greater dynamism in regional production networks, would increase trade, and promote greater foreign direct investment. Moreover, proper linkage of India's Northeast region with Southeast Asia is likely to help in the region's better integration with the mainstream economy.

## **2. Connectivity Projects between India and Southeast Asia**

Considering the words and space constraint, only important connectivity projects between India and Southeast have been taken up.

## **3. Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project**

The Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project is an important limb of India's Act East Policy and its outreach towards Southeast Asia. The project aims to enhance connectivity between the ports in India with the Sittwe port in Myanmar. From Sittwe, it will then connect to India's Northeast region through road and inland waterways. Thus, the project would provide an alternative route to connect mainland India to the Northeast parts of the country via Myanmar, making transportation of goods easier. The project is named after the river Kaladan. The Kaladan River originates in the state of Mizoram and is referred to as Chhimtui. It flows in a southerly direction through the Rakhine and Chin state in Myanmar before draining into the sea. The river is navigable but turns shallow beyond Paletwa. However, once the project materializes, it will be easier to transport goods using the Kaladan River. The background study for the waterways component comprising Port and Inland Waterways Transport (IWT) was done by M/S RITES Limited in 2003, and for the road component in 2005. The company suggested a waterway route from Sittwe Port to Kaletwa (Myanmar), a distance of 225 kilometres along the Kaladan River, and thereafter connecting Kaletwa to the Indo-Myanmar border through road, which would cover a distance of 62 kilometres. Based on this suggestion, the Ministry of External Affairs, India, entered into a 'Framework Agreement' with the Myanmar government in April 2008 for undertaking the multi-modal project. The Indian government, the financier of the project, had approved a project cost of rupees 535.91 crores, which has recently been revised to rupees 2904.04 crores. Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has been in-charge of the Port and Inland Water Transport (IWT)

component of the project appointed as the Project Development Consultant (PDC) for the implementation.

**Table 1: The Transit Route Planned between Kolkata and Mizoram Comprises of the following Segments**

<b>Stretch</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Distance</b>
Kolkata to Sittwe Port (Myanmar)	Shipping	539 km
Sittwe to Paletwa Inland	Water Transport	158 km
Paletwa to Indo-Myanmar	Border Road	110 km
Border to NH 54 (Lwangtlai, India)	Road	100 km

*Source: Mdoner, Goi*

**The principal components of the project include the following:**

- **Port and IWT Components**
  1. Construction of an integrated port and inland water transport terminal at Sittwe including dredging.
  2. Construction of an IWT-Highway trans-shipment terminal at Paletwa.
  3. Construction of 6 IWT barges (300tn Capacity) for transportation of cargo between Sittwe and Paletwa.
- **Highway Component**
  1. Construction of a highway from Paletwa river terminal to Zorinpui in Chin state of Myanmar on the Indo-Myanmar border for 110 kilometres.

Further, to distribute the benefits of the project throughout the Northeast region, Zorinpui would be connected to Lwangtlai in Mizoram, 100 kilometres away from the Indo-Myanmar border from where NH 54 goes through. It would, then be connected to major Northeast cities and state capitals.

The project was awarded to Essar Projects (India), which started the project work in December 2010. The responsibility for providing land and security rests with Myanmar whereas the Indian government will bear the cost of the construction of a project. Upon completion, the project would be delivered to the Government of Myanmar, and would be operated by it as per the provisions contained in the Protocol on Facilitation of Transit Transport and Protocol on Maintenance and Administration.

The initial deadline for the Kaladan Project to be completed was June 2015. However, because of various reasons, the project has got delayed. The work on the project began in December 2010. After a string of several delays, India finally started the work on the construction of the 109 km stretch of road that links Paletwa River Terminal to Zorinpui on the Indo-Myanmar border in April 2018. The project was awarded to C & C Constructions in June 2017 at an investment of INR 16000 crores, with a timeframe of 36 months. However, the project took off late since it received clearances from Myanmar's government only in January 2018. On the Myanmar side, the Indian government has wrapped up the construction of the Sittwe Port, the river terminal at Paletwa, and the dredging of the Kaladan River. India handed over the control of Sittwe port to Myanmar in April 2017. On the Indian side, the extension of the Aizawl-Saiha National Highway to the Indo-Myanmar border at Zorinpui is near complete. India also handed over six cargo vessels worth \$81.29 million on 26 June 2017. The construction work for the vessels began in 2013 and was launched in 2016. Each vessel has a cargo capacity of 300 tonnes. These vessels will be used for the transportation of goods from Sittwe to Paletwa.

One of the important reasons for the project to come up is to provide the landlocked states of Northeast India an easy pass to the Bay of Bengal. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, the project "aims to provide connectivity between India and Myanmar from ports on India's eastern sea board to Myanmar's Sittwe port and further to Northeast India through Myanmar using sea, river and road transport modes to facilitate movement of goods". The project, when completed, will provide an alternative route to the already overburdened and overstretched Siliguri corridor in West Bengal, popularly known as the Chicken's Neck. Moreover, the continuous refusal of Bangladesh to grant transport and transit rights through its territory to the Northeast states, including denying access to the Chittagong port which is located within a distance of 200 kilometres from Agartala, is also considered an important reason to implement the project. The project helps India to bypass Bangladesh for its transportation of goods from Kolkata to the Northeast.

According to reports, the diversion of cargo going to Northeast India to Sittwe will benefit the region, especially the states of Mizoram, the

Manipur, and Nagaland. The Northeast will be closer than ever to the mainland India once the road, waterway, and port project is completed. At present, the distance between Lwangtlai in Mizoram to the Haldia port in Kolkata through the Siliguri corridor is around 1880 kilometres. However, once the project is completed, NH 502A will connect Lwangtlai in Mizoram to the Indo-Myanmar, which will further travel towards Paletwa through a highway, and finally connect Paletwa to Sittwe using the waterway. Thus, goods can be moved from and to the mainland of India, Mizoram, and the Northeast reducing the distance from 1880 kilometres to roughly 930 kilometres. Thus, the reduced distance will help in cutting costs as well as time.

The Zorinpui Land Customs Station in Mizoram will come up will enhance the border trade with Myanmar. Important commodities that are exported from Mizoram to Myanmar are bamboo, spices like chillies, sesame, banana, cotton yarn, ginger, squash, passion fruit, and all kinds of citrus fruits. Major items that Mizoram brings from Myanmar are cattle, pigs, processed food like fish, beef and pork, cow, chicken, readymade garments, electronic goods, textile articles and textile fabrics, etc. Thus, the economic benefits of the project to the landlocked state would be substantial.

The port project will lead to improving bilateral relations and increased economic activity between India and Myanmar. The ships carrying goods from Indian ports to Sittwe for delivering it to the Northeast can also carry goods to be exported to Myanmar. From Sittwe, goods can travel to Rangoon and from there to entire Southeast Asia. Thus, the port has the potential to link Myanmar to all major Indian ports. Moreover, the port at Sittwe also provides India certain strategic influence to India, as it will help India to counter the growing influence of China on Myanmar.

However, the project is not free from challenges. On the Myanmar side, several civil rights and environmental organizations voice the concerns of the lack of transparency by the Indian government. They raise the issues of lack of consultation with the local communities and unavailability of information about the project. Non-involvement in the gains of the project as well as wages for the labour are also pointed out. The environmentalists opposing the project also highlight the damaging impact of the project on the environment.

The project faces certain geographical challenges as well. The inaccessible and difficult terrain creates logistical problems in terms of transportation of construction materials, machineries, and labour. Firms undertaking the project face similar problems in completing the highway from Lwonglai to the Indo-Myanmar border.

#### **4. India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway**

The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway is an enterprising project covering a length of around 1360 km that will connect India with the Southeast Asian region. The eventual extension of the highway to Vietnam would increase the highway's length to approximately 3200 km. The highway links the town of Moreh in the state of Manipur in India, to Mae Sot in Thailand via Tamu, Mandalay, and Myawaddy in Myanmar. The project is a part of India's larger 'Act East' policy which aims to connect the nation with the ASEAN region. The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway was first proposed in a trilateral ministerial meeting on transport linkages in April 2002 held at Yangon. The highway was initially scheduled to be operational by 2015. However, due to delays arising from various reasons, it is likely to be operational by 2023. The route of the highway will be:

Moreh (India) – Tamu (Myanmar) – Kalewa (Myanmar) – Yagyi (Myanmar) – Monywa (Myanmar) – Mandalay (Myanmar) – Meiktila (Myanmar) – Nay Pyi Taw (Myanmar) – Payagyi (Myanmar) – Theinzayat (Myanmar) – Thaton (Myanmar) – Hpa'an (Myanmar) – Kawkaik (Myanmar) – Myawaddy (Myanmar) – Mae Sot (Thailand). At the 2003 Foreign Ministers' meeting of the three countries held in New Delhi, the following decisions were taken with respect to the works related to the trilateral highway:

- The highway would be built in three phases. The first phase was to include 78 km of new roads, upgradation of around 400 km of roads, the construction of all-weather approach lanes, and rehabilitation/reconstruction of weak or distressed bridges.
- India was given the responsibility of 78 km of new roads, also dubbed as the missing link, 58 km of upgradation in Phase-I. Thailand was given the responsibility of upgradation of 136 km and 62 km sectors

of Phase-I and another 100 km as part of Phase-II. It was also decided that Myanmar would take up intermediary approach roads, reconstruction/rehabilitation of weak bridges, pending the approval of the Burmese government.

- A Senior Officials group was to be established to review the implementation and progress of the projects.

The three-sided Joint Task Force again met in New Delhi in September 2012. The meeting agreed that all efforts would be made to establish the highway by 2016. At the 2012 India-ASEAN commemorative summit, the leaders of the ASEAN countries and India agreed to extend the trilateral highway to Cambodia and Vietnam. India and Myanmar also signed two MoUs pertaining to connectivity projects during the visit of the Myanmar President Htin Kyaw to New Delhi in August 2016.

In July 2017, the Indian government approved the expansion and widening of the section of NH-39 between Imphal in Manipur, to Moreh in Myanmar for 1630 crores. The National Highway Authority of India is appointed as the Technical Executing Agency and Project Management Consultant for the project. The work for the nearly 120 kilometres Kalewa-Yargi section for upgradation to two lanes was awarded to a joint venture of Punj Lloyd-Varaha in September 2017 at an estimated cost of 1177 crores to be completed in 36 months. India's Border Road Organisation (BRO) has already upgraded the Tamu-Kalewa-Kalemyo road (TKK) in Myanmar, also called the India-Myanmar Friendship road.

The Trilateral highway is expected to give a boost to the border trade between India and Myanmar and help in implementing the free trade area with Southeast Asia. According to Bana and Yhome, the project will help build direct people-to-people connectivity between India and the Mekong Sub-region as well promotes India's reach in a region where China's foothold has increased.

However, the project faces certain challenges. Lack of coordination among the agencies responsible for the project, financial constraints, inadequate monitoring, and security problems related to insurgent activities have led to repeated delays and cost escalation of the project. Even though the project faces other problems like land acquisition and tree felling, the Indian government intends to complete the project by the new deadline of 2023.

## **5. Trilateral Motor Vehicle Agreement**

India, Myanmar, and Thailand are also in talks for signing a motor vehicle agreement to promote land connectivity between the three nations. The proposed motor vehicles agreement was first discussed in the meeting of the Transport Secretaries of India, Myanmar, and Thailand on Cross-border Transport Facilitation on 18 April 2015. A follow-up meeting took place in June 2015 where a framework was proposed to facilitate cross-border transport in the region. The motor vehicle agreement aims to connect the two regions of South-Asia and South East Asia via a unique agreement to facilitate the easier cross-border flow of people, passenger vehicles, and cargo vehicles in a seamless manner, which will boost trade between the three countries. The agreement seeks to promote a regulatory regime, which would harmonise the cross-border procedure and standards by allowing mutual recognition of documents. According to the Indian government, the initiative will “further cement cultural and economic ties among the three nations and highlight the potential benefits of connectivity and integration in the region and keeping India’s focus on its close neighbourhood”.

However, Myanmar has sought time to sign the agreement. It seeks to review the possible fallouts of connectivity arrangements it has signed with other countries as well as those that are in the region before proceeding with the agreement.

## **6. Imphal-Mandalay Bus Service**

Another project that has been pending is the bus service connecting Imphal in Manipur to Mandalay in Myanmar. The Manipur Assembly passed a resolution in August 2003 for the introduction of bus service between the two cities to facilitate the easier movement of Manipuris. Finally, the Chief Minister of Manipur flagged off the experimental bus service on 9 December 2015. The approximate length between Imphal and Mandalay is around 580 km. Once the Motor Vehicle Agreement is signed and operationalised, buses can travel up to Bangkok in Myanmar. Some of the issues that need to be resolved include operators, fare structures, visa/travel documents, as well as designated points of halting throughout the journey. The bus service is considered an enabler in promoting tourism and cultural relationship between Myanmar and Manipur. Manipur has various tourist sites such as Govindaji Temple,

Kangla Fort, Loktak Lake, etc., which attract people from another side of the border. The famous Sangai Festival also promotes tourism of the state, which attracts people from Myanmar in large numbers.

## **7. Rih Tiddim Road**

The Rih-Tiddim road seeks to build connectivity between Myanmar and the Indian state of Mizoram to give a push to border trade and commerce. India has been upgrading the road, which connects the town of Rih in Myanmar, to the Zokhawthar Land Customs Station (LCS) in Mizoram, via Tiddim, which leads to the Champhai town in Mizoram, just 28 km away from Zokhawthar LCS. IRCON International Limited has been selected as the project developer.

## **8. Tentative Projects**

Apart from the above-listed projects, which are in progress, other important projects are also in the pipeline. One of them is the Mekong-India Economic Corridor. The ERIA Institute of Jakarta has done a study on the proposed project, which connects India's east coast with the four Mekong countries of Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand. The project aims to connect the Dawei port of Myanmar with Ho Chi Minh City of Vietnam via Bangkok and Phnom Penh, which is further, linked to the Chennai port of India, thus forming a trade, industrial and investment corridor and adding to the GDP of the region.

## **9. Conclusion**

The above-mentioned projects hold immense benefits for India in terms of enhancing its relationship with South East Asian countries in all spheres, especially furthering trade and investment. Moreover, the socio-economic development of the Northeast region could also be pushed further once connectivity with Southeast Asia materialises and investment follows up. These projects will also advance India's Act East policy in the larger Indo-Pacific template. For these to happen, the projects must be expedited and completed on a war footing.

One of the important requirements for the projects to see the light of the day is finances for the creation of infrastructure. According to ADB, Asia needs around \$26 trillion for financing infrastructure needs for 2016-2030. Apart from public finances, the report suggests to make use of the private sector money to solve infrastructure problems. De argues that

Public-Private partnership could be a viable alternative. Long-term finances from global lending organisations like the World Bank, AIIB, BRICS Bank can help mitigate financing problems.

India, Myanmar, and Thailand must expedite the process of creation of the Highway considering the possible gains they could reap from the project. Political will needs to put behind these projects for their successful implementation. India and ASEAN also must engage at various levels for the early conclusion of connectivity projects. Moreover, India must meet its target of connecting the Northeast with the mainland India through the railways. This will not only help bring the Northeast close to the mainstream but also promote a faster and cheaper mode of transporting goods. Road networks also need to be improved and integrated into Northeast India.

The border trade between India and Myanmar should be made smooth with the publication and expansion of items that could be traded between the two sides. Businesses should be made aware of the changes in the list. Moreover, proper infrastructure should be constructed along the border providing civil facilities for traders and customers. Illegal trading points and extortions by insurgents should be checked. India and ASEAN must explore the possibility of a paperless trade mechanism for seamless trade connectivity, starting first with India and Myanmar, and then expanding it to other member countries. The connectivity projects possess immense positives for the development of Northeast India which itself should be a reason to expedite the processes and complete the projects by the newly projected deadline of 2023. What is also required is the improvement in connectivity among the Northeast states, both rail and road, to bring private investments and foster socio-economic development.

Indian ports also need to be modernised to expand the trade with Southeast Asia. The Kaladan Multimodal project could be used to trade with countries beyond Myanmar. However, the inefficiency of Indian ports in terms of turnaround time for cargo due to various other reasons is an inhibiting factor. What is required is an overhaul of the Indian port systems to respond to the needs of expanding trade volumes with the East.

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## **Entrepreneurship in Pre-independent India, New Opportunities and Perspectives.**

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### **Abstract**

For Generations, Man has always been in his “Quest for Gold”, today we have folks who look at disrupting the status quo by “Creative destruction”, we call them Entrepreneurs. They are mostly individuals who have a keen eye on the arising opportunities, willingness to churn out their share of fortune, creating wealth for themselves and also for those who are involved in the firm. In this paper, I would take a walk down to memory lanes as presented by a few on how the entrepreneurship started during the British era, and how the emergence of the “Change Maker” Entrepreneurship came up with a growth mindset, and towards the end we look at a few influencing perspectives of Entrepreneurship.

### **Keywords**

Globalization, Information technology, Strategic plan, Entrepreneurship, Business Performance Indicator, and Deployment.

### **1. Introduction**

New venture creation is important in the international economy, the key factor that defines entrepreneurship, and shows how three factors-individuals, environment, and organizations-come together to make the entrepreneurial event. Studying entrepreneurship cannot be done in a formulaic way, by the numbers fashion. It requires judgment. (Dollinger, n.d.).

### **2. Evolution of Entrepreneurship in India**

British enterprises enjoyed phenomenal success in the late nineteenth century. A few large British firms dominated the modern industrial economies of Eastern India because of an upper hand in external trading sector. These firms were introduced into India not only in the early industrial era but also looked like a corporate organization most Based out of Calcutta.

After reaching a peak within the early 1900s, British enterprises were still attached to old and declining sectors of the Indian industrial and trading economy and appeared to lose their dynamism. (Misra, 2000)

We can look explain in two broad categories: the first and more conventional of political uncertainty suggests that after the First World War British businesses in India were subject to serious disadvantages and therefore the consequent British business weakens.

The second view is that new economic conditions of inter-war India, Indian entrepreneurs who were better placed to take advantage of business, and particularly manufacturing opportunities, than their British counterparts.

It then seemed clear from the research that the Indian government had its own financial priorities and had little interest in promoting specifically British business. With the change in attitude, British firms were being outstripped by their Indian competitors in industrial innovation and rates of investment from the late 1920s.

Another view of the decline of British business is more convincing: the new multinational type of enterprise was much more suited to industries where a large-scale investment of capital and organizational complexity were required. British expatriate firms, with their antiquated structures, were unable to adapt to these new circumstances. British companies which did not make the transition to the multi-divisional, modern industry began fading away.

Some Indian enterprises, which had been almost exclusively mercantile, small-scale, family firms, transformed themselves into pioneers of advanced and heavy industry. British firms, however, didn't adopt this way though they had considerable advantages. They may not have been familiar with the Indian markets, but they did have the advantage of extensive contacts in the European and North American economies.

British firms should have enabled the use of resources like foreign technology, capital, and co-operation to establish a competitive advantage over Indian firms to move into the modern industry since they already had a standing. Yet their strategy was different? A central reason that determined the fate of British and Indian enterprises lies in their diverse attitudes towards business activity, their self-image as businessmen: what might be called their 'business culture'.

### **3. The Individuals, The Environment, The Organization**

Most of these firms were founded by Scots of not particularly high social status with a background in trade or agriculture and they continued to recruit heavily from Scotland throughout the period.

Some of the wide range of industrial and commercial activities that they were involved in traditional businesses like jute manufacturing, coal mining, and transport to insurance, banking, and the provision of agency services for manufacturers based in Britain. There were about a handful of dominant ones from about sixty significant Managing Agency Houses. In 1915, these kinds of firms provided almost half of the total employment in industry in India.

These firms had an unusual structure although private partnership firms themselves, they had only small shareholding interests whereas they controlled a large number of independent public companies. They made their money by providing a range of managerial, financial, and agency services protected by long-term legal contracts and not through investments in these companies, which could have led to long-term gains. The investments which they did make in the companies were primarily designed to secure these legal management contracts.

However, the British firms were unable to grasp the opportunities offered by Indian economic development in the 30 years before independence. Such opportunities were demonstrated by the meteoric rise of entrepreneurs and the success of Japanese and German businesses and even of multi-national companies based in Britain, such as ICI. The British due to their business attitude failed to compete. They could not accept change to diversify into the expanding, new industrial sectors which were opening up in India after World War-1 in particular in construction, iron, and steel, transport, and chemicals.

Tomlinson has argued that the reason for this was that the managing agencies lacked capital, but this was just another blocked mind-set. The British firms themselves clearly knew that there was no difficulty in raising capital.

Similarly, during the 1940s, the partners of both Gillanders, Arbuthnot, and Co., and Bird and Co. found overwhelming offers of capital from Indian sources. The attitudes of these businessmen suggest that it was their beliefs and not lack of capital that held firms from diversification and growth; it was rather their deeply-held beliefs about the nature of the firm or what we call today as "Limiting Beliefs". To raise the capital

necessary to invest in modern industries they would have to become public limited companies from private firms. This would have diluted the partners' capital holdings, have more owners joining and therefore their autonomy and control over the future of the firm would be reduced from before.

#### **4. Remain in your Comfort Zone or Expand .... Which would you Romance with?**

British businessmen's commitment to stay small, partnership firm and the consequent acceptance to stay in a comfort zone was not the product of the influence of prevailing aristocratic culture, they preferred to live the life of a landed gentleman that was filled with leisure or politically active life, as some historians have suggested; it was part of a more general attachment to a particularly individualistic set of attitudes towards business. The central concern of these businessmen was to maintain full personal control over their firms: they insisted on having room for maneuver and preferred, therefore, to spread their risks across many activities; they refused to tie themselves or their capital down in long-term projects and took a short-term view of profit; they wanted to be able to seize any business opportunity and move capital quickly in order to take advantage of new ventures. They always wanted to play on Safe mode which meant that they spread risk across many ventures to conserve capital, and insisted on maintaining control of those ventures in which they invested so that they could withdraw capital rapidly if there are changing market conditions.

Gut instinct had a high value in the business strategy of the individual Indian entrepreneur, or the 'business brain' as these businessmen described it; hence they liked having to rely on the gut rather than on technical advice that was complex and time-consuming.

Entrepreneurs of this type had a rather romantic approach to business, a belief that business should be exciting, rewarding, energetic individualists allegedly characteristic of the large-scale, hierarchical, and professionally managed corporations which were becoming common, particularly in the United States.

British business, therefore, found the Managing Agency House an ideal vehicle for translation of this ‘business culture’ into practice. Frequently businessmen made conscious decisions not to diversify or innovate as they preferred the tried and tested options because innovation would have come in conflict with these values.

Past experiences influenced these sets of attitudes to some extent since these businesses’ had early mercantile origins. An individualistic and adventurous approach had been very appropriate initially, then they were mainly involved in financing export and import trade, that could grow personal wealth of individual partners. Even after these Managing Agency Houses had become much larger and more stable, the attitudes of these British businessmen suggests that these values continued to be influential in the way they operated. British business had to raise capital, the managing agents were concerned with their status of managerial autonomy and absolute control, even though this strategy restricted the amount of capital they could raise. Henry Gladstone, of Gillanders, Arbuthnot and Co. admitted as much when he objected to the possibility of changing the status and structure of the company in 1927, arguing: He felt that there were restrictions of a joint-stock company and they were irksome to an extent.

A private partnership is so absolutely master in its own house.’<sup>21</sup> Bird & Co. when offered the opportunity to go into a joint venture showed a overriding concern with autonomy in the promising Indian steel industry in 1935. The British business here had to raise capital and in order to mobilize the capital required to join this venture it was suggested to Edward Benthall, the senior partner in the firm, that Birds should become public limited company. Edward was quite. Adamant that this proposal should be avoided, saying: ‘Once the public aa concerned with the firms we all believe that their disintegration will not be long delayed. British Businessmen strongly opposed to such a step if it can be avoided by any practical means.

Similar new opportunities for Gillanders Arbuthnot in both engineering and steel ventures required high expenditure of capital that could have been easily raised by turning the company (Gillanders, Arbuthnot, and Co.) into a public limited company. Yet again the idea was rejected, saying that to preserve the company as a private partnership; Henry Gladstone emphatically stated: ‘For him it’s not a matter of pounds,

shillings and pence. He wanted a smooth-running business and not to impede the safe running of the coach by hasty and unwise changes.

It is clear, then, that although these companies were aware of new business opportunities, and could see that they would be profitable, they placed a higher value on maintaining their exclusive control and autonomy within their private firms. Therefore these businessmen chose to remain in old and clearly stagnating businesses, such as jute and coal, which required less capital. The partners were often aware that the maintenance of control was at the expense of innovation and diversification. Edward Benthall, writing in 1928, admitted that this strategy was inhibiting the development of the business as any spare capital was used to buy protective shareholdings in the companies they already managed in order to maintain control and by preventing others from buying shares in the firm; as he explained: 'a really forward and constructive policy is out of reach. Our main aim is to keep things going, to avoid serious mistakes and increase protective holdings'.

This refusal to open up shareholding inevitably led to a miserly attitude to the use of capital and companies formulated rigid rules governing capital that could be invested in any enterprise.

This refusal to commit money to one interest and the concern with spreading risk meant that the partners of Managing Agency Houses were required to oversee the running of several companies, often in different fields. Inevitably management was not as specialized or competent as it might have been and there were frequent criticisms of the caliber of their administration. For example, in 1893 the firm of James Finlay and Co. was sued by an English shareholder of one of their mills. The litigant alleged: There is a feeling that you have a double interest, there is no public confidence in your management. In your undertakings and that your interests as shareholders are largely subordinated to your interests as managers, agents, and financiers. The Business Community felt the Champdany Company had made a laughing stock of itself. The interests your senior partner has to supervise and control are so varied and so vast that the affairs of the Champdany Company can only receive a small share of his time.

Conservative attitude towards capital was another drawback of the managing agents' since their insistence that the capital they employed should show swift returns and thus never be committed for too long. Such 'short-termism' ruled out certain kinds of investments. So, one reason

Bird and Co. refused to participate in the proposed steel venture in the mid-1930s was that projected profits would not be realized for at least seven years. A British firm (Gillanders, Arbuthnot and Co.) in 1928 decided not to invest in road transport schemes, again on the grounds that 'ten years is too long to wait for a return'.

Keeping capital constantly with the firm had a significant impact on the level of technological sophistication in many of the enterprises. A partner of James Finlay and Co. in 1893 admitted antiquated machinery was the reason for failure of one of their jute mills, 'all to save a few thousand rupees'. Gladstone's attitude was typical: he halted innovation to cut cost so, in 1909, he noted: all the mills have reached a point to exercise the strictest economy in all directions. His justification was based on ship owners "Why should we not do what ship-owners do in bad times; Crew had to be reduced and repairs need to be at minimal". Surely a great deal more can be done to save expenditure.

Even in 1941, these British Businessmen wore the same conservative attitude. The renovation of one of the firm's paper mills was halted by Benthall: 'renovations must go slow. It is imperative that they had a first class cash position'. British businessmen's conservative approach to investment even drew the critical attention of the government;

## **5. Criticism and Emergence of Perspectives**

British managing agency houses could not escape criticism for being unduly conservative in their methods of business and exhibiting undue reluctance to begin new ventures. In other words, they have been inclined to develop commerce rather than industries and to have been less helpful than might have been the case in clearing the way for the industrial firm and their highly individualistic business style, was strengthened by their intellectual attachment progress.

The managing agents' commitment to the small partnership to the economic tenets of *laissez-faire*. This ideology of the British Businessmen obviously provided intellectual legitimacy for their merchant style and identity: it justified the persistence of small, private competitive market-oriented firms in the face of clear pressures to merge, integrate and rationalize. Identifying the political ideology of British businessmen was a complex issue that can only be examined briefly here, but there are three aspects of these *laissez-faire* views which were particularly evident among British businessmen in India.

Firstly, that there should be strict adherence to free trade theory, secondly there was a firm belief in the preservation of small competitive firms, and finally, there was an antipathy to business involvement in politics and dealings with the state.

Many of the new industries which developed in India in the period of the war were initially protected by tariffs. This was because the state, partly in its search for revenue, tried to encourage domestic industries. It was quite surprising that British expatriate businessmen were unwilling to take the manufacturing opportunities created by protection. British firms wanted to keep themselves away from new industries partly because they were ideologically opposed to the principle of protection. The laissez-faire instincts of these expatriate businessmen led them to stress the importance of preserving an economic system conducive to the survival of small firms even when economic crisis threatened these firms' viability. Between 1920s and 1930s overproduction of raw jute led to a profound crisis in the jute processing industry. The government suggested, in response, that the industry be rationalized through company mergers, arguing that this would produce larger plants that would then be in a position to recover competitiveness. Benthall's firm resisted these plans. He was sure that he would certainly benefit from this rationalization, 'The conditions of trade between Britain and India was looking at small firms being altered.

Initially, it would appear that the government had some anti-capitalists in their midst.' Even though the failure to rationalize the jute industry meant that the firm continued to make losses, Benthall was willing to accept this as the price to be paid for preserving competition: 'As a fundamental principle, we see that we are not entitled to the making of large profits if we are not prepared to stand up firmly to periods of poor trading. 'These entrepreneurs were as hostile to business involvement in politics as they were to state involvement in business. During the 1930s, the British Government in India as part of its Anti-congress strategy tried to establish a new conservative business party designed to engage the support of business groups, Indian and British, by offering them influence over policy.

Some Indian businessmen were enthusiastic about the Rise of a new corporate thought process, but the response of British entrepreneurs was much more wary. Edward Benthall remarked that: there have been at many instances to try to provide some constitutional protections against

the government interfering in business. It seemed to him that this interference would be moreover looked upon as a policy of running to the government whenever there is difficulty.

He was not only suspicious of Indian politicians, but considered that the very mild intervention instance of some British Conservatives exhibited 'socialistic leanings'. Unable to see things change for the better it is easy to see that any new corporatist initiatives failed. Businessmen refused to establish political influence when they had the chance and were subsequently ignored during the transition to independence.

## **6. Conclusion: Learnings from Then and Now**

To effectively start-up and manage new ventures, Entrepreneurial learning is most often described as a continuous process that help develop necessary knowledge for sustainability. From our literature survey, we find that in entrepreneurs' experiences, there is a very thin line between "entrepreneurial experience" and "entrepreneurial knowledge" (or what (Reuber et al., 1990) has also referred to as "experientially acquired knowledge").

From our literature on How the British Entrepreneurs and Indian Entrepreneurs behaved, These two concepts are mostly distinguished to consider entrepreneurs' experiences has an impact on new venture creation, when the action-oriented knowledge and learning from what an entrepreneur has encountered represents the wisdom derived from this particular experience (Reuber et al., 1990).

When we look at the then prevailing circumstances, we could reason based on (Politis, 2005), two basic dimensions of experiential learning-acquisition (grasping) and transformation. Acquisition or Grasping can be argued to be similar to "experience" which we gain as entrepreneurs' experiences, transformation can be considered equivalent to "experientially acquired knowledge" based on the action taken (referred to as entrepreneurial knowledge).

If past experience can explain success on How some entrepreneurs are more successful than others (e.g., Politis, 2005; Reuber et al., 1990; Wright et al., 1997), which type of career experience can then be taken into account to have an impact on entrepreneurs' learning in terms of developing their effectiveness in recognition of prevailing opportunity and coping up with the exposure of newness? A widely used measure in studies of entrepreneurial learning is prior start-up experience (Bruderl

et al., 1992; Wright et al., 1997) (Politis, 2005) and according to our literature, the British at one point in time were looking at prevailing circumstances of the business and were not ready to take on liabilities whereas Indian entrepreneurs were willing to take the gamble.

**Prior start-up experience, knowledge gained, and decision making:** According to previous researches carried, it indicates that previous start-up experience has provided action-oriented learning and knowledge to individuals that aids the decision-making process about entrepreneurial opportunities which arise time pressure-filled with uncertainty (Johannisson et al., 1998; Sarasvathy, 2001). As a result, to exploit opportunity individuals with more prior start-up experience would see it much more beneficial to exploit an existing circumstance as more desirable than other individuals with less start-up experience see it, and therefore be more likely to exploit it to add value to the ecosystem.

Many empirical studies dwell on the concept of “Learning by doing”. For example, (Gimeno et al., 1997) showed that previous start-up experience of founders enhances the economic performance and hence better profits. When do we consider a few liabilities of how to manage newness? A prior start-up experience is mostly considered to provide important clues in terms of knowledge and wisdom that helps an entrepreneur to bravely face the drawbacks of newness that new ventures face (Politis, 2005; Reuber et al., 1990).

Moreover, (Cooper et al., 1989) showed a positive relationship between the entrepreneurs’ previous start-up experience and firm performance also see (Reuber et al., 1990; Stuart & Abetti, 1990) for similar results. Several authors also point out that Education to be a great source of information and knowledge, but much of the required action is primarily taking action or by going ahead and doing what’s required to keep the firm afloat (Cope & Watts, 2000; Politis, 2008). For example, it’s more like forming a daily routine and thereby developing routines to form organizations may quite be learned by creating organizations (Bruderl et al., 1992; Shepherd et al., 2000), and to understand how they work? Gathering the right information, making effective decisions with available information about opportunities, and with a call to action can only be understood when we go ahead and undertake the activity or the practical experience is what matters? (Duchesneau & Gartner, 2016; Gartner, 2016; Politis, 2005; Rondstat, 1988).

I would like to conclude here from the literature survey that, Uncertainty leads to UNITY.

**Uncertainty:** In the previous and current times, we were always surrounded with the uncertainty changing social, economic, and ecological conditions

**Newness:** Uncertainty has led to opportunity recognition and acceptance of newness

**Intelligence:** This Newness has helped us learn and thereby enhance our intelligence to exploit opportunities and add value to the human race

**Travel:** With uncertainty, Newness and intelligence, we begin to travel the path of new learnings.

**You:** uncertainty, newness, intelligence, travel lead to an enhanced “You”

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## **The Effect of Mobile Phone Brands on Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention among Young Adults**

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### **Abstract**

A lot of work has been undertaken in the field of Brand and Brand Management ever since the concept developed academically. Brand per se is one of the primary concepts of marketing which gained more importance as economies developed more and more moving from production concept to the marketing concept where the need for differentiating one's product increased as similar products flooded the market in various categories.

This study looks at the use and attitude towards an omnipresent product - the mobile smartphones. Though it seems a lot of work has been accomplished in this field, sometimes the basics are left out while researchers take on the complexities associated with the area of study. Thus, this study is a humble step to assessing the use of mobile brands and its effect on consumers' satisfaction and subsequently the effect on repurchases intention of customer satisfaction. This is a descriptive study conducted on a sample size of one hundred and forty respondents that belong to the age group of eighteen years to twenty-five years. The data was collected through an online questionnaire. The findings indicate that brand name impacts customer satisfaction but it is not very pronounced in the case of the mobile phone category for young adults. Also, the satisfaction for mobile use is not in any way related to the demographics of gender, income, education, and profession. But there is found to be a positive moderate correlation between satisfaction level and repurchase intention, the higher the satisfaction with the mobile phone brand being used, the higher is the repurchase intention.

### **Keywords**

Brand use, Customer satisfaction, Repurchase intention, Young adult, Mobile phones, and Demographic variables.

## **1. Introduction**

In today's time, a mobile phone is the constant companion across all age groups, starting as young as 12 years to very old in their seventies and eighties using it for a wide spectrum of purposes from the very basic as a means of communication to fighting loneliness by surfing the net and using social media platforms. In times of the current pandemic, it has become all the more central to the existence of man as the schools, colleges, offices, and shops have all merged and come online and can be accessed with the use of this handheld device. Since the beginning, it is known that it is the youth that as more addicted to mobile phones. In a study conducted across eleven developing nations and emerging economies with India being one, it was found that it was more common to own a mobile phone rather than share it and most of the respondents belonging to the age group of 18 to 19 admitted to having a separate mobile phone for their own use in all almost all the counties studied, also smartphones were most often being used by younger and more educated people (Silver et al., 2019).

In a study of the impact on customer satisfaction of brand awareness and repurchase intention, three of the four hypotheses were found to be significant. The study found that brand awareness has a positive and significant impact on repurchase intention and customer satisfaction, and satisfaction of customers has a positive effect on repurchase intention that is significant. Brand awareness does not have an effect on repurchase intention that is significant with customer satisfaction as an intervening variable. Finally, satisfaction does have a positive effect, but it does not significantly impact repurchase (Ilyas et al., 2020). The experimental study offered support for the proposition that brand expectations have better impact on affective outcomes such as customer satisfaction while category expectations have a better predict behavioral outcomes such as repurchase and recommendation. Further, the research suggests that brand expectations are not that important in determining satisfaction but predict performance better (Gupta & Stewart, 1996).

According to Cisco Annual Report, internet and mobile usage in India will cross the 900-million mark by 2023, it is estimated that two-thirds of the Indian population will have internet access and a mobile device (Jain, 2020). The top-selling mobile brands in India include Samsung, Xiaomi, Vivo, Realme, Oppo, and Apple in the premium segment (bajajfinserv, 2020). It was noted that online usage for Indians increased

to 24 percent making them spend 4.3 hours per day on smartphones when the lockdown started in March 2020. This signaled a rise of an hour per day from an earlier average of 3.5 hours per day in 2019 (Chanchani, 2020). Looking at this scenario, it becomes inevitable that a study uses mobile as the product category as they are present everywhere across all age groups as well as other demographics.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### **2.1 Brand**

The dictionary meaning of a brand given by Cambridge dictionary is a type of product manufactured and offered by a particular company (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). The most accepted definition of a brand is of the American Marketing Association which defines a brand as something which is either a name or any term or a sign or a symbol, or even a design, or maybe a combination of either all or some of them, which is used to identify either the goods or services of one marketer or a group of marketers and is used as a differentiation tool from the competitors (Kotler et al., 2009). Aaker (1991) defined a brand as “a distinguishing name/symbol whose intention is to identify the services and goods of sellers/ or an amalgamation of sellers and also to demarcate these from those of their customers.”

Brands play a crucial role for both the customers as well as the firms. Kapferer (2005) identified the functions (related consumer benefit) of a brand for the consumer that involve-identification (to be seen clearly and identify the sought-after products); practicality (to save time and energy for repurchase and brand loyal products); guarantee (assurance of buying the same quality products); optimisation (to be confident of purchasing the best performer in a product category); characterisation (to confirm and project one’s self image as one wants to); continuity (to have customer satisfaction because of continued intimacy and familiarity with the brand); hedonistic (customer satisfaction due to the attractiveness and communication of the brand); and finally ethical (customer satisfaction related to that behaviour of the brand that is responsible towards the society). A brand signals to the customers of the origin of the product linking it to its manufacturer which in turn protects both the customer and the firm from identical products being offered by the competitors

(Aaker, 1991). According to (Keller et al., 2011), identification of the source of the product; assigning the responsibility to the manufacturer of the product; ability to reduce risk; enabling a reduction in the cost of searching; a sign of a promise or bond with the maker of the product; acting as a symbolic device and a mark of quality are the various roles that brands play.

Similarly, brands play a very big part for the firms and organisations offering their products in the market. According to Kapferer (2005), the functions or roles of a brand include that it provides a recognition cue; offers the practicality of choice; offers a guarantee of quality; it optimises the choice by acting as a signal of high quality performance; helps in personalising an individual's choice; acts as a bonding or relationship building tool; offers pleasure and finally acts as a mark of ethics and social responsibility. It is through product attributes, names, packages, distribution strategies, and advertising that brand associations have been established. All that enable the owner to move their products beyond commodities to branded products. Which enables them to differentiate their products from the competitors and give a foundation to the purchase decision other than pricing to the consumers (Aaker, 1991). Roles played by brands for manufacturer further include a means for identification so as to enable easy handling or tracing of the product; as a means of legal protection against unique features; signal of quality for satisfied consumers; a means of endowing products with unique associations; act as a harbinger of competitor's advantage and also is a big source of financial returns (Keller et al., 2011).

## **2.2 Customer Satisfaction**

American Marketing Association (2015) (as cited in Rezaei et al., 2016) defines satisfaction/dissatisfaction as “a reaction that is either positive or negative reaction in relation to a decision of purchase or a decision regarding a product after purchasing it. Further, it can be the limit to the fulfillment of the expectations of a consumer or even being exceeded by a product”. Satisfaction is a barometer to reflect the performance that is perceived from a product according to a customer's judgment of it against the expectation towards that product. If the performance is less than expected then, the customer is dissatisfied; if there is a match with the expected performance the customer is said to be satisfied but in case the performance is much

more than expectation then the customer is said to be delighted (Kotler et al., 2009). According to Oliver (2006), as cited in (Kotler et al., 2009), satisfaction has been defined as something by which a person either feels delighted or disappointed. A comparison is made between the performance that was expected and the actual performance that is finally received. It is around this simple logic that the whole game of customer satisfaction is played and marketers' ultimate aim is to have satisfied customers as, it is the key to retaining customers and not losing them to the competitors. So, customer satisfaction holds the key to the success of an organization.

### **2.3 Repurchase Intention**

Repurchase intention is an individual's act of repeat purchase of a pre-defined product or service from the same firm after taking into account his/her current situation and related circumstances (Hellier et al. 2003). According to Peyrot & Doren (2005), repurchase is the actual behaviour of a consumer that ultimately results in the purchase of the same product or service again. Hume et al. (2007) as cited in (Ibzan et al., 2016) distinguish between repurchase and the intention to purchase again as repurchase being actually an action that does take place but repurchase intention is the decision of a consumer to again engage for any other future activity with the same supplier or retailer. Rezaei et. al. (2014) as cited in (Rezaei et al., 2016) define Repurchase Intention as the probability that a present customer will go ahead and keep purchasing the same product from the same seller that is selling products online. Also, it can be said that when services and products are bought again from the same firm then that can be labelled as an intention to purchase again.

### **2.4 Young Adults**

As marketing becomes more and more pointed so does define the target market. Gone are the days when a family as a unit represented all the target segments irrespective of the demographic differences of its various members. This is not so with various segmentation coming to for based on age starting with the baby market, kids, teens, young adults, adults, old, and so on. The United States Census Bureau (2015) (as cited in Bitner & Albinsson, 2016) defines young adults as people belonging to 18-24 years who are part of the

millennial generation. Generally, the age of adults identified as young is taken as 18-24 years (Ling and Stanton, 2002; Sepe and Stanton, 2002 as cited in Akturan et al., 2011). Keeping in line with the accepted norms, the young adults have been defined as respondents belonging to 18-24 age group which means who have completed 18 years and are 24 years or more but less than 25 years.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Sample**

The present study was done on a total of 140 young adults' respondents from India who owned a mobile phone and were regular users of the same. The demographic variables of the sample are presented in Table-1. The sample consisted of more Females with 53.6 percent and males with 46.4 percent while 60 percent were not working as this age group consists mainly of full-time students, however, 40 percent of the sample respondents were working professionally. The Majority of the respondents were highly educated with 45 percent being bachelors and approximately 34 percent having or studying for a Postgraduate degree while only 21 percent were high school pass-outs. The respondents came from a wide spectrum as far as the monthly family income was concerned as they were equally spread with 50 percent belonging to households with an income of below Rs. 50,000 per month to almost 50 percent belonging to households having a monthly income of more than Rs. 50,000.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Demographic Variable</b>	<b>Variable Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
1.	<b>Gender</b>	Male	65	46.4
		Female	75	53.6
		<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>
2.	<b>Highest Educational Qualification</b>	High School or Equivalent	30	21.4
		Bachelor's Degree / Graduation	63	45.0
		Master's Degree / Post Graduation	47	33.6
		<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>

3.	<b>Profession</b>	Working	56	40.0
		Non-working	84	60.0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>
4.	<b>Monthly Family Income</b>	Less than Rs. 25,000	44	31.4
		Rs 25,001 - Rs 50,000	29	20.7
		Rs 50,001 - Rs 1,00,000	27	19.4
		Rs 1,00,001 - Rs 2,00,000	16	11.4
		More than Rs - 2,00,000	24	17.1
		<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Researcher's compilation of the research findings*

### 3.2 Research Instrument

The data was collected using a structured questionnaire that consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of questions that ranged from dichotomous to nominal scale and seven-point interval scaled satisfaction scale, while the second part dealt with questions relating to the demographic details of the respondents.

## 4. Analysis and Interpretation

### 4.1 Most used Mobile Phone Brand

The study showed that MI Xiaomi was the most used brand among young adults with almost 33 percent (46) of them using it, followed by Samsung with 16.4 percent (23) of the respondents using the same. Apple phones being premium category phones were being used by 11.4 percent (16) of the respondents, so were the economy brands Vivo and Oppo. Among others were Honor (6), Asus (3), Nokia (2), and with one respondent each owning Karbonn, LG, Micromax, Motorola, and Techno.

**Table 2: Mobile Phone Brand used the Most**

<b>Mobile Phone Brand used the Most</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
MI Xiomi	46	32.9
Samsung	23	16.4
Apple	16	11.4
Vivo	16	11.4
Oppo	13	9.3

Mobile Phone Brand used the Most	Frequency	Percent (%)
One Plus	10	7.2
Others	16	11.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Researcher's compilation of the research findings

#### 4.2 Satisfaction with the Current Mobile Phone Brand

The study pointed out that an overwhelming 85 percent were satisfied with their mobile phones as can be seen in Table-3, below while just 15 percent of them were dissatisfied with their current brand of mobile phones raising a question mark over the concept of branding to distinguish a product among various competitors.

**Table 3: Satisfaction with the Current Mobile Phone Brand**

Satisfaction Level	Frequency	Percent
Dissatisfied	21	15
Satisfied	119	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Researcher's compilation of the research findings

#### 4.3 Relationship between the Mobile Phone Brand Used and Satisfaction with it

The satisfaction data was cross-tabulated with mobile brands used and chi-square value was calculated to find out if there exists any association between the two.

**Table 4: Cross Tabulation between Mobile Phone Brand Used and Satisfaction**

		Combined Mobile Use							Total
		Apple	MI Xiom	One Plus	Oppo	Samsung	Vivo	Others	
Dissatisfied	Count	0	8	0	0	7	2	4	21
	%	0.00%	17.40%	0.00%	0.00%	30.40%	12.50%	25.00%	15.00%
Satisfied	Count	16	38	10	13	16	14	12	119
	%	100.00%	82.60%	100.00%	100.00%	69.60%	87.50%	75.00%	85.00%
<b>Total</b>	Count	16	46	10	13	23	16	16	140
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Source: SPSS Output

The cross-tabulation has been produced in Table-4 above. It can be seen that majority of respondents are satisfied with their brands but to confirm whether the same holds true the following hypothesis of

no association between the two variables was tested using Chi-square and since some cells have less than 5 value so Fischer's exact test was also applied to test the relationship.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no association between the mobile brand used and the satisfaction with it

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is an association between the mobile brand used and the satisfaction with it

**Table 5: Chi-Square Test Statistics**

Chi-Square Test			
	Value	df	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.720a	6	0.045
Likelihood Ratio	17.533	6	0.012
Fisher's Exact Test	11.586		0.043
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.209b	1	0.073
N of Valid Cases	140		
a. 6 cells (42.9%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.50.			
b. The standardized statistic is -1.791.			

*Source: SPSS Output*

The p-value for both Chi-Square (0.045) and Fisher's Exact Test (0.043) is less than the significance level of 0.05, so the null hypothesis of no association cannot be accepted, indicating that the association is significant statistically at the 0.05 level. Thus, the brand used does affect the satisfaction levels. This can be noted from Table 4 that though all brands have high satisfaction levels but the consumers of Samsung have the lowest satisfaction level of 69.6 percent, but all the other brands have satisfaction levels above 80 percent with Apple, One Plus and Oppo having as high as 100 percent satisfaction. Since there is some association so the measures of the association strength like Phi Coefficient (.301) showing not a strong association was calculated, which is the only measure that shows the direction of association by taking values from a minimum of -1 at one end to a maximum of +1 at another end through zero for perfect negative correlation to perfect positive correlation and no correlation for zero (Malhotra & Dash, 2009). The value of Cramer's V was also found to be 0.301 signaling a not very strong association which can range from 0 to 1 for no association and perfect

correlation though it is never practically achieved (Malhotra & Dash, 2009). Both the values were found to be significant at 0.045 being less than 0.05.

#### **4.4 Relationship between Mobile Phone Brands Satisfaction and Demographic Variables**

The study next seeks to find out whether the satisfaction with the mobile phone brand being used varies with various demographic variables of gender, income levels, educational qualification, and profession, for this analysis of variance was done with each demographic variable. The hypothesis tested results using ANOVA have been tabulated below.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between satisfaction with the mobile phone brand used and the various demographic variables.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between satisfaction with the mobile phone brand used and the various demographic variables.

**Table 6: ANOVA Test Statistics and Interpretation of Satisfaction with Various Demographic Variables**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Result Interpretation</b>
<b>Gender</b>	1.377	0.243	Not Significant; H <sub>0</sub> cannot be rejected
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	0.753	0.608	Not Significant; H <sub>0</sub> cannot be rejected
<b>Profession</b>	2.503	0.062	Not Significant; H <sub>0</sub> cannot be rejected
<b>Income</b>	0.218	0.928	Not Significant; H <sub>0</sub> cannot be rejected

*Source: Researcher's compilation of the SPSS Output for ANOVA Test*

As can be seen from Table-6 above, none of the demographic variables have any impact on the satisfaction level of the respondents with their mobile phones as demographic variables of gender, education levels, and income groups do not show any significant difference. Thus, irrespective of the demographic makeup of the respondents, their satisfaction with their respective mobile devices remains the same.

#### **4.5 Re-purchase Intention**

In the next question, the respondents were asked about their repurchase intention, and the opinion were divided with just a few

more than half i.e., around 58.6 percent were planning to buy the same brand, and rest 41.4 percent would not go for the repurchase of the same brand. On being asked, if not the same brand then which one would you prefer to buy next, majority of them out of 41.1 percent preferred Apple (19 percent) followed by One Plus (13 percent) for their next purchase.

**Table 7: Repurchase Intention for the Same Brand**

<b>For the next purchase, would the same brand be purchased again</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	82	58.6
No	58	41.4
Total	140	100

*Source: Researcher’s compilation of the research findings*

#### **4.6 Relationship between Satisfaction with the Mobile Brand used and Repurchase Intention**

**Table 8: Cross Tabulation between Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention**

		COMBINED MOBILE USE							Total
		Apple	MI Xiom	One Plus	Oppo	Samsung	Vivo	Others	
Yes	Count	14	25	10	5	14	11	3	82
	%	87.50%	54.30%	100.00%	38.50%	60.90%	68.80%	18.80%	58.60%
No	Count	2	21	0	8	9	5	13	58
	%	12.50%	45.70%	0.00%	61.50%	39.10%	31.30%	81.30%	41.40%
	Count	16	46	10	13	23	16	16	140
<b>Total</b>	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Observing Table-8 above with the cross tabulated data, it can be seen that when satisfaction level is high with the mobile brands being used then too just 58.6 percent of respondents were willing to repurchase the brand. The chi-square value as well as Fischer’s exact test was calculated since the expected count of less than 5 was observed in one of the cells to test the given hypothesis whether any relationship exists between satisfaction and repurchase intention.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no association between the satisfaction level and repurchase intention

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is an association between the satisfaction level and repurchase intention

**Table 9: Chi-Square Test Statistics**

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.285a	6	0
Likelihood Ratio	31.039	6	0
Fisher's Exact Test	27.161		0
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.331b	1	0.011
N of Valid Cases	140		
a. 1 cell (16.7%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.93.			
b. The standardized statistic is -6.395.			

Source: SPSS Output

As can be seen in the table in 9 above, the p-value for both Chi-Square (0) and Fisher's Exact Test (0) is less than the significance level of 0.05, so the null hypothesis of no association cannot be accepted, indicating that there is an association between the satisfaction level and re-purchase intention for the mobile brand used, that is significant statistically at the 0.05 level. This can be also noted from Table-8 and explained therein. Since there is an association, the measures of the association strength like Phi Coefficient and Cramer's V were further calculated which have been shown in Table-10 below.

**Table 10: Measures of Strength of Correlation**

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Exact Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.433	0
	Cramer's V	0.433	0
N of Valid Cases		140	

Source: SPSS Output

Phi coefficient is used to measure the association strength in specific cases involving a 2x2 table, and Cramer's V can be used for any number of rows and columns (Malhotra & Dash, 2009). The value of Phi varies from a minimum of -1 to a maximum of +1 through 0 for perfect negative correlation to perfect positive correlation with no correlation for 0 and Cramer's V can range from 0 to 1 for no association and perfect correlation though it is never

practically achieved (Malhotra & Dash, 2009). Both the Phi coefficient and Cramer's V value are found to be 0.433, which shows that there is a moderate association between the two.

## **5. Conclusion**

From the analysis and interpretation given in the previous section, it can be concluded that MI Xiaomi was the most used brand among the young adults with almost 33 percent of them using it, followed by Samsung with 16.4 percent of the sample respondents using the same. Further, it was seen that a good 85 percent were satisfied with their mobile phones while just 15 percent of them were dissatisfied with their current brand of mobile phones raising a question mark over the concept of branding to distinguish a product among various competitors. But, on further analysis using chi-square statistic, the long-established role that a brand plays came to the fore when it was revealed that the brand used does affect the satisfaction levels. But the association was not found very strong with the measures of the association strength like Phi Coefficient and Cramer's V both having a value of 0.301. A somewhat similar outcome was chronicled by (Ilyas et al., 2020) When an indirect relationship of brand awareness on repurchase intention was measured with customer satisfaction as a mediating variable, the study did not show any significant effect. This study thus amplifies the role of customer satisfaction in the determination of customer loyalty as well as repurchase intention. None of the demographic variables have any impact on the satisfaction level of the respondents with their mobile phones as demographic variables of gender, education levels, and income groups do not show any significant difference with ANOVA. Thus, contrary to the popular belief, irrespective of the demographic design of the respondents, their satisfaction with their respective mobile devices remains the same. Regarding the repurchase intention, the opinion was divided among the young adults with around 58.6 percent were planning to buy the same brand and the rest 41.4 percent going against it. The outcome showed that there is an association between the satisfaction level and re-purchase intention for the mobile brand used ( $\Phi=0.433$ , Cramer's  $V=0.433$ ,  $P<0.05$ ), which support the previous study in which Huang et al. (2014) concluded that customer satisfaction ( $\beta=0.733$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) has a significant positive impact on repurchase intention.

## **6. Limitations of the Present Study and Directions for Future Research**

This study was conducted on the sample size of one hundred forty respondents and limited to young adults, moreover, the sample design used was also convenience sampling. The time for the study was also less so the study is not very in-depth thus for future studies, this can be built further to cover more information with a larger sample size across more age groups with different product category especially services. For future research multi-item scales previously developed should be adapted for the Indian population and used for the study by adding new dimensions to the existing ones.

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## **Higher Education In and After COVID-19: Response for Future**

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### **Abstract**

All most within few weeks' time, the pandemic has forced more than \$600 billion higher education industry worldwide to either closed their gates to students or shift to online mode.

In the first place the paper highlights the current landscape of higher education in India. The paper further highlights the impact of pandemic on higher education institutes especially those which are self-financed or are privately owned. Some impact of pandemic was seen in short term only but as the pandemic keeps hitting back, they need to be reviewed in medium and short term. The paper envisions journey of higher education industry in 2030 and look for various models, short term and long term interventions which can be adopted by higher education institutions to overcome the challenges faced by them. This paper tries to look into future by focussing on 'digital transformation' rather than just 'digital learning'. The paper reviews the relevant literature from various sources to make some arguments in the paper.

### **Keywords**

Higher education India, Online education, Covid-19, Pandemic, and Future response.

### **1. Introduction**

Growing capitalism has created a new world economic order where knowledge is considered to be an important and predominant factor of production (Bhoite, 2009). In this new world order, the major drivers of affluence, status and power for individuals are their acquired knowledge and skills. Hence for both developed and developing countries, they have become the great determinant of economic prosperity and development. Hence strategic importance of higher education has increased manifolds playing a larger role in production and dissemination of knowledge. With

51,649 institutions, the higher education system of India is considered to be one of the largest in the world (Ravi, Gupta & Nagaraj, 2019). Due to the association of social, cultural, economic and political externalities with higher education, it is considered to be a public good or at least a quasi-public good (Agarwal, 2006). It is considered to be Merit-2 good (education other than elementary education) and hence it is the responsibility of the state to do investments for it. It is considered to be an important constituent of human capital because of increasing returns to total factor productivity (CABE Committee, 2005). In contrast to other market-based economies where the universalization of higher education is supported by public institutions, in a country like India it is a market-driven process which is led by public institutions further enabled by private institutions and funded by the households (Varghese, 2015). India's higher education is governed by different regulatory bodies such as Medical Council of India, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Bar Council of India and University Grant Commission (UGC) regulating universities, colleges and courses (Shah, 2015). India has a huge market of informal education which constitute of pre-primary schools, coaching classes and multi-media/technology-based courses considered as supplementary to formal education acquired at school, colleges and universities (KPMG and Google, 2017).

Starting of FY2020 came as big jolt to education Industry worldwide when an unknown coronavirus (Covid-19) spreads to different parts of the world (Cortez and Johnston, 2020). The pandemic forced education industry to take a drastic step and move either to emergency remote teaching or completely shut down (Liguori and Winkle 2020). The pandemic gave even less than weeks' time to plan any counter move. The available technologies like Zoom or Microsoft teams or Google meet app etc. came to rescue and helped in maintaining academic services at least in some part of the world. Similar to other institutions, the biggest challenge for these Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in India, especially private ones were crisis of funds due to delayed academic cycle. HEIs main revenue source is the tuition fees paid by its students. Delayed academic cycles can reduce the student enrolments which can cause fiscal pain to these institutions. Higher education industry has remained largely operational in its traditional format of brick and mortar and its first love was always being face to face learning. Due to current situation, this traditional model is shattered and broken. Teaching

fraternity around the world is working day and night to transfer their learning materials for delivering online classes. But perhaps the time has come to take a pause and think about the difference between ‘digitalisation’ and ‘digital transformation’ of learning. Interestingly in the recent years’ a lot of talking is happening on predicting change in the landscape of education sector due to development of disruptive technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning, Big Data, Block Chain, Virtual Reality(VR) and Augmented Reality (AR). Hence, the time has come to take a long term view of higher education and its future. The higher education institutions should differentiate between short term course of action and long term strategy as even after one year, pandemic and its aftermath is far from over. This pandemic presents a unique opportunity to higher education institutes to adopt a long term strategy to speed and scale to transform the sector beyond traditional outcomes and demographics. Now higher education institutions should not just see it as a question of business continuity only and must differentiate between remote delivery (or referred by some experts in various webinars conducted during this tenure as ‘emergency remote teaching’) from ‘effective learning’ irrespective of its mode whether it is online or offline.

## **2. Indian Higher Education: Good, Bad, and Ugly**

Varghese (2014) in their study have categorized growth of Indian higher education system in the period of post-independence in three stages. The stage one, is characterized as the stage of high growth but limited access period (1950-70) followed by stage two between 1970-90 as the stage of decreasing growth in enrolment and stage three as the revival and massive expansion of enrolment (Varghese 2015) in higher education in India (for the period of 1990 and after).

Total enrolment in higher education {as per All India survey on higher education for the year 2018-19 conducted by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)}, has been estimated to be 37.4 million with 19.2 million males and 18.2 million females in India (Singh et. al. 2021). The gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education in India is 26.3 percent which was calculated for the age group of 18-23 years.

**Table 1: Higher Education: Institutions and Enrolment in India**

Year	Central Universities	State Universities	Deemed to be universities	Institutes of National Importance	Private Universities	Total	Colleges	Enrolment (in millions)	GER %
1950-51	3	24	-	-	-	27	578	0.2	-
1960-61	4	41	2	2	-	49	1819	0.6	1.5
1970-71	5	79	9	9	-	102	3277	2	4.2
1980-81	7	105	11	9	-	132	4577	2.8	4.7
1990-91	10	137	29	9	-	185	6627	4.4	5.9
2001-02	17*	176	47	11	-	256	12806	8.8	8.1
2011-12	42	299	40	59	178	621**	34908	28.5	19.4
2015-16	41	339	122	74	183	774	39071***	34.6	24.5
2018-19	44	378	124	122	289	962	38179***	37.4	26.3

\* Includes IGNOU & Central Agricultural University, Imphal

\*\* Other institutes

\*\*\* Excluding standalone institutions

**Source:** (i) Varghese 2015, (ii) *University Development in India: Basic Fact and Figures-1995-96 to 2000-01* (U.G.C. Information and Statistics Bureau), New Delhi, December 2002. (iii) *All India Survey on Higher Education (aishe 2010-11), 2015-16 & 2018-19*

In a study by Jiang & Lui (2019) claimed that mainland in China experienced its initial wave of increase in 1993 where gross enrolment in higher education doubled up between 1992 to 1998. In the starting of 1999 increase in number of colleges started, which resulted in an expansion from less than 6 percent in 1998 to over 50 percent in 2017. So, on one hand, China succeeded in increasing post graduate enrolment, India, on the other hand, continued to record higher level of undergraduate enrolment (Yeravdekar and Tiwari 2014). As per All India Survey on Higher Education for the year 2018-19, 79.8 percent of the Indian students are enrolled in Undergraduate level programme (Sengupta, 2019). Over the years' enrolment has increased at all the levels. During the last 5 years, Compound Annual growth rate (CAGR) was calculated at 1.8 percent.

**Table 2: Level wise Student Enrolment in India**

Year	Ph.D.	M.Phil.	Post Graduate	Under Graduate	PG Diploma	Diploma	Certificate	Integrated	Grand Total
2014-15	117301	33371	3853438	27172346	215372	2507694	170245	141870	34211637
2015-16	126451	42523	3917156	27420450	229559	2549160	144060	155422	34584781
2016-17	141037	43267	4007570	28348197	213051	2612209	166617	173957	35705905
2017-18	161412	34109	4114310	29016350	235263	2707934	177223	195777	36642378
2018-19	169170	30692	4042522	29829075	224711	26993395	162697	241126	37399388
CAGR	7.6	-1.71	1.0	1.9	0.9	1.5	-0.9	11.2	1.8

**Source:** All India survey on higher education (aishe) for 2018-19 conducted by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)

It is evident from Table-2 and Table-3 that gross enrolment in higher education is showing an increasing trend. But when it is compared to countries like Pakistan (9 percent), Afghanistan (9.6 percent), Bangladesh (20.5 percent), clearly India is on a higher side whereas in comparison to China (50 percent), Korea (94.3), Germany (70 percent) and USA (88 percent) it is only in initial stages of massification of higher education (Varghese, 2015). When GER is below 15 percent it is considered to be a system which is only accessible to rich or privileged. If the rate is between 15 percent to 50 percent higher education becomes accessible to people with some formal qualifications. The higher education system is universal when GER reaches above 50 percent (Ravi, Gupta and Nagaraj, 2019).

**Table 3: International Comparison on Gross Enrolment Ratio, Tertiary (Both Sexes %)**

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Country</b>				
Afghanistan	8.23068	-.	-.	-.
Australia	..	118.61086	120.96571	113.14216
Bangladesh	13.86508	..	17.87436	18.15146
Brazil	49.91353 <sup>*(+)</sup>	51.05413 <sup>(+)</sup>	50.48851 <sup>(+)</sup>	51.3436
China	42.43073	46.04043	48.01902	49.07326
France	61.51048 <sup>(+)</sup>	62.78593 <sup>(+)</sup>	64.72768 <sup>(+)</sup>	65.629
Germany	65.50391	67.74687	69.58059	70.24665
India	25.43213	26.76899	26.82922	27.44213

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Country</b>				
Kazakhstan	48.80432	46.37351	46.61612	50.14618
New Zealand	77.9813	80.56338	81.77039	82.03322
Pakistan	9.65985	9.2259	9.03274	9.34892
Republic of Korea	94.85205	94.33984	94.03362	94.34969
Russian Federation	78.4631	79.93813	80.63262	81.90931
Singapore	..	.. <sup>(+)</sup>	83.94098 <sup>(+)</sup>	84.79291
South Africa	19.80924	..	20.91845	22.36603
Tajikistan	24.70546	26.58862	29.16614	31.25656
Thailand	50.18006	..	49.28681	..
United States of America	88.62687 <sup>(+)</sup>	88.88941 <sup>(+)</sup>	88.83505 <sup>(+)</sup>	88.16739

\*+:National Estimate

- Not Updated

*Source: Data extracted on 29 Jun 2020 05:45 UTC (GMT) from UIS .State*

Referring to Table-3, the huge gap became quite evident while looking at gross enrolment of students in higher education in comparison to other countries. The GER in India is around 28 percent whereas it is reported as 88 percent in USA and 50 percent in China. So if this gap has to be bridged, India needs to establish huge number of brick & mortar educational institutions which seems to be unlikely looking at the public expenditure done by Government of India (GOI) in education, especially HEIs. So importance of number of higher education institutes providing quality education at a lower cost or institutions which are funded by state or centre is very high for a country like India to reach the stage of mass universalization.

### **3. Challenges Posed by COVID-19**

In India, three types of responses were found from different institutions based on the category they belonged to. The first kind of response was from advanced Institutions with more resources and technological know-how and infrastructure like IIT Mumbai, IIM-B, IIM-A. Indian Institute of Technology Bombay has announced to conduct online classes for next

trimester (August, 2020 onwards) avoiding face to face classes due to COVID-19 pandemic. The second category of institutions is digital newcomers or evolving adopters of digital transformation. The third category of institutions are who lack capabilities, resources and infrastructure can also be called foot draggers. The higher education institutions can belong to different categories but their leaders need to figure out what action they need to take their institutions forward in this digital transformation journey. Initially the crisis was proving to be a crowning ceremony for online education as everybody believed that this crisis will persist in short term only. But worldwide pandemic has proved each one wrong and have a backlash to online education as students in lot of circumstances found it ineffective. The universities also face hardship in tracking progress and actual learning of students.

Many higher education institutes operate like small towns where famous campuses bring business as admission aspirants and their relatives stay in nearby hotels, eat at local restaurants, students organize events, get-together, theme parties, conferences, sports events. They act like life line to the smaller towns. These activities add to the experience of college life and hence adds to revenue of the colleges also. Education is always considered to be a labour oriented and intensive industry and hence normally its rise in cost is at a faster pace than inflation in the country (Baum, Kurose and McPherson 2013). The forced shift to online education can force HEIs to adopt some cost saving innovations. Deming et al. (2015) found in their study that institutions with more online students' intake charge lower fee though impact on quality of education remained unassessed. So if this is the general perception of students, then question arises that whether for online and face to face courses same fee should be or should not be charged from students.

Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Managing Continuity through restructuring and remote delivery</li><li>• Managing lack of trust and credibility amongst current students (students of academic year 2019-20)</li><li>• Planning for Full one year (though if crisis gets over, resuming face to face learning)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Managing delayed Academic cycle.</li><li>• Building of trust and credibility in students of academic year 2020-21</li><li>• Facing resource constraints due to reduced enrolments</li><li>• Hiring of Foreign faculty will become cheaper due to integration</li><li>• Institutes of National Importance can increase their foreign intake if they use online presence</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visioning exercise for 2030</li><li>• Focus on learner Centric Approach while using digital learning</li><li>• Focussing on Digital Transformation for enhanced learning experience</li><li>• Identifying changes in learning needs</li><li>• Build on small , low cost experiments done during and after COVID -19 crisis</li><li>• Offering Competency based Courses</li><li>• Focussing of retraining of labour forces due to change in job scenarios</li><li>• Building on Artificial Intelligence resistant capabilities for survival</li></ul>

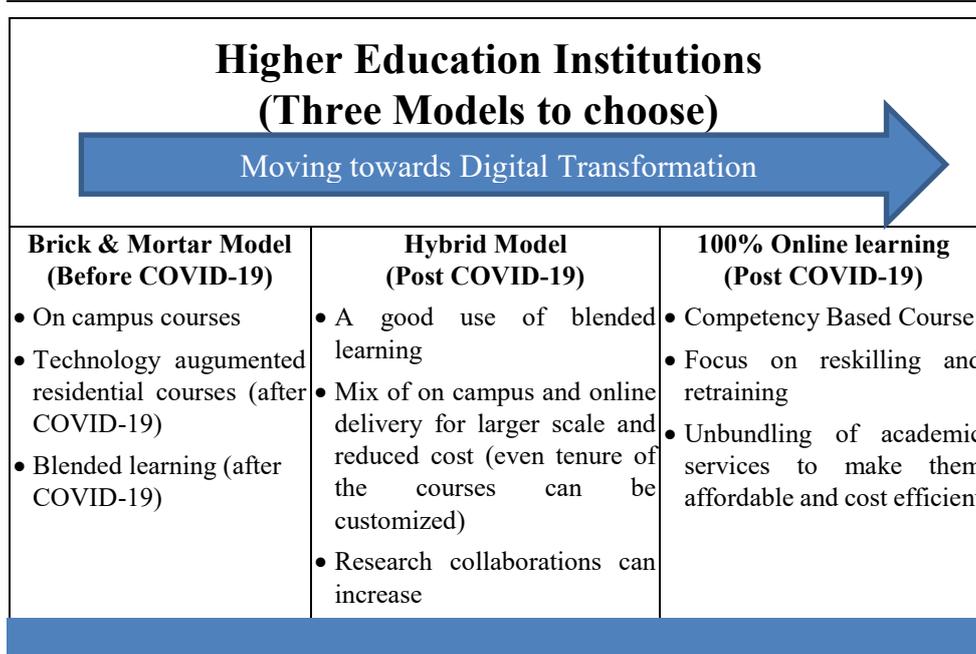
**Figure 1: Challenges and Response for Business Education Institutions during Pre and Post Covid-19 World**

*Source: (i) Deloitte (2020) (ii) Author's Compilation (iii) Harvard Business Publishing Webinar on "COVID-19's Impact on the Future of Higher Education: What University Leaders Should Be Thinking About Now" by P.S. Vijay Govindarajan*

#### 4. Pathways for Digital Transformation

The pandemic has impacted the employment opportunities in many industries like tour and travel, automobile and electronics industry etc. The need of the hour is reskilling labour and provide employment opportunities to them. But only operating in brick and mortar model makes it heavy in terms of public expenditure required on the part of central and state governments. Even if new colleges, universities, polytechnic and training institutes are opened sufficient qualified staff and arranging trained faculty will be an issue.

Now leaders of higher education institutes need to think and plan strategically not only for 2020-21 or next academic year but for the next 5 to 10 years. So this understanding is everywhere that face to face learning or more interactive styles are better for engaging students. Nowadays the question arises that can all the learning needs of the students be only met by face to face learning or rebalancing of the mix between 100 percent online and face to face learning? Consequently, there must be certain courses (which focusses only on Knowledge sharing) which could be easily substituted by online mode and some courses which could be enhanced in terms of the learning experience by the use of technology.



Source: Author's Compilation

**Figure 2: Different aspects of Three Models for Higher Education Institutions**

The digital transformation in the context of higher education (Adedoyin and Soykan, 2020) means transforming an organization by use of technology and data for better fulfilment of its student's needs. Sandkuhl and Lehmann (2017) have described three different possible ways of achieving digital transformation in higher education (Marks et al. 2021). The first way is to redefine and focus on the change of services before addressing major improvements in operations by creating new educational products and transforming existing ones into digital products. The second means is to emphasise on the change in operational processes first aiming at improving digital internal processes like admission, registration of programmes, the examination of courses and other support services like teacher allocation, scheduling etc. The emphasis will be on having an integrated campus management functionality which is accessible to students from outside the physical campuses. The third method is service-operation combination where the integration of both will happen. This is possible by making the content

of the education digital and providing means for better student-teacher interaction and collaboration (Sandkuhl and Lehmann, 2017). So courses offered traditionally for face to face learning will be decomposed into a smaller offering e.g. a three or four-year programme include certification courses, each course instead of having 5 modules can be decomposed into smaller modules along with flipped videos, pre-reads, group discussions replaced by Padlet and reflection notes are replaced by KWL charts. Many such pilot projects taken during or Post COVID-19 can define the most suitable path for the digital transformation of any higher education institution.

Worthington and Higgs, (2011) in their study have rightly pointed out that profit maximization assumption does not suit to the universities and institutions as they are operating in quasi-markets (government funds them but is not the provider of educational services, and it retains different degrees of control and regulates on the number and size of institutions as well as the inputs and outputs employed). Still cost minimisation assumption will be applicable to all the institutions those who desire efficient and effective utilization of resources and output (Worthington and Higgs, 2011). So the long-run objective for any educational institutes can be to produce and deliver academic services (desired output) at the lowest possible cost. This means that an institution or university can unbundle its academic services. For example, any premium higher institution charges its students based on services it provides for a fully residential programme. This could involve playground and other recreational facilities, information and communication technologies (ICT), bigger auditoriums and cafeteria along with learning experience provided by its reputed faculty and trainers. A student from a modest income group might only be interested in paying for academic services rather than full recreational facilities. By offering fully online courses, short term competency-based courses and courses offered with hybrid model (mix of blended and face to face learning). The regulators of higher education institutes can take the note of the same and achieve the goal of mass universalization of higher education in India. HEIs can bag an opportunity for admitting higher number of students with same physical infrastructure and still offer its

courses at lower cost. This can be interpreted as adjusting scale of operations in such a way by dividing and modifying its production process in terms of capital-labour mix in the long run and dividing it into smaller units for achieving economies of scale. The commitment of resources is done in the long run but once commitment is done its implementation is done in the short run. A comparison drawn with China on how it has achieved higher GER in a shorter span of time, it was found that larger number of students were studying in a smaller number of Universities whereas in India low number of students were admitted for developing high quality institutions. This has given rise to a broken system and disjointed system (Ravi, Gupta and Nagaraj, 2019; Council B, 2013). So if reputed public universities, private institutions/universities gradually adopt hybrid or hundred percent online courses or even offer complete programmes, they can deliver superior quality courses but with the existing physical infrastructure.

## **5. Conclusion**

The pandemic Covid-19 has presented a perfect opportunity for transforming the higher education system especially in Indian context. The Institutes or universities should think for proposing more flexible learning possibilities, exploring blended or hybrid learning ways and for rebalancing the mix of synchronous learning with asynchronous. The regulators and government should also pause and rethink before fixing their budgetary deficits due to pandemic. This pandemic should initiate a broad based dialogue with government at all levels, employers, faculty, trainers, researchers, students, institutions and their representatives' associations about higher education and its realignment (creative alignment) to changing times. The institutions which will build digital capabilities will show resilience for facing any kind of crisis in future. The digital transformation will provide opportunities for redesigning service delivery and transforming learning experience. This learning experience will have the capability to surpass age, demographics, economic status, employment type by offering affordable exciting courses with content through leveraging digital technologies to non traditional students.

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## **The Impact of Covid-19 on Weddings: An Indian Context**

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### **Abstract**

India is a diverse country and its diversity is reflected in its people, culture, and religion. A wedding is a significant event in an individual's life because it is not only a celebration of the union of two persons but also of two families, maybe cultures and religions too. During the past decade, the Indian wedding industry has flourished immensely and contributed a lot to the overall economy. But during the Covid-19 outbreak, it has gone through a significant change. The pandemic has resulted in the slowdown and stagnation of the overall wedding industry. The government-imposed lockdown has resulted in the cancellation of many pre-planned weddings. Those who conducted the weddings had to cut short their guest lists and undertake the ceremonies and rituals with utmost safety and security measures. The government has kept on issuing Covid-19 SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) from time to time for the conduct of weddings. This paper is an attempt to analyze and examine the impact of Covid-19 on the wedding industry in India. The study has been undertaken by using secondary data for the collection of information.

### **Keywords**

Indian wedding industry, Weddings, Covid-19, Pandemic, and Covid-19 SOPs.

### **1. Introduction**

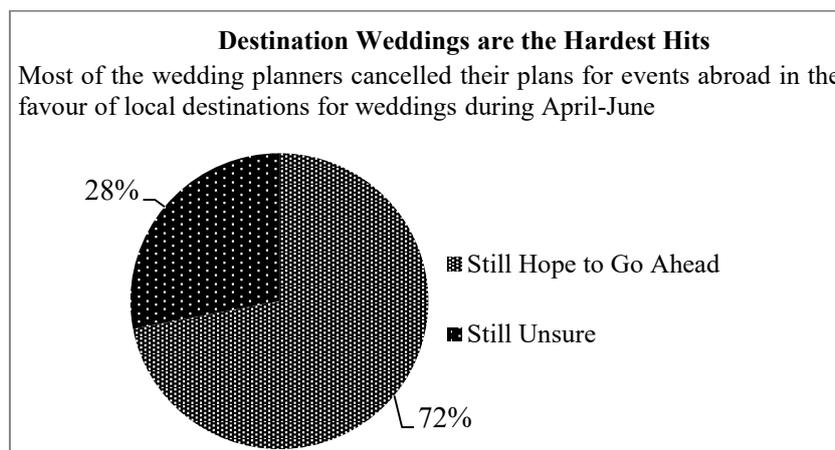
Weddings in India has historically been an opportunity to flaunt one's riches and social standing. Everything about a wedding must be fine, from the venue to the food, decor, clothing, and guest entertainment. Such big fat weddings are the product of careful planning and management. The growing popularity of event organizers, wedding planners, videographers other wedding professionals have made it all

easy. All these professional services are proved to be an aid for the effective planning and execution of a wedding function.

Depending upon the rituals and ceremonies, an Indian wedding lasts up to 5-6 days. From the beginning till the end of the planning process, an Indian wedding is meticulously planned in terms of demands, current trends, budget, and all of the specifications of both families. An Indian wedding, in my opinion, includes joy and enthusiasm throughout, and the individual's happiness knows no bounds. There is an atmosphere in which presents are exchanged, and elaborate preparations are made with an emphasis on food, fun, decorations, clothing, floral arrangements and so on.

Traditionally, wedding planning does not necessitate a comprehensive administrative experience. With the recent growth of large-scale wedding celebrations, modern weddings, with their many complexities, often necessitate professionals with technical expertise and adequate managerial abilities. Wedding planners, a group of experts who can think beyond basic wedding arrangements such as theme weddings, designing imaginative and innovative invitations, entertaining guests, photography, sourcing the best of regional and foreign cuisines, and so on, could fill the void today. In recent years, the growth and development of the Indian wedding industry have made a great contribution to the overall Indian economy.

The world economy has been devastated by the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in one of the worst global recessions in history. The Indian wedding industry has observed a significant drift due to the widespread disease and the resulting lockdown. Some weddings were cancelled, some were postponed and some were conducted with the minimum number of guests and a wide number of safety and security measures.



Source: The Economic Times

### Figure 1: The Impact of Covid-19 on Destination Weddings in India

The outbreak of Covid-19 has resulted in a downfall of the overall economy. This paper is an attempt to study the effects and the impact of Covid-19, the global pandemic, on the Indian wedding industry. The study is based on the use of secondary data for the collection of information.

## 2. Review of Literature

The Indian wedding industry is a great contributor to the nation's economy. The range of products and services, as well as the number of personnel involved in putting together the grandest of festivities, is only to be expected by giving the size and scope of the average gathering. Weddings are an irreplaceable part of our culture and many families are willing to do anything to ensure that every detail of the wedding is perfect. Weddings are usually arranged to correspond with auspicious dates on the calendar and are prepared in advance. Parents start saving for their children's wedding as early as they are born and allocate a significant portion of their life savings to the event. Some of the estimates show that up to one-fifth of an individual's total lifetime wealth is invested into this occasion. (Vohra, 2020)

The wedding market of India is estimated to be at \$50 Billion, the world's second-largest, after the \$70 billion US market, and is growing at an approximate rate of 20 percent a year. According to other over-the-top estimates, though the wedding market of India was worth 1,00,000 Crores in 2015, it is growing at a rate of 25-30 percent a year. Indian

weddings have a budget range from 5 Lakhs to 5 Crores. An average Indian spends an estimated one-fifth of his/her wealth saved in a lifetime on weddings **(Pandit, 2018)**.

The big fat Indian wedding may have derived its title from the extensive planning that it involves. While everyone wants a wedding to be easy, but it is a great investment of not only time but money too. To get rid of the tension of planning a suitable venue, plan the menu, chalk in various traditional ceremonies, guests' stay, the priest, music and decorations, the rise of Wedding Planners made it all easy (at a cost, of course). Destination weddings are on the rise in India, thanks to them, and more and more Indian couples and families are opting for them. **(Tiwari, 2018)**

The current SARSCoV2 (coronavirus disease 2019; previously 2019nCoV) outbreak, which began in Hubei Province of the People's Republic of China, has spread to a number of other countries. The WHO Emergency Committee declared a global health emergency on January 30, 2020, citing rising case reporting rates in Chinese and foreign locations. The case detection rate fluctuates everyday and it can be monitored in near real-time on Johns Hopkins University's website and other forums. China continues to bear a substantial burden of mortality as of the middle of February 2020, while the incidence in other Asian nations, Europe, and North America have remained low thus far. **(Meyer, 2020)**

SARS-CoV-2 is the official name for the current coronavirus, which stands for extreme acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2. This virus will cause coronavirus disease 19, or COVID-19 if it is infected. SARS-CoV-2 is similar to SARS-CoV, a coronavirus that caused a different type of coronavirus disease in 2002 and 2003. According to the facts, SARS-CoV-2 is more easily transmitted and can cause life-threatening illnesses in some people. It, like other coronaviruses, can live long enough in the air and on surfaces to infect anyone. If you come into contact with SARS-CoV-2, you could become infected. However, this isn't considered to be the virus's primary mode of transmission. SARS-CoV-2, on the other side, multiplies quicker in the body even though there are no signs. Furthermore, you will spread the virus even though you never show any signs. Some people only have mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms while others have more severe symptoms. **(Iftekhhar, 2020)**

The respiratory ailment known as coronavirus disease (Covid-19) was recognized in December 2019. It is known to be caused by a virus that is similar to a virus that causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). As in two earlier cases of the occurrence of the coronavirus disease in the last 18 years — SARS (2002 and 2003) and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) (2012 to the present) — the Covid-19 outbreak has posed critical challenges for the public health, research, and medical communities. **(Anthony S. Fauci, 2020)**

After the COVID-19 spread, the people's mindset has changed too as everyone is treating each other as a source of virus because of their own safety. This mindset is also followed in weddings. Recently, there is frequent news of virus spread in wedding functions. In one of the wedding, the groom died just after two days of the wedding by COVID-19 and 95 guests also got COVID-19 positive, further creating phobia for people that the weddings are spreading coronavirus and can be deadly to attend. **(Ravi Kumar Arya, 2021)**

### **3. The Indian Wedding Industry**

Weddings are one of the most significant occasions in most people's lives, and their friends and families will not want to miss out on making it unique, stunning, and perfect. The preparation and performance of such weddings would require a lot of time, money, and effort. Weddings in the modern period fit well with the subjective understanding of today's culture. The people of India are dedicated to their culture and religion for living every aspect of their lives.

Traditionally, the entire family would participate and engage in wedding planning and management, while today most couples and families will employ a professional or skilled wedding planner. The Indian wedding industry has emerged as the fastest-growing sector contributing significantly to the economic growth and development of the country. In the past decade, the industry underwent a dramatic change. A recent report of KPMG estimated that India's wedding market was at \$50 Billion, with a rapid annual growth rate. Currently, India is having 28 states and 8 union territories. Each state or union territory in India has its own demography, language, history, culture, dress, festivals, and so on. The country's diverse religions and cultures have always shaped the way of how people live

Following the rituals and traditions, religion has had a heavy impact on the choice of marital partner. However, the increasing middle class, the impact of urbanization, and the country's demographic changes are reforming social inclusivity and acceptance beyond caste, culture, and religious and conventional boundaries. Due to the evolving environment, traditional Indian marriages are likely to undergo a transition as the urban, middle-class marriage market continues to rise to the occasion and welcome this change with open arms. People in cities are becoming less dependent on their cast identities because of increased urbanization, and are, therefore, less regulated or affected by associated customs and traditions. Also, such audiences are more exposed to modern living standards, technology, social media, and a larger marriage market through online matrimonials.

The Indian wedding industry comprises a number of sub-industries that are responsible for the continuous up-gradation and development of the overall economy. These sub-industries include the following:-

- 3.1 Online Matrimonial Sites:** There are various online matrimonial sites that aid to the finding of partners online. They are also known as marriage websites. Users can register on matrimonial websites and make their personal profile on a database that is maintained by the respective website. Users searching for suitors conduct customized searches in the database, which usually includes nationality, age, gender, photo availability, caste, religion, and geographic location.
- 3.2 Event Management Industry:** The word "event management" refers to the use of business management and organizational expertise to plan and organize large-scale activities such as festivals, gatherings, wedding functions, formal parties, or concerts. In relation to the wedding, this industry includes the various professional services which are required to organize a wedding; like food, venue, photography, hospitality, and decor. The event management industry among the fastest-growing industries is one and it contributes significantly to the economic growth and development of the country.
- 3.3 Textiles and Apparel Industry:** This industry is concerned with the manufacture of clothing. India's textile and apparel industry is strong across the value chain, from fibre to yarn to cloth to apparel.

Spinning, weaving, drying and apparel manufacturing are all part of the well-organized textile industry, which is defined by the use of capital-intensive technology for the production and manufacturing of textile goods. It has a wide variety of segments, ranging from traditional handloom products, handicrafts, wool, and silk products, to the integrated textile industry.

**3.4 Jewellery Industry:** The jewellery industry of India is the most promising industry in the country. Indian women and Indian jewellery are the two terms that are related to each other inextricably. It comprises gold, silver, stones, gems, and so on. The design and variety of the jewellery varies in accordance with the regions and religions of our country. The jewellery industry of India contributes significantly to the GDP of the country's economy.

#### **4. Covid-19: The Global Pandemic**

Covid-19 is an infectious disease that is caused by a virus, known as the coronavirus. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak as a health emergency on 30th January 2020 and listed it as a pandemic on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020. A pandemic is a disease that affects several countries or continents at the same time. It has a larger impact and kills more people than an epidemic.

Coronaviruses are found in animals but humans are rarely infected by these animals. Coronaviruses are of different forms. Colds and other respiratory (nose, mouth, and lung) illnesses may be caused by some of them. Other coronaviruses, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), may cause more serious illnesses. Coronaviruses have got their name from their presence under the microscope, which resembles a corona or crown, with pointed structures surrounding them.

Most people who are infected with the coronavirus suffer from mild to moderate respiratory sickness and can recover with some care and treatment. Older people and those who are suffering from some medical illnesses like heart diseases, diabetes, respiratory diseases, cancer, and so on are more seriously affected by the virus. It is a communicable disease and can be spread through saliva or nasal discharge when an infected patient coughs or sneezes and it transmits to the other person through his/her hands, eyes, nose, and mouth.

Again in February, 2021 a second wave of the covid-19 came in India with a high rise in the intensity and number of cases. The second wave proved to be more dangerous as it resulted in more number of cases and deaths this time. The infection proved to be more serious and more people lost their lives. There also incurred a shortage of oxygen cylinders. The Scientists and researchers have found out that there are more waves to come in the near future. However, the Government of India has started the process of vaccination after which India will be able to reduce the spread and severity of the disease.

## **5. SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures)**

A standard operating procedure (SOP) is a collection of steps that are needed to be followed by an employee to properly function in an organization. In relation to Covid-19, the Government has listed various SOPs for the continuance of different activities undertaken in the economy. The SOPs were developed according to the number of cases and the respective states.

On November 23, 2020, the UP Government laid down various SOPs for conducting a wedding and other functions in the State in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. Outside the containment areas, these functions are permitted, but at a reduced capacity. According to the guidelines, the total number of guests attending a wedding function should be 50 percent of the wedding hall's capacity, but the number should not exceed 100. Face masks, sanitizers, and thermal scanners will be needed at the venue by the organizers. Guests will also be required to maintain social distancing. There will be no further restrictions on DJs and wedding music bands. However, in the containment zones, such functions and gatherings are not allowed.

Further on November 27, 2020, the Government stated that holding wedding ceremonies would not require written approval from local authorities. It also stated that the members of wedding bands and DJs would not be counted among the guests permitted to attend a wedding. It is not mandatory to notify the police or district administration of the location prior to carrying out marriage activities. If any police brutality is reported, however, strict measures will be taken. Officers will have to face the consequences. In addition, it clarified that the UP Government would not tolerate any kind of harassment in the name of the Covid-19 guidelines. "Instead, citizens should remain vigilant and inspire others to

obey the Covid-19 guidelines”, it said. The government also stated that strict actions will be taken and FIR will be lodged against the people who are violating the SOPs and guidelines in relation to Covid-19.

After the occurrence of the second wave, on May 18, 2021, the UP Government revised the existing guidelines due to the rise in the cases. According to the new guidelines, the total number of people who can attend the wedding and other functions shall not exceed 25, in both open and closed places. In addition to this, there has to be strict social distancing prevailing in such functions and gatherings.

## **6. The Impact of Covid-19 on Indian Weddings**

Couples who had expected to marry in 2020 were among those who were disappointed after the Covid-19 hit our lives hard. The lavish weddings have become an important part of Indian culture, and if there was anything that could put a damper on it, it was the Covid-19 pandemic. On March 24, 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation to declare Covid-19 as a national emergency that has claimed and changed the lives of many people since then. On account of the outbreak being considered a national emergency, the government imposed a nationwide lockdown. The Indian wedding industry, which was among the first ones to be affected by the virus, came to a halt overnight, with many weddings scheduled for the first half of 2020 being postponed or cancelled.

The Covid-19 pandemic has forever altered our lives. ‘Big Fat Indian Weddings’ are no longer the same. Weddings have become much more smaller and intimate as social distancing has become the ‘buzzword’. Wedding planners, caterers, decorators, musicians, artists, photographers, artisans, freelancers, dancers, and choreographers, are all affected by the global pandemic. There are clearly no tasks, and wedding planners are scrambling to stay afloat while adjusting to changing times through new technologies. The wedding professionals are combining technology to enable couples to connect with loved ones all around the world through the virtual platform, without being physically present.

According to industry estimates, India hosts 10-12 million weddings each year. Thousands of cancellations have now occurred. In November, Kanika Subbiah, proprietor of Wedding Wishlist, a wedding organizer firm, was planning approximately 30 weddings. In March, the number slid to four and in April just one. “The industry is feeling the pinch.

Weddings have just stopped. Most people have postponed their plans and the few, who are going ahead, have made it a smaller event. The industry is seeing a big blip in terms of revenue. Thankfully, the weddings are only getting postponed, not cancelled,” she said. **(Narsimhan, 2020)**

The Covid-19 pandemic is having a profound impact on businesses that rely on weddings and events. In March 2020, the Federal Government introduced strict social distancing rules that restricted wedding ceremonies to only five people; the couple, the celebrator, and two witnesses. In addition, social distancing should be followed, with a limit of one person per four square meters. According to IBIS World Senior Industry Analyst Yin Yeoh, these temporary restrictions are expected to constrain demand for industries that rely on weddings, including the Bridal Stores, Flower Retailing, Event Catering Services, Taxi, and Limousine Transport, and Professional Photography Services industries. IBISWorld estimates that downsizing, postponements and cancellations due to Covid-19 are estimated to cost wedding and events businesses over \$670 million in 2019-2020. **(Yeoh, 2020)**

**Table 1: Revenue Loss from Covid-19**

<b>Revenue Loss from Covid-19 (in \$M)</b>	
Bridal Stores Industry	108.6
Flower Retailing Industry	68.5
Event Catering Services Industry	329.7
Professional Photographic Services Industry	107.5
Taxi and Limousine Transport Industry	58
<b>Total Estimated Loss</b>	<b>672.2</b>

*Source: IBIS World*

One can say that ‘marriages are made in heaven’, but the grandeur and extravaganza of weddings are definitely made in India. While COVID-19 achieved the unexpected situation in India, with intimate and small weddings on Zoom becoming the go-to option. While many people have postponed their big large Indian wedding plans as we approach the end of the year, weddings have shrunk in size but they are back in business for the \$50 billion industry – a recovery is on the cards. **(Dash, 2020)**

## **7. The Pandemic's Effect on the Indian Weddings**

- **Pandemic wedding:** With the pandemic apparently never-ending, most people have taken to dealing with the spectre of Covid-19 around, and although prohibitions remain in place, many have worked within the rules to marry.
- **Eco-friendly:** Weddings are becoming more effective, with people opting to reduce waste and also cull large invitation lists, which is necessary now more than ever – in this age of social-isolation.
- **Hyperlocal:** Planners are turning their attention to sourcing supplies from nearby sites, such as flowers and food, in order to reduce the event's carbon footprint while also addressing Covid-19 transportation concerns.
- **Efficiency:** Brides and grooms are increasingly adopting the idea of a wedding registry, which allows them to list things they would like as presents, reducing the amount of waste created by gifts.
- **Tech-savvy:** After the pandemic, everybody was working from home, including wedding planners. With many families being able to conveniently shop and select from online or digital catalogues, professionals may use technology to work for them, including sending out digital invitations. **(The Economic Times, 2020)**

## **8. Conclusion**

Indian wedding has undergone a major change during the Covid-19 pandemic. The wedding industry has faced unfavorable horizons due to this pandemic and as a result, it has affected the overall economy. A whole lot of wedding professionals including wedding planners, artisans, musicians, decorators, caterers, videographers, choreographers, freelancers, and so on, are all affected by this global pandemic. Some weddings were cancelled, some were postponed and some were conducted with the minimum guest list. Initially, the wedding professionals had no tasks, but now they are trying to get their foot back in the industry. They are integrating technology to enable couples and families to get connected virtually throughout the wedding. The priorities of the consumers have changed all over. The couples are now getting married in accordance with the guidelines of the government. The planners are trying to organize the marriage from food to decor to everything through local sources. The couples, along with their families

are becoming tech-savvy and conducting weddings through virtual platforms. Although the Indian wedding industry has witnessed a slowdown, but there is scope for the industry now to function better and recover its position in the global economy.

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## **A Study on: How Digital Marketing has changed the Life Style of Rural People**

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### **Abstract**

India has a wide and diverse rural population, with various dialects and cultures. In addition to more conventional applications, India expects the Internet to empower poor, rural villagers to better their lives. In every way, the rural population differs from the rest of the population: quality of life, clothing, schooling, and accommodation, accessibility to facilities, transportation, occupation, and so on. Digital marketing in rural areas is a relatively unexplored field with so much untapped potential, but strategies to explore this area are still being developed. Digital marketing has emerged as a primary catalyst for connecting with audiences, engaging them, and driving sales for businesses. It is critical to comprehend how we use digital to reach out to rural audiences. With the passage of time, digital marketing practices have shifted, and new methods of marketing have emerged. Newspapers, radio, television commercials, email, and now the internet are all on the rise. It is clear that change cannot be managed, and companies must remain well ahead of the curve because this is how a company is proven to be competitive enough to reach its customers. With an increase in business opportunities in rural areas, there would be a significant increase in new job opportunities, thus increasing people's overall income levels. These scenarios, in turn, would have a positive effect on more small businesses entering rural India in a variety of ways, with digital marketing being one of the most beneficial. This study is descriptive as well as exploratory in nature.

### **Keywords**

Digital marketing, Rural population, Small businesses, Internet, and Marketplace.

## **1. Introduction**

Digital marketing is a type of electronic communication that marketers use to sell their products and services to the marketplace. The main purpose of this research paper is to explore that how digital marketing Changes the lifestyle of not even the urban but also the rural population. If we talk about lifestyle change then in this context online marketing plays a vital role and gave a boom to the marketers where they sell their products in pan India as well as out of the country. Digital marketing is also known as 'online marketing,' 'internet marketing,' or 'web marketing.' Over time, the term "digital marketing" has risen in popularity, especially in some countries. Digital marketing is an umbrella word for the marketing of goods or services using digital media, especially the Internet, through cell phones, display ads, and every other digital medium. The term digital marketing has thrived and stands for brisk growth in rural India, with technological advancements having a significant impact on rural marketing by shifting to digital marketing. Villages are providing significant sales coverage to e-commerce giants such as Myntra, Jabong, Nykaa, Amazon, Limeroad, FlipKart, and others. The villager's profit from the online distribution system. And, with the spread of the Internet and smartphones, the majority of the villagers order their products using mobile apps and computers. According to these businesses, the most common goods are electronic items, utensils, grinders, baby products, mixers, and so on. The interesting thing about orders from distant areas is that there is a lower risk of products being returned because they order only the most important goods. This saves the business money on logistics because they have to spend less in returning the delivered goods. Certain businesses, such as Ipay, Storeking, eDabba, and others, are entirely focused on rural areas, with creative web design and creation that takes into account user needs and Internet access limitations in rural areas. Digital marketing is already dominating the industry. While traditional marketing has not yet become obsolete, digital marketing has overwhelmed it. Digital marketing is advertisement through digital channels such as websites, social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and so on), emails, and so on. Digital marketing includes social media marketing, email marketing, affiliate marketing, on-demand video streaming, the internet, SEO, SEM, and so on.

## **2. Objectives of the Study**

- To study the impact of digital marketing on rural consumer life style.
- To the study of rural customer perception towards digital marketing/online marketing.

## **3. Review of Literature**

**P. Sathya (2015)** said in his research paper that many businesses already consider digital marketing to be an essential component of their overall strategy. At the moment, small business owners have an incredibly low-cost and efficient way to sell their goods or services in society by using digital marketing. **Dr. M. Renuka Devi, S. Swathi (2019)** in their research paper studied rural consumer behaviour in digital marketing and explore that digital marketing in rural areas is a relatively unexplored field with a lot of untapped potentials, but strategies to explore this area are still being developed. there are some advantages of digital marketing, such as the fact that it is time-efficient, has a significant effect, and is easily accessible. The diversification of technology also increases people's visibility, and it opens up the possibility of social networking, online classes, ticket booking systems, and much more. The rural market is product-driven rather than service-driven, and having product knowledge accessible to customers ahead of time allows the company to forecast the behaviour of the actual product before releasing it, which aids in preparing for the outcomes. **Dr. B. Joy Suganya (2018)** studied about Impact of Digital Marketing on Indian Rural Marketing and said that Companies are facing enormous challenges in meeting the needs of rural people, causing rural marketing to rise faster than urban marketing. Recently, the implementation of schemes by major telecom players, such as lowering the cost of data packs, has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of internet users in rural areas.

## **4. Research Methodology**

The research is based upon primary and secondary data both. The primary data is collected through a survey with the help of structured questionnaire. And secondary data is collected through research journals, newspapers, articles, thesis, websites, etc.

### **4.1 Type of Research**

This study is descriptive cum-exploratory in nature.

#### 4.2 Sample Design

The samples are convenient sampling and collected from those customers who know about digital marketing and shop the through internet.

#### 4.3 Sample Size

The sample size of this study is 100 where there are 100 respondents and 100 sets of questionnaires. Besides, the response rate is 88 percent.

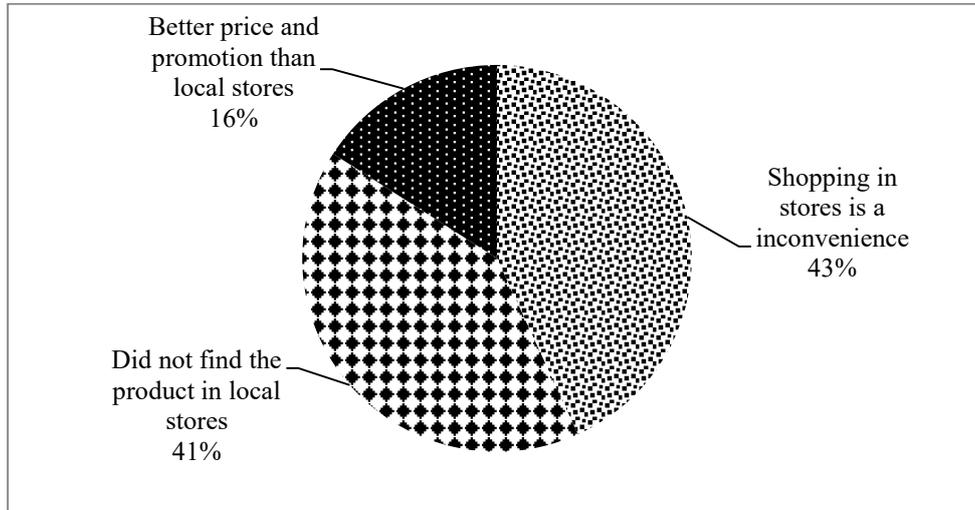
### 5. Data Interpretation

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile of Online /Buyers**

	Categories	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondent
Gender	Male	45	51%
	Female	43	49%
	Total	88	100%
Education level	Pre-graduate	7	8%
	Undergraduate	30	34%
	Post-graduate	51	58%
	Total	88	100%
Occupation	Student	40	45%
	Employee	33	38%
	Business	10	11%
	Home maker	5	6%
	Total	88	100%
Marital status	Married	28	32%
	Unmarried	60	68%
	Total	88	100%

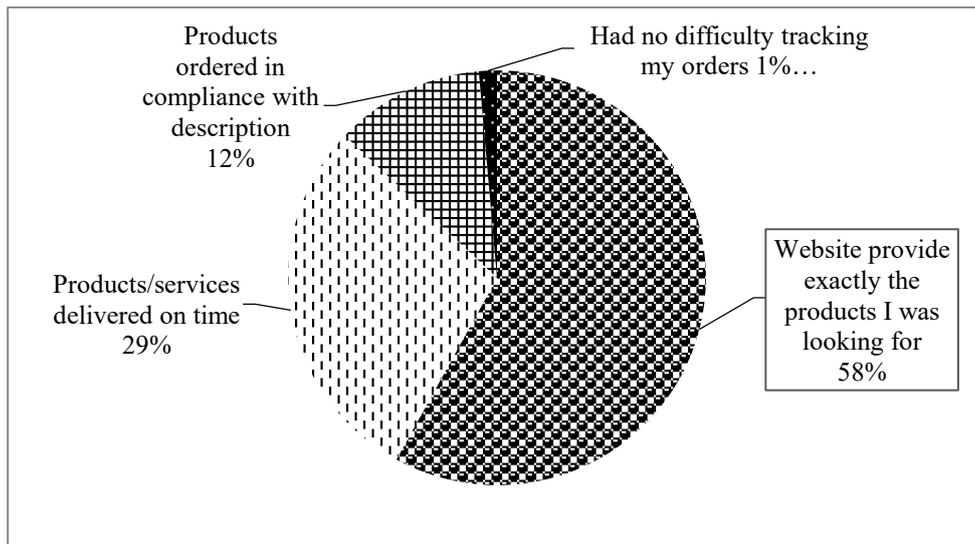
**Table 2: Way to know about Online Shopping**

Categories	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Magazines & Journals	0	0%
TV	15	17%
Friends	23	26%
Web-ads	50	57%
Total	88	100%



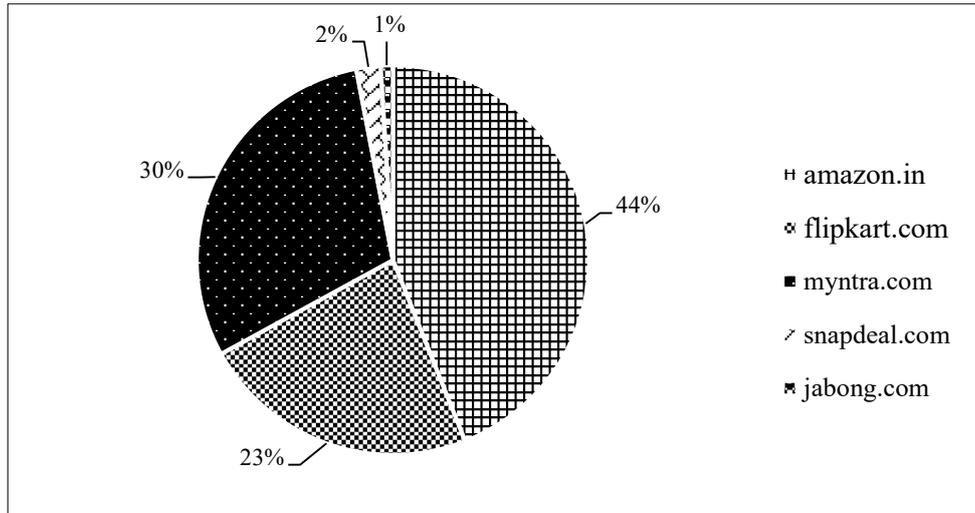
**Figure 1: Reason to Purchase Products through Online Portals**

The above figure shows that respondents have two major reasons to purchase the product online 43 percent respondents said shopping in store is an inconvenience and the second 41 percent population did not find the product in local stores.



**Figure 2: Reasons for Satisfaction**

According to this figure majority of respondents, 58 percent opt website provide exactly the products I was looking for and the second reason product/services delivered on time given by 29 percent of respondents.



**Figure 3: Most Preferred Shopping Websites**

Customer opinion on the basis of shopping experience of online products on a five-point scale with the following indicators. 1-Not at all important, 2-Slightly important, 3-Moderately important, 4-Important, 5-Extremely important.

**Table 3: Pricing Details of Products on the Customer Purchase Design**

Statement	Indicators				
	1	2	3	4	5
Pricing details to be clear and explicit on inclusion of all taxes	7	12	16	14	39
Delivery costs to be explicit in the pricing description	18	12	22	21	18
Period for which the offer or the price remains valid is clearly mentioned	29	21	10	12	26
Period for which promotions/discounts are valid is clearly mentioned	15	6	11	29	31
Choice of Modes of Payment is clearly mentioned along with product description	9	5	19	25	30

**Average mean for the given statement:**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Average Mean</b>
Pricing details to be clear and explicit on the inclusion of all taxes	3.75
Delivery costs to be explicit in the pricing description	3.204
The Period for which the offer or the price remains valid is clearly mentioned	3.170
The Period for which promotions/discounts are valid is clearly mentioned	3.76
Choice of Modes of Payment is clearly mentioned along with product description	3.704

Table-3 illustrates the mean score of various perceived factors. The respondents were subjected to questionnaires to indicate the perceived factors that affect rural customers to purchase through online marketing in five-point Likert type scale. the range is (1) Not at all important” (2) “Slightly Important” (3) “Moderately Important” (4) “Important” (5) “Extremely Important”. The study revealed purchase decision of products by the online portal is highly affected by Period for which promotions/discounts are valid is clearly mentioned by a mean response of 3.76 second highest reason which influence customers to online purchase Pricing details to be clear and explicit the on inclusion of all taxes by mean is 3.75 and the third reason is Choice of Modes of Payment is clearly mentioned along with product description by mean of 3.704.

**Table 4: Level of Satisfaction about Purchase Benefits of online Shopping**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Indicators</b>				
	1	2	3	4	5
Products quality	17	50	14	3	3
Secure payments	28	43	9	5	2
Easy replace and return	44	26	11	4	2
Timeless delivery	32	39	16	0	0

***Average mean for given statement:***

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Average mean</b>
Products quality	2.13
Secure payments	1.96
Easy replace and return	1.73
Timeless delivery	1.81

Table-4 illustrates the level of satisfaction of customers who shop online fashion products. They are satisfied with the quality of the product with mean of 2.13. And second, highest factor is payment security with a mean value of 1.96, and the third one is the timeless delivery of products.

## **6. Findings of the Research**

- In today's marketplace, digital marketing has a brighter future.
- Rural consumers are satisfied with online shopping for their needed products.
- The socio-demographic profile of rural customers who are involved in online shopping includes gender, education, occupation, marital status.
- The ratio of the male and female customers is 51:49 where the male customer is higher than female customers who shop online. Since, there is less difference between male and female customers who shop online so we can say both genders equally participate in online shopping.
- The rural online customers are satisfied with the product's quality, price of online products' that depends on the quality of products and also on online shopping sites; maintaining good commitments for the delivery of products in rural areas.

## **7. Conclusion**

Digital marketing has given a smart way to people who belong to rural areas, it provides a chance for rural people to change their lifestyle by using the internet. Nowadays smartphone has become a common thing it is accessible approximately to all people, it doesn't matter whether he/she belongs to the rural areas or urban areas. Every people use the internet and do online shopping according to their needs and they easily find products, because numbers of companies are present online by direct or indirect through own or other online websites. online

companies like Amazon, Flipkart, Jabong, Snapdeal, Myntra, Nykaa, are available and they easily delivered the products in pan India, and people are satisfied with that.

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## **A Study on Economic Condition of Maid Servants with Special Reference to Mysore District**

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### **Abstract**

Domestic employees are not entitled to the same employment security as office workers, schoolteachers, and other enterprises. As a result, women domestic workers have no job security because they are dependent on the moods and whims of their employers. A hike in the pay of women domestic workers again depends upon the mood of employers. There are several women domestic workers who have been working for many years under the same employer, without any hike in pay. As a result, these workers have been subjected to economic and social exploitation. Economic exploitation has progressed to the point where they have no wage bargaining power. They lack a self-governing organisation to safeguard their rights. This study looks into women's socio-economic problems and makes recommendations for improving the socio-economic conditions of female domestic workers in the case study location.

### **Keywords**

Economic, Government, Workers, Wages, and Development.

### **1. Introduction**

Despite all provisions in the constitution and various legal and instructive measures to improve the status of women, little has been taken in changing the socio-economic condition of the women domestic workers in India. Few of the state governments have taken some steps to uplift the socio-economic status of women domestic workers. For example, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu have introduced minimum wages for domestic workers. Karnataka is the first state to affix minimum wage for domestic workers in 2004 in order to establish some kind of fairness in wages. It was fixed at 600 per month for an eight-hour day of domestic (Hamid, 2006). Hence, it is an important issue to study the social and economic conditions of women domestic workers.

## **2. Definition of Women Domestic Workers**

According to the Social Security Bill 2007 “Wage worker means someone employed for a remuneration as an unorganised non-agricultural worker, directly by an employer or through any contractor or agencies, whether solely for an employer or more employers, whether concurrently paid in cash and/or in kind, whether temporary or casual worker or as migrant workers, workers employed by households including domestic worker”. (GOI, 2007.)

## **3. Review of Literature**

Domestic workers in ancient India was mainly performed by “serfs” who commonly belong to the poor category and were deprived to access education. (Gothoskar, 2005).

Domestic maidservants, also known as "Dasis" in medieval times, are not a recent addition to the country. (Mahadevan, 1989).

All of India's major cities have become centres for the recruitment of poor women domestic servants in recent years. A regular supply of women workers to these cities is facilitated by the absence of jobs in rural and tribal areas. The substantial increase in the employment of middle-class women is one of the key reasons behind this. (Deshkal and FES, 2002).

## **4. Objectives of the Study**

- To study the socio-economic condition of women domestic workers in the study area.
- To suggest suitable measures to improve the living condition of women domestic workers in the case study area.

## **5. Research Methodology**

The present study is on the empirical investigation based on a sample interviews of women domestic labourers in Mysore city. Mysore is a mid-sized south Indian city with a population of about 7.8 lakh and spanning an area of 128 sq kms. This is the second largest city in Karnataka after Bangalore, the capital city of Karnataka. This city is 140 kms away from the state capital Bangalore. The present study is based on both primary and secondary data and a systematic random sampling method has been adopted for the survey.

The primary data has been collected from 5 extension areas of Mysore city. Where there are a large number of female domestic workers, both homemakers and working women prefer them. Vijayanagara, Kuvempunagara, Saraswathipuram, Gokulam, and Siddhartha Layout are the five extension areas. To begin with, the majority of the people in this area are financially secure and can afford to manage maid servants. Secondly, a number of apartments are also more in the study region. The Survey has been conducted by taking 50 women domestic labourers of these areas and 10 respondents are randomly selected from each extension mentioned above. Simple tables, percentage methods are used to analyse the result and have been depicted by simple bar graphs and pie charts.

## 6. Result and Discussion

Table 1: Age Composition

Age	Respondents	Percentage
18-30	12	24
31-50	30	60
Above-50	8	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey

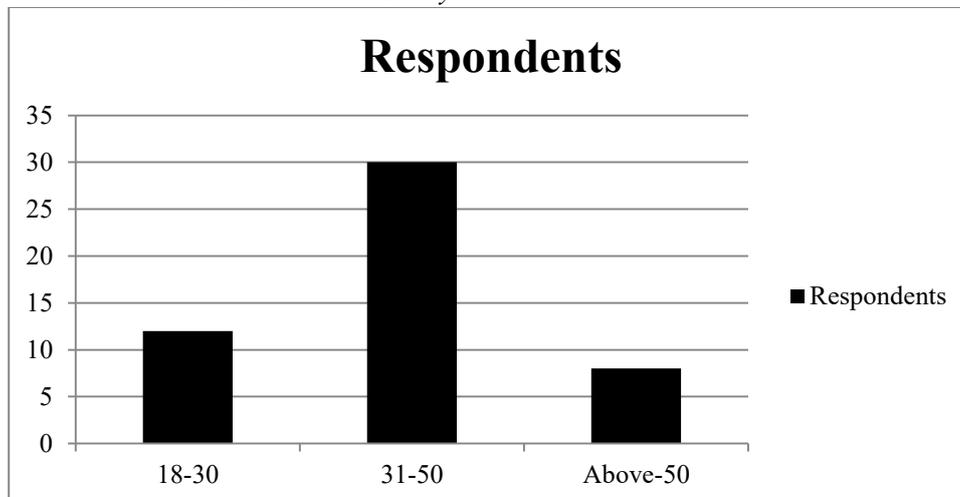


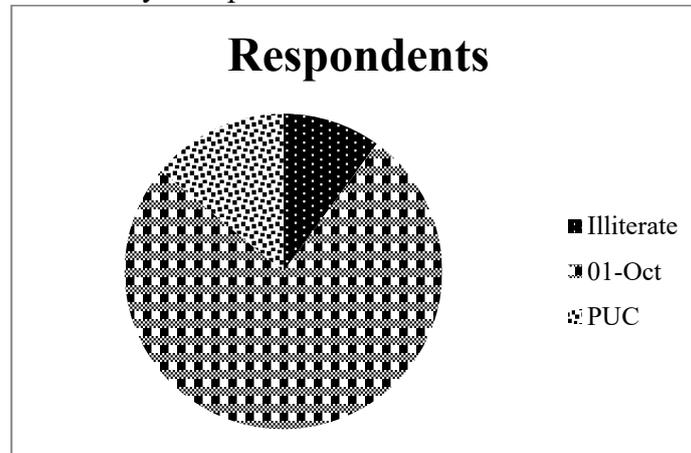
Table-1 explains that out of 50 respondents 30 of them belong to the age group of 31-50 years followed by 12 respondents belonging to the age 18-30 years and 8 respondents coming under the group of above 50 years.

**Table 2: Educational Status**

Educational Status	Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	5	10
1-10	38	76
PUC	7	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey

Table-2 analyses the educational status of the respondents, out of 50 respondents 38 of them have studied between the 1-10<sup>th</sup> standard of their schooling followed by 7 respondents studied PUC and 5 are illiterate.

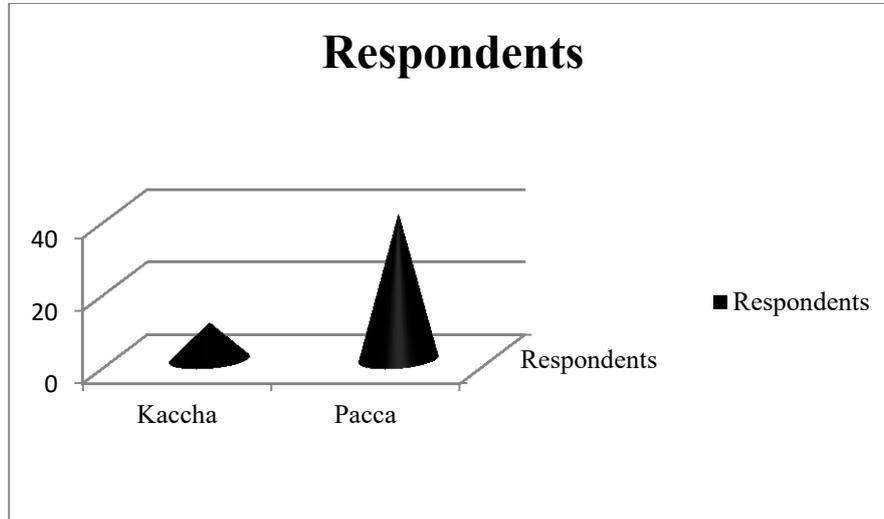


**Table 3: Type of House**

Type	Respondents	Percentage
Kaccha	10	20
Pacca	40	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey

Table-3 highlights that out of 50 respondents 40 of them live in pacca houses and only 10 of them still live in kaccha houses.



**Table 4: Access to Potable Drinking Water**

Access	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	40	80
No	10	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey*

Table-4 explains that 40 respondents have access to potable drinking water and hardly 10 of them do not have access to potable drinking water

**Table 5: Access to Sanitation**

Access	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	40	80
No	10	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table-5 reveals that 40 respondents have access to sanitation facilities and 10 respondents do not have the access to sanitation.

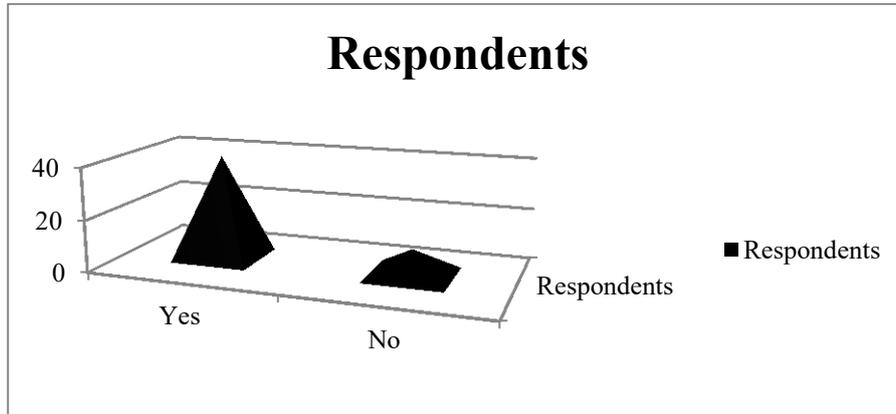
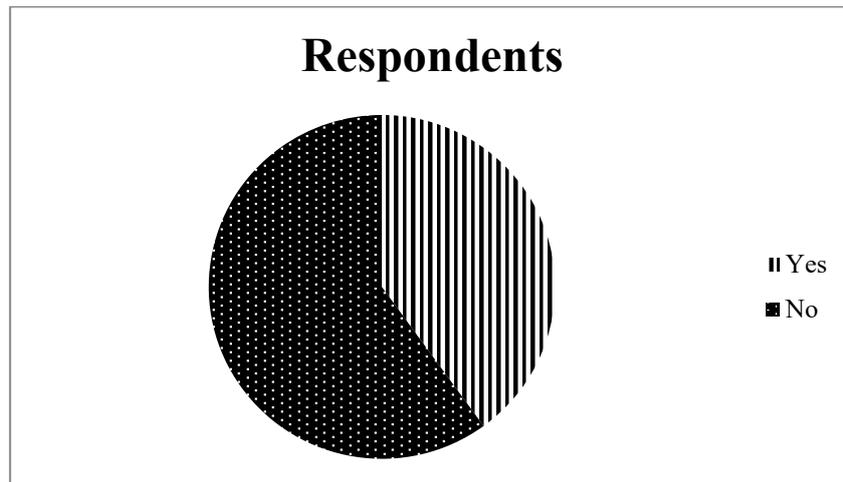


Table 6: Access to TV

Access	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	20	40
No	30	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey

Table-6 explains that 20 respondents have access to TV and 30 respondents do not have access to TV.



**Table 7: Income per Month**

Income level	Respondents	Percentage
< 5000	15	30
5001-8000	20	40
8001-10000	10	20
>10000	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey*

Table-7 explains that 15 respondents have income less than 5000 per month and 20 respondents earn between 5001-8000 rupees every month followed by 10 respondents between the income of 8001-10,000 and only 5 of them have monthly income above 10000.

**Table 8: Savings Level**

Savings	Respondents	Percentage
< 1000	20	40
1001-2500	15	30
2501-5000	10	20
> 5000	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

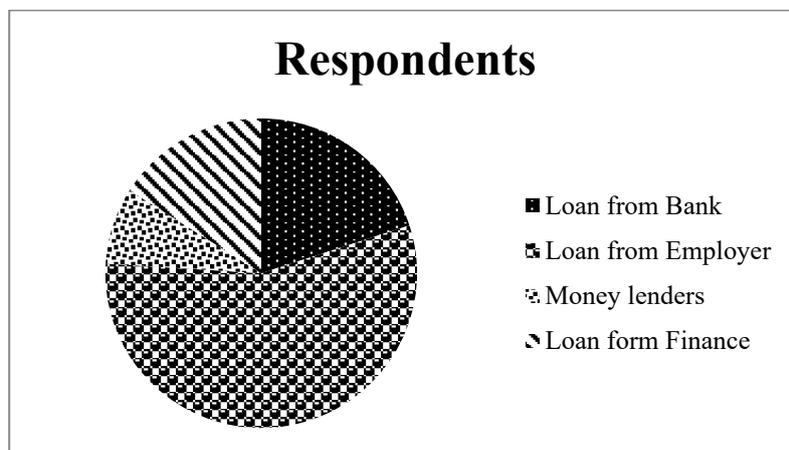
Table-8 examines the savings of the respondents, 20 respondents have less than 1000 rupees of savings every month similarly, 15 of them have between 1001-2500 savings followed by 10 respondents who have savings between 2501 -5000 rupees and 5 of them have above 5000 of monthly savings.

**Table 9: Sources of Loan**

Sources	Respondents	Percentage
Loan from Bank	10	20
Loan from Employer	28	56
Money lenders	04	08
Loan from Finance	08	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey*

Table-9 explains that 10 respondents have taken loan from banks, 28 of them have taken as the advance amount from their employers, 8 of them have taken loan from some private finances and followed by 4 respondents taken loan from money lenders for a huge amount of monthly and weekly interest.



**Table 10: Reasons for Accepting this Job**

Reasons	Respondents	Percentage
1. Easy to do	19	38
2. Less tedious than casual laborers	12	24
3. No other skill	19	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey*

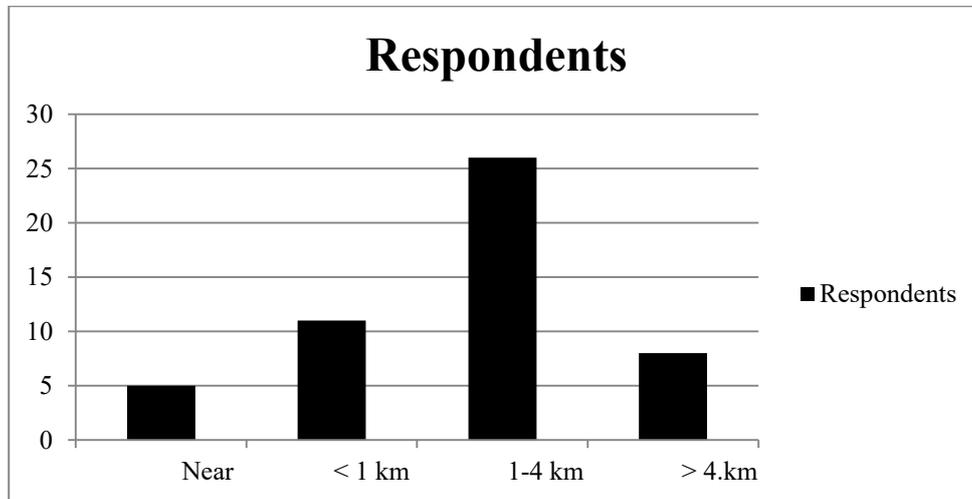
Table-10 reveals that 19 of the respondents have adopted this job mainly because it is easy for them to pursue job and similarly other 19 respondents said that they do this job since they do not know other skills, followed by 12 respondents who considered their jobs as less tedious if compared to casual labour.

**Table 11: Travel Distance**

Distance	Respondents	Percentage
Near	5	10
< 1 km	11	22
1-4 km	26	52
> 4.km	8	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey*

Table-11 explains that 5 respondents work nearby their dwelling areas, 26 of them travel between 1 to 4 kms every day for their work-places followed by 11 respondents who travel less than 1 km every day, and 8 of them travel more than 4 kms every day from their living places.



## 7. Findings

- The majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 31-50 years, because it is the core age for earning and contributing to the income of the family.
- 38 respondents have studied between 1-10<sup>th</sup> standard of their schooling because of free schooling facilities they have gone up to 10<sup>th</sup> standard and due to various sociological, economic issues they were not able to go beyond 10<sup>th</sup> standard.
- The majority of them live in Pacca houses because of various governmental schemes.
- The majority of them have access to potable drinking water and sanitation facilities.
- The majority of them have monthly income between 5001-8000 rupees and most of them have savings less than 1000 rupees per month.
- 28 Respondents have borrowed loan from their employers.
- 38 respondents have the opinion that they adopted their job because it is easy and few of them do not have other skills than this job.
- A large number of respondents travel to their working places between 1-4 KMS every day.

## **8. Suggestions**

- This paper makes an attempt to suggest suitable measures to improve the socio-economic conditions of women domestic workers.
- Non-Governmental Organizations must organize general health camps once in 6 months for these women domestic workers.
- Education plays an important role in the life of every individual to lead a successful life, but in the case study many of them are illiterates, there is a need for making these domestic workers educated which in turn will contribute for them to get better employment and good health. As a result, significant efforts are required to put the measures existing on paper into effect.
- Central Social Welfare Board, National and State commission for women should take proper measures for improving the socio-economic conditions of women domestic workers.
- NGO's and volunteers need to educate the members of the family about the problems faced by the women domestic workers in their working places to make their work secured.
- NGO's should also maintain registered Welfare Association of these women which in turn will help them to get secured in their job places.
- Registered Welfare Association has to register the homes of domestic workers along with their phone numbers so that if an any employer wants the service of domestic servants can approach this association for booking the domestic servants.

## **9. Conclusion**

Education plays an important role in the life of every individual to lead a successful life, but in the conclusion, the modern trend, the demand for domestic workers has increased, mainly because of the lack of time and the physical inability of the housewives and also due to the emerging modern lifestyle among the city habitants. Nowadays, people are very much in need of the help of these domestic workers, but the right recognition is never given to them and their jobs. As a result, domestic workers play an important role in the economy. However, society does not appreciate their worth. They themselves are not aware of the importance, and value of their job. So the necessary steps have to be undertaken by the Government to regard their job as a respectable one. It is also in the hands of the general public of the country to respect these

domestic workers with humanitarian concern. Because many of them are illiterates, there is a need to educate these domestic workers, which will help them find better jobs and improve their health. As a result, painstaking efforts are required to put the measures that are already on paper into effect.

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## **Performance Enhancement among the Faculty Members of the University of Livingstonia, Laws Campus through Feedback Giving and Receiving**

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### **Abstract**

A study was carried out in 2015 and 2016 to evaluate the perceptions of staff of the University of Livingstonia, Laws campus, regarding feedback giving and receiving and how it relates to work performance. The study used an exploratory research design in order to dig deeper into the ideas and insights of feedback giving and receiving as understood by the staff of the University of Livingstonia, Laws campus. Data were subjected to simple correlation and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) where relevant and differences in the means were separated using Fishers Least Significant Difference (lsd) at 0.05 level of significance.

The findings of this study have shown that feedback is not correcting someone of their wrongs. Among other key findings, sixty percent of the support staff said one has to always prepare for giving feedback. And, seventy-four percent of the academic staff said feedback is not necessarily telling someone of the bad things or their wrong doing. A surprising finding also comes from managers in which case 50 percent said feedback is telling someone of their wrong-doing sometimes. In terms of the need for qualification when giving feedback, 75 percent of the managers said the age, qualification, and experience matters when giving and receiving feedback. All three group of respondents cared if someone will use the feedback given. Academic staff cared at 85.7 percent Managers cared at 75 percent and Support staff cares at 61.1 percent. Finally, 100 percent of the Managers, 100 percent of the Academics, and 77.8 percent of the Support staff said yes feedback enhances an individual or a group of individuals' work-related performance.

Among the key recommendations of the study is that feedback culture be institutionalised in which case tailor-made trainings on feedback and performance-related topics need to be offered to all employees at given intervals. Such topics as soft skills, time management, motivation and many more need to be covered during training. Lessons generated in this study can be applied to any growing university or institution that seeks to enhance the performance of its employees through a feedback culture.

### **Keywords**

Feedback, University of Livingstonia, Performance, Employees, Skills, and Motivation.

### **1. Introduction**

For the past four years, one of the authors has been engaged in a Research Leadership and Management mentorship program with PICO-EA funded by McKnight Foundation CCRP of the United States of America. PICO-EA is based in Kenya. Under this project, participants are put in a setting of mentor-mentee pairs in which case the mentee is supposed to learn from the mentor on several issues bordering on professional development of the mentee in the area of specialisation. Also, the mentee learns key leadership and management skills that would make them be effective in their area of specialisation. I am participating in the project as a mentee.

The activities of this mentorship program are divided into two. The first component comprises the career development of the mentee in their area of specialisation. The second component equips the mentee with leadership and management skills. Both of these components are geared towards making the mentee an effective person in their area of specialisation, for example, agricultural sciences.

One component of practice in the area of leadership and management was for the mentees to carry out a mini-project. The title of the author's mini-project was 'Enhancing feedback between and among faculty members of University of Livingstonia, Laws campus.' It was a literature review kind of research, followed by a series of seminar presentations. Upon conducting the presentations, the author learned that there was more work to be done. That was when the author decided to conduct a mini-survey on feedback giving and receiving in collaboration with the second author. This proposal, therefore, details the conduction of a mini-

research project on feedback culture titled “Performance enhancement among the faculty members of the University of Livingstonia through feedback giving and receiving.”

The main objective of the study was to evaluate the perceptions of staff of the University of Livingstonia, Laws campus, regarding feedback giving and receiving and how it relates to work performance. Specifically, the study was conducted to:

- Determine level of understanding about feedback among administrative, academic, and support staff.
- Assess some aspects of feedback giving and receiving by staff.
- Evaluate the role of feedback on an individual’s work performance within institutional targets.

## **2. Feedback: Its Role in Individual and Institutional Performance**

It is generally believed that there are many forms of feedback. People give feedback in whatever form they deem appropriate. The feedback is given in forms that are verbal and nonverbal. However, it is clear that although there are many forms of feedback, not all these forms are useful feedback (Poertner and Miller, 1996). For feedback to be considered useful, it must be well planned, directed towards certain behaviour, and respond to a specific job or work-related actions which have arisen in the process of doing a particular job (Poertner and Miller, 1996). Useful feedback is aimed at improving the performance of an individual on particular tasks. It is a supporting tool to enhance an individual’s performance related to some set goals (Walker et al., 2010). It is basically a consequence of performance (Hattie and Timperley, 2007).

Feedback is a very important process in organisational performance management cycles. London and Smither (2002) made several propositions to support the importance of feedback in the performance management cycles of an organisation or an institution. Such propositions include the fact that over time, there will be improved optimism and the willingness to do better by an individual receiving feedback. This is possible if there are positive reactions and emotions in an individual receiving feedback compared to an individual with negative reactions and emotions after feedback. The relationship between feedback receiving and using in the context of the individual’s

understanding of feedback and the organisation's feedback culture is key to the performance management cycle. There is performance enhancement in individual when positive critical events touch specific effective behaviour and competencies.

Feedback needs to be planned. It does not need to be haphazard, non-specific chatter that simply aims at emptying one's chest. Neither does it mean filling some gap with words or simply stating the obvious and just giving a report. It should be specific, accurate, detailed, and a two-way process. Both the giver and the receiver get actively involved in the feedback process in order to make an improvement related to some performance on the planned activity (Poertner and Miller, 1996; Bridgespan, 2003, Hattie and Timperley, 2007).

Giving and receiving feedback is a very crucial process for the realisation of effective feedback. The giver needs to plan the feedback. Feedback must target a certain performance behaviour that has to improve in order to achieve the intended performance goals. The receiver also has to be ready to receive the feedback and affect the desired performance improvement (Walker et al., 2010; Hattie and Timperley, 2007). For this to be achieved, the receiver will have to be in a receptive, non-defensive mood. The mood of the receiver will be to a large extent due to preparedness. It is therefore proper for the giver of feedback to prepare the receiver (Walker et al., 2010; London and Smither, 2002). This study is focussed on studying some aspects of feedback giving and receiving among the staff of the University of Livingstonia, Laws campus with an aim of contributing to performance improvement among the faculty members and staff.

### **3. The Research Methodology**

The study used an exploratory research design in order to dig deeper into the ideas and insights (Kothari, 2004) of feedback giving and receiving as understood by the staff of the University of Livingstonia, Laws campus. The specific methodology used to conduct the study was the experience survey (Kothari, 2004) in which a structured questionnaire was used to collect information regarding the experience of the staff when it comes to giving and receiving feedback and how it affects their performance on set goals and tasks. The questionnaire was designed in

such a way that respondents would just choose from the options about feedback that best describes their current knowledge and practices about feedback. By doing this, researchers were able to gain insight into the understanding of the staff on issues related to feedback giving and receiving.

The study was conducted at the University of Livingstonia, Laws campus in November 2015. Laws campus of the University of Livingstonia is the former Overtoun Institute founded and established by Rev. Dr. Robert Laws around 1925, which later became Livingstonia Secondary School and turned to the University of Livingstonia in 2003, fulfilling the dream of Rev. Dr. Robert Laws (Chilenje, 2007; Hinfelaar, 1993). Livingstonia is located at 10. 360 South and 34. 060 East and at an elevation of 1,377.09 meters above sea level (Google Earth, 2012). You reach the institution by climbing up the Nyika plateau through Gordon road, popularised by one medical doctor, Dr. David Gordon who established and worked at the rural hospital in Livingstonia, which was named after him-David Gordon Memorial Hospital (Chilenje, 2007).

Participants in the study were purposefully sampled based on their work positions with the University of Livingstonia staffing system. The names and identities of participants were kept anonymous in order to maintain the objectivity of the study. These participants comprised those in the category of Administrative position, Academic position, and Support staff position. There was 10 staff from the administrative position representing 83 percent of the employees in this category, 25 staff from the academic position which represented 64 percent of the employees in this category, and 30 staff from the support staff position making a 53 percent of the employees in this category. The total study population was 65 people which represented 60 percent of the total staff employee of the institution at this campus.



**Figure 1: Google Earth Image showing location of the University of Livingstonia, Laws Campus [Accessed on 2/11/2015]**

The variables corrected in this study were grouped into those relating to the general understanding of feedback and how it enhances performance, feedback giving, and receiving. Each category had specific questions targeting certain aspects of feedback as practiced or understood by the respondents (Refer to questionnaire in appendix). The data collected was cleaned, organised, and entered in Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 20 for analysis. The variables were subjected to simple descriptive analyses in order to ascertain certain trends in the data. Examples of such descriptive statistics were means, standard deviations and mode. Variables were further subjected to simple correlation and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) where relevant and differences in the means were separated using Fishers Least Significant Difference (lsd) at 0.05 level of significance. The results were reported using tables charts and graphs.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The study focused mainly on understanding the perception of the employees of the University of Livingstonia at Laws Campus as to whether feedback giving and receiving could help enhance their work

performance. As such questions that were asked to the employees revolved around basic knowledge of feedback, if there was a need to prepare for giving feedback, if they would like to tell someone their bad things only when giving feedback the relevance of age, qualification, and experience of someone who was giving feedback if the feedback giver cared about the use of feedback by the receiver, and finally, if feedback enhances someone's performance at the workplace or on a given task.

#### 4.2 If feedback is correcting someone about their wrongs

The overall view of the three groups of respondents revealed that feedback is not correcting someone of their wrongs. The managers clearly stated this fact too.

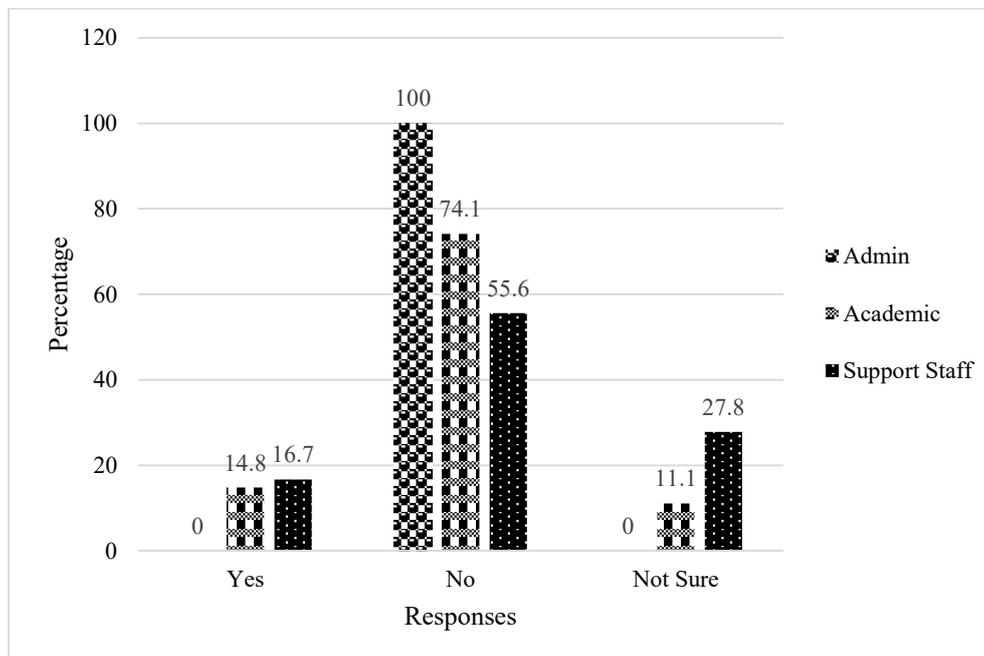
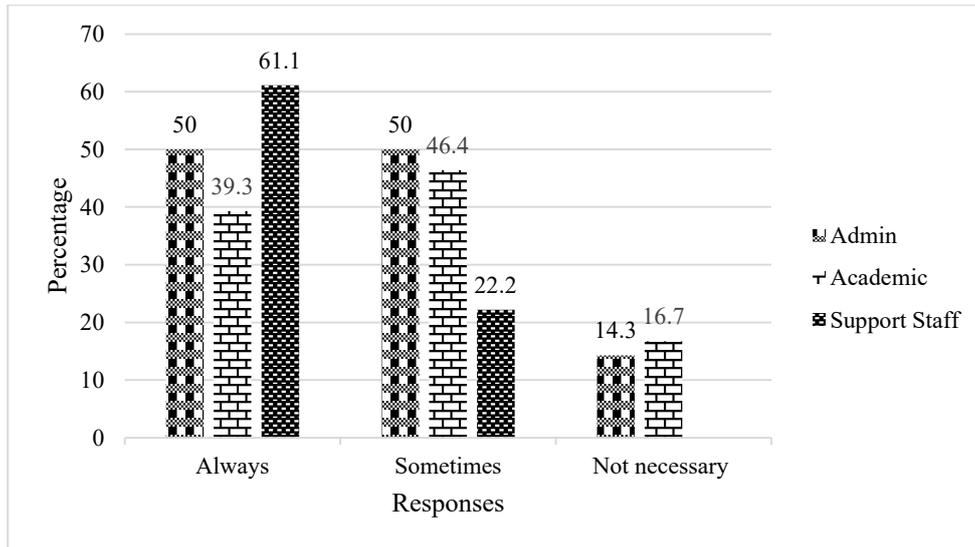


Figure 2: Shows the proportions of responses on whether the feedback is correcting someone of their wrongs or not.

#### 4.3 Need to prepare before giving feedback to someone

One question that comes to mind when thinking about feedback is whether one has to prepare on how they will give the feedback. If they need to do their homework in terms of the feedback that they will give to someone. As such, this study sought out answers to this question. From the responses, half 50 percent of the managers said

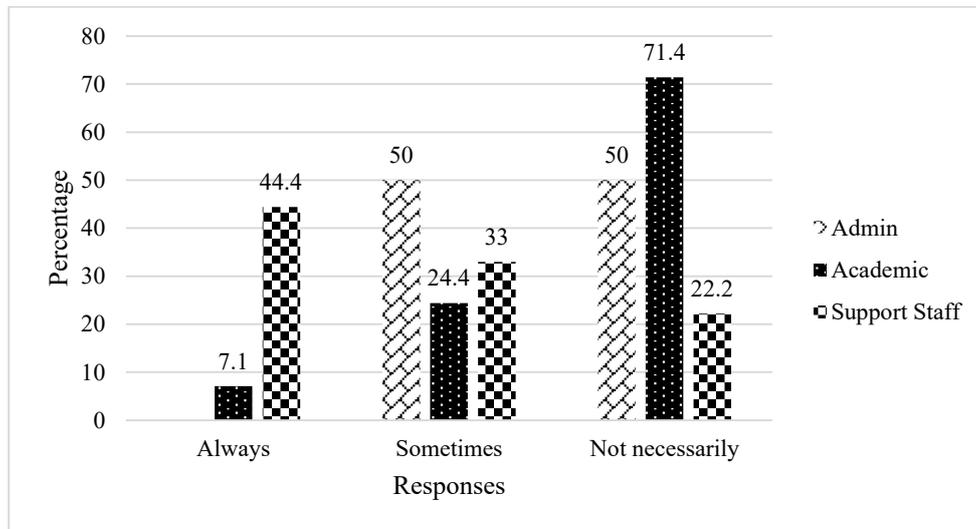
one has to prepare for feedback giving always while the other half 50 percent said one has to prepare sometimes. Strikingly, 60 percent of the support staff said one has to always prepare for giving feedback. The summarised responses on whether one has to prepare before giving feedback are shown in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 3: Need to Prepare before Giving Feedback to Someone**

**4.4 Would like to tell someone their bad things only when giving them feedback**

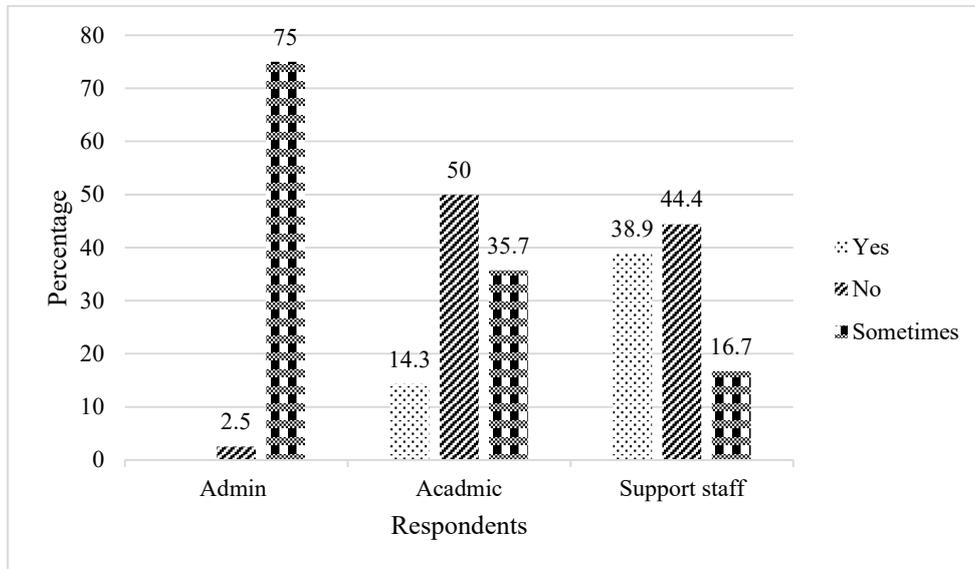
In most circles, it seems that feedback is reporting on something. Sometimes people even talk about giving feedback when they are responding to a question or an issue. To a greater extent, one gets the feeling that feedback is when someone is being told of the bad things they always or mostly to. To understand this last misconception about feedback, respondents in this study were if feedback is to tell someone of their bad things or their wrong doing. In response, 74.4 percent of the academic staff said feedback is not necessarily telling someone of the bad things or their wrong-doing. On the other hand, 44.4 percent of the support staff indicated that feedback is always telling someone of their wrong-doing or bad things. A surprising finding also comes from managers in which case 50 percent said feedback is telling someone of their wrong-doing sometimes while another 50 percent said not necessarily telling someone of their bad or wrong doing. Figure 3 is a summary of these findings.



**Figure 4: Is Feedback Telling someone of the Bad things or their Wrong doing?**

#### **4.5 Age, Qualification, and Experience of a person giving feedback!**

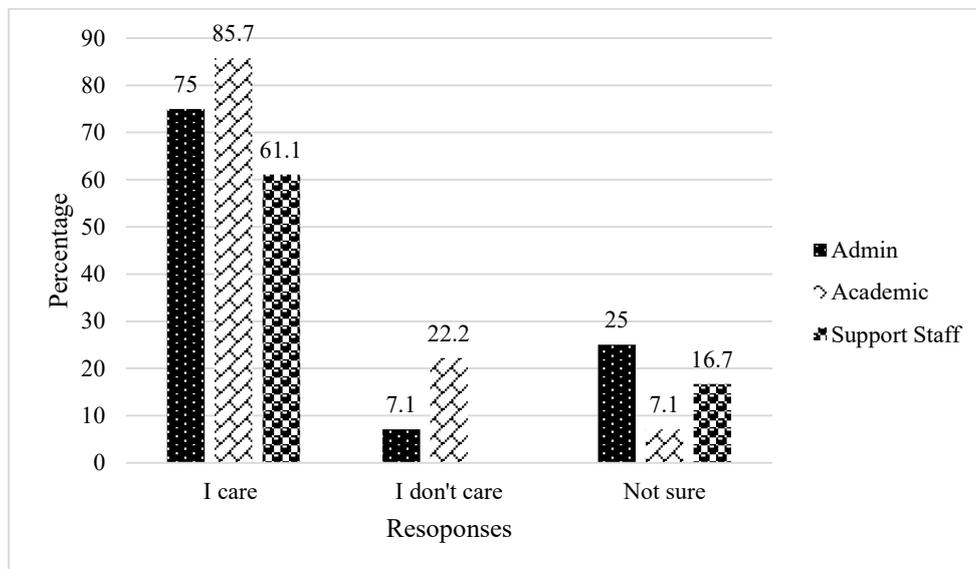
In life, understanding of things including the environment around us is affected by our age, qualification, and experience on a particular aspect of life a person is dealing with. In order to ascertain if age, qualification, and experience also matter when giving and receiving feedback, a question was asked to respondents on this. In response, 75 percent of the managers said age, qualification and experience matters when giving and receiving feedback while 50 percent of the academic staff said it does not matter. Just 44.4 percent of the support staff indicated there was no issue about age, qualification and experience affecting feedback giving and receiving. This meant anyone can give feedback regardless of their age, qualification, and experience. Figure 4 gives a picture of the responses regarding the relationship between age, education, experience, and feedback on one side.



**Figure 5: If Age, Education and Experience of Feedback giver is relevant**

#### 4.6 Do they care if you will use the feedback??

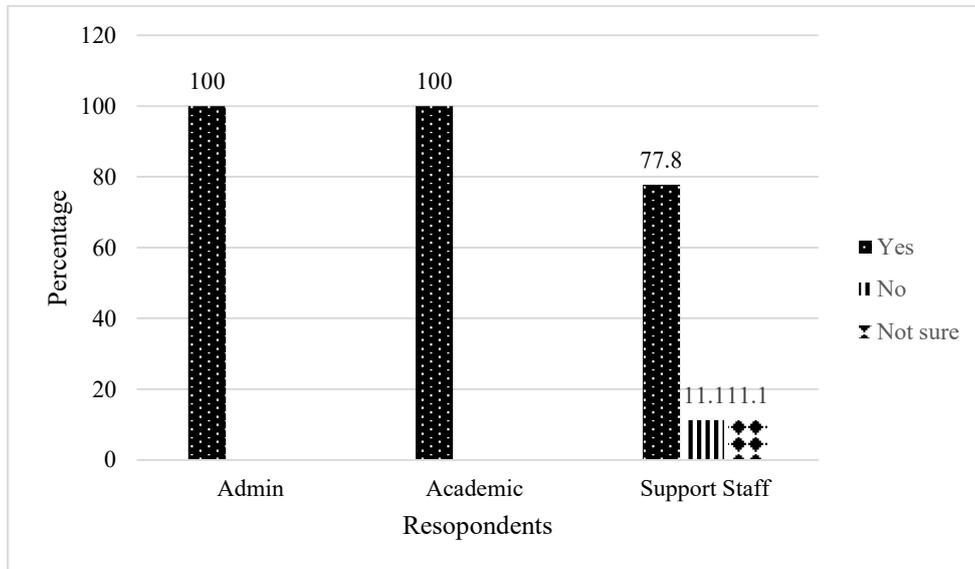
There seems to be more confusion regarding feedback. In some cases, feedback is interpreted to mean giving a response to a question. In other cases, it seems to mean correcting someone of their wrongs. For whatever meaning or interpretation attached to feedback, one important aspect is whether the feedback receiver will use the feedback given. A question was asked to determine if the givers of feedback are concerned as to whether the receiver of feedback will use the feedback. On overall, all the three groups (Administrative, academic, and support staff) said they cared if the receiver will use the feedback they have given. Academic staff cared at 85.7 percent Managers cared at 75 percent and Support staff cares at 61.1 percent. Figure 5 is a summary of the responses on whether the feedback givers cared if the receiver will use the feedback received.



**Figure 6: Feedback Givers Care if Feedback Receiver will use Feedback**

#### 4.7 Feedback enhances work-related performance

The essence of this whole study was to determine the relevance of feedback in terms of enhancing work-related performance. As pointed out, there seem to be more meanings of feedback and various understanding as to what feedback is all about. Literature has it that feedback is a process that assists an individual or a group of individuals where they are performing well and where they have to make improvements. Feedback is meant to enhance work-related performance. In line with this understanding, a question was asked to the respondents in this study to determine if feedback enhances work-related performance in individuals or groups of individuals. The responses were overwhelming because 100 percent of the Managers, 100 percent of the Academics and 77.8 percent of the Support staff said yes feedback enhances and individual or a group of individuals' work-related performance. Just a small number 11.1 percent of the Support staff said they were not sure and they do not agree that feedback enhances work-related performance. Figure 6 is a summary of these striking findings.



**Figure 7: Feedback enhances Work-Related Performance**

#### 4.8 Some significant relationships within some variable

Descriptive analysis of the variables revealed some exciting trends which needed further analysis in order to understand further the issues pertaining to feedback giving/receiving and enhancing the work performance of an individual. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and correlation analyses were performed on some specific variable with the 'feedback enhances work-related performance' variable.

Analysis of variance showed some significant differences between 'feedback enhances work related performance' variable and 'position of the respondent at work place' ( $p = 0.044$ ), 'respondents preference to giving both verbal and non-verbal feedback' ( $p = 0.004$ ), 'that respondent never cared whether the person receiving feedback will use it or not' ( $p = 0.016$ ), 'it is the responsibility of the respondent to give feedback' ( $p = 0.026$ ), 'that respondents wished to tell the recipients their bad things only' ( $p = 0.001$ ) and 'that the respondents looked and age, qualification, and experience of feedback giver' ( $p = 0.036$ ). The specific areas that showed significant differences are as highlighted in the pairwise comparison test shown in Table-1. The significant difference between the 'feedback enhances work-related performance' variable and other variables confer a deeper meaning in terms of

the perception as to whether feedback giving and receiving enhances an individual or group work-related performance. For example, only 11.1 percent of the support staff respondents said they do not know or they are not sure if feedback can enhance someone’s work-related performance. On the contrary, 77.8 percent of the same group said feedback can enhance work related performance. In such a case a significant difference from ANOVA is a strong backing for the result.

**Table 1: Pairwise Comparison of Significant Variable to the Feedback Enhances Work-related Performance’ Variable**

Variable	Test	Pair		Std Error	Sig (p-value)
Would like to tell people their bad things only every time you give them FB	Tukey HSD	Yes	No	0.506	0.017
		Yes	Not sure	0.506	0.017
		No	Yes	0.506	0.017
		Not Sure	Yes	0.506	0.017
	Scheffe	Yes	No	0.506	0.023
		Yes	Not sure	0.506	0.023
		No	Yes	0.506	0.023
		Not Sure	Yes	0.506	0.023
	LSD	Yes	No	0.506	0.006
		Yes	Not sure	0.506	0.006
		No	Yes	0.506	0.006
		Not Sure	Yes	0.506	0.006
	Boniferroni	Yes	No	0.506	0.019
		Yes	Not sure	0.506	0.019
		No	Yes	0.506	0.019
		Not Sure	Yes	0.506	0.019
Prefers to give both verbal and non-verbal feedback	Tukey HSD	Yes	No	0.422	0.010
		No	Yes	0.422	0.010
	Scheffe	Yes	No	0.422	0.014
		No	Yes	0.422	0.014
	LSD	Yes	No	0.422	0.004
		No	Yes	0.422	0.004

	Boniferroni	Yes	No	0.465	0.011
		No	Yes	0.465	0.011
You don't care whether the person will use the feedback given to them	Tukey HSD	Yes	Not sure	0.465	0.030
		Not Sure	Yes	0.465	0.030
	Scheffe	Yes	Not sure	0.465	0.039
		Not Sure	Yes	0.465	0.039
	LSD	Yes	Not sure	0.465	0.011
		Not Sure	Yes	0.465	0.011
	Boniferroni	Yes	Not sure	0.465	0.034
		Not Sure	Yes	0.465	0.034
Giving feedback is your responsibility	Tukey HSD	Yes	No	0.317	0.022
		No	Yes	0.317	0.022
	Skeffe	Yes	No	0.317	0.030
		No	Yes	0.317	0.030
	LSD	Yes	No	0.317	0.008
		No	Yes	0.317	0.008
			Not sure	0.317	0.027
		Not sure	No	0.317	0.027
	Boniferroni	Yes	No	0.317	0.025
	No	Yes	0.317	0.027	
Looks at age, qualification, and experience of person giving you feedback	LSD	Yes	No	0.508	0.023
		No	Yes	0.508	0.023

Note: All differences shown in the table above were significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The use of different statistical tests were just for comparison purposes. The benchmark test was LSD as stated in the methodology section

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study have shown that feedback is not correcting someone of their wrongs, which someone needs to prepare if they are to give effective feedback and that feedback is not necessarily telling someone of their wrongs. Further, the study has also revealed that feedback enhances an individual or a group of individuals' work-related performance.

**In view of the findings in this study, it is recommended that:**

1. Feedback culture is institutionalised in which case tailor-made trainings on feedback and performance-related topics need to be offered to employees at given intervals. Such topics as soft skills, time management, motivation, and many more.
2. There is a need to initiate dialogue and deliberate or periodical interactions between top managers and junior staff with an aim of kick-starting feedback culture. This would act as a platform for nurturing a feedback culture which can grow to specialised feedback giving and receiving among employees.
3. Initiate some motivational strategies that can encourage members of staff to give feedback to each other. For example, carry out individualised or personalised assessments on individuals so that they check themselves in terms of how much feedback they have given and received and if such feedback culture is assisting their work and overall life performance.
4. Lessons generated in this study can be applied to any growing university or institution that seeks to enhance the performance of its employees through a feedback culture.

## **6. Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to thank the Institute for People, Innovation and Change in Organisations-East Africa (PICO-EA), Kenya, for the scholarship. PICO-EA has since rebranded to Emerge Centre for Innovations-Africa (ECI-Africa). Also thank you to The McKnight Foundation Collaborative Crop Research Program, a US-based foundation for funding this project.

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**Appendix: Questionnaire**  
**Research questionnaire: Feedback**

Dear participant,

We are happy to engage you on some aspects of feedback with an aim of enhancing the performance of staff as part of performance management studies. The questionnaire that you are kindly requested to complete will help us complete a study titled "Performance enhancement among the faculty members of the University of Livingstonia through feedback giving and receiving." We would like to assure you that the information collected will not be used against you in any way. Thank you for your willingness to participate in the study.

**Preliminary information**

Date:

Administrative position  Academic position  Support staff  
(Accounts/Security/Library/Grounds etc)

**A. General understanding of feedback**

1. Feedback is correcting somebody on their wrongs.  
Yes  No  Not sure
2. Feedback can be given any time.  
Yes  No  Not sure
3. Feedback can help enhance somebody's performance on a particular activity/task.  
Yes  No  Not sure
4. One needs to prepare thoroughly before giving feedback to someone.  
Yes  No  Not sure
5. Feedback must be clear, timely and not judgmental.  
Always  Sometimes  Not necessarily

**B. Giving feedback**

6. You can give feedback to someone anywhere anytime.  
Yes  No  Not sure
7. You would prefer to give both verbal and non-verbal feedback.  
Yes  No  Don't know
8. It is good to prepare someone before giving them feedback.  
Always  Sometimes  Not necessary

9. You don't care whether the person will use the feedback you have given them.  
I care  I don't care  Not sure
10. Giving feedback is your responsibility.  
Yes  No  Don't know
11. You would like to tell people their bad things only every time you give them feedback.  
Always  Sometimes  Not necessarily
- C. Receiving feedback
12. Can ask someone to give you feedback on what you have done.  
Always  Sometimes  Not necessary
13. Would like to answer back as someone is giving feedback to you.  
Always  Sometimes  Not at all
14. Looks at the age, qualification and experience of the person giving you the feedback.  
Yes  No  Sometimes

End of Questionnaire  
Thank You for Your Responses

## **Reinforcement of Sexism through Memes: Harassment and the Current Digital Culture**

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### **Abstract**

Memes are very catchy, attractive, and immensely popular internet jokes which carry content that is usually sexually provocative in an implicit manner. Progressively, for quite some time now, a discerning pattern is the explicitly bold sexual overtones of the messages, exchanged in apparent bonhomie and a casual and carefree charm. This apparently harmless form of humour is now a staple in the daily dose of entrainment in a significant section of the global population, cutting across age and social status. Special groups are formed, just to share memes for indulgence, pleasure, and catharsis. What is becoming worrisome is that this combination of social mores and age-old gendered norms with popular shareable, usually aesthetic images tagged with heady and catchy phrases & exchanged in superfast distribution is frequently becoming a very common instrument of exploitation and harassment. Feminist research & mouthpiece has long been vocal about how such instances of online sexism and gendered jokes are recurrently reframed as “acceptable” by masking them as a form of wit & humour albeit with derision of women as ‘innately stupid and dull’ members of the human race. This paper attempts to analyze some selected memes across a broad cultural milieu and the various labels used to describe the gender politics, relationship, and positioning through the syntactic as well as semantic relationships used and whether it is possible to revert with corrections.

### **Keywords**

Humor; Internet meme; Harassment; Mindset, Gratification, Superfast distribution, and Revert with Corrections.

## **1. Introduction**

In the year 2015, the United Nations established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve gender equality in a world still polarized in the age-worn wars of sexual politics skewed unfairly towards an almost universal & virulent worldview, mindset, traditions & manifestations of patriarchy, sexism, misogyny and the like. Working on the silence of the fair half, the mission of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to achieve maximum gender equity and equality. The 17 clearly charted goals are efforts to achieve the mission of ‘universal gender equality and endeavour to empower women and girls across the world and all social class & stratification created by man. It is an undisputed reality that, despite obvious improvements across most communities worldwide, we are still far from achieving parity in our Sexual Politics. Ironically, women empowerment itself has paradoxically brought in its wake its own baggage of the new facet of exploitation of women at work.

There is nothing new or surprising in this, so what the SDGs were set to achieve was the reinvigoration of the continual efforts and the endeavour to provide a new stimulus to women empowerment and gender equity at all places, contexts, and instances across the globe irrespective of ethnicity, community or political divides.

Harassment of women is a prime thrust of the SDGs Goal 5 that specifically aims at “gender equality.” Here, the UN candidly speaks of how gender equality is the indispensable foundation for a progressive, peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. Accepting unequivocally that the past decades have shown progress in terms of a greater number of girls going to school, fewer getting forced into early marriage, more women going out to work at various levels in the organized sector evolving to serve in positions of leadership in traditional male bastions like the armed forces, in politics & parliaments and in highly competitive global as well as a local business.

So, it is not surprising that across the world we are witnessing laws and legislations being promulgated and reformed to press & push forward gender equality with a renewed zeal and enthusiasm. However, as the UN points out that, despite these gains, many challenges and unaddressed problems still remain at large in terms of existing ‘discriminatory laws’ and ‘regressive social norms’ that still plague a significant number of nations, communities, and traditions. Hence, it is not surprising to still stumble upon stark UN statistics which claim that

still in most countries, women continue to remain underrepresented at all levels of political leadership, and that, '1 in every 5 women and girls in the ages of 15 and 49 report experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner within 12 months' (UN GOAL 5). Alongside, Article 2 of the UN also clarifies what would include in violence against women in addition to well-understood offences like spousal and non-spousal violence, trafficking, rape, assault, and harmful traditions like female genital mutilation (FGM) and the like. Here, what becomes of interest to this study is the mention of harassment of women at work along with brutalities like violence perpetrated or condoned by the state such as rape in war (Heise, 2018).

It would also make it relevant here to mention Noam Chomsky definition of sexual harassment by what he calls the "manufacturing consent". According to Chomskian notion, harassment arises from the fact that 'men' who still form the ruling classes continue to control the discourse on 'sexual violence' by influencing and manipulating the views of the victims who most often are women.

Goal 5 is thus the aspiration to do away with all forms of prejudice, discrimination, and 'violence against women' in every aspect of her public, domestic or private life and to undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources and access to ownership of property. It is in this very familiar narrative, that we come across the one unique target that particularly talks about enhancement of the use of 'enabling technology', particular in the information and communications technology (ICT), to promote the empowerment of women which is of again of particular interest to the authors of this paper.

The act "The Sexual harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 defines "sexual harassment" (Section 2 (n) as it includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour (whether directly or by implication) namely:-

In a 2017 survey conducted by the Bar Association of India, a whopping 70 percent of the women said they did not report sexual harassment due to the fear of repercussions and harsh consequences.

Sexual harassment can be defined as a kind of undesired sexual attention from a problem holder to its target. Definitions and understandings of this notion vary, since sexual harassment can occur in many different ways: physical, indirect, verbal, or non-verbal. Verbal harassment is predominantly vectored by sexual jokes and comments, whereas non-verbal harassment by and large happens when sexual objects or pictures are displayed overtly or tacitly. Indirect harassment portrays situations

where the sufferer is not directly contacted, however, she still gets affected by my psychological burden from the indirect harassment such as sexual gossips or private information/pictures/chats exhibit in public without her consent. When it comes to direct or Physical harassment, it is when the victim is inappropriately touched or held in an unwelcome way. It includes being pressurized or forced into kissing or even being compelled for sex.

## **2. This Research Paper is Focusing on the Following Questions**

- Understand that do internet memes act as innocent humour or carry a gendered undertone?
- Analyze the role of internet memes in promoting casual harassment in an office environment
- Study the impact of memes on behaviour and conduct towards a female co-worker

## **3. Hypothesis**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Internet memes make digital migrants less sensitive towards casual sexual harassment but do not influence the behaviour of digital migrants in India.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Internet memes are innocent but do influence the behaviour of digital migrants in India

## **4. Review of literature**

Women's harassment is not a recent phenomenon. Our society is patriarchal, and women have been suppressed for centuries in various forms. Education and economic independence have brought some changes yet; more needs to be done. Social Media has been serving as a platform for people to exercise and express their freedom and gain invaluable insights.

Similar studies mentioned earlier, a 2017 Ottesen, Kannair, and Bendixen's study highlighted how sexual harassment had a negative impact on student's wellbeing, self-esteem, and body image, which in many cases lead to depression and anxiety in even young adults!

Similarly, the study, "The Economic and Career Effects of Sexual Harassment on Working Women" shockingly brings out how majority women have been 'sexually harassed' at some point in their career. The research on expected lines found that, 'sexual harassment has a negative

physical and mental impact on women affecting various contexts of her life and that it also has the potency to harmfully redirect women's lives and careers. The study also indicates that the adverse effects are supposedly strongest in the so-called "formative career period" (age of late twenties, early thirties).

Depressions, self-doubt, and anger, which creep into the victim usually affect the victims' employability. The research once again demonstrated that women usually preferred to quit their jobs due to sexist, toxic working climates and also due to the seemingly hopeless situation of not being able to 'change sexist structures'. Additionally, their results show that such a toxic working environment also affects other actors, who are only indirect targets of sexual assault. The qualitative findings of this study also confirmed that most of the people questioned experienced many different forms of sex-based discrimination and harassment. Hence, the results are believed to be applicable in a broader context that will include workplace factors of gender violence and harassment like bullying, partner violence, etc. (McLaughlin, Uggen, & Blackstone, 2017).

Pink Ladder, a career enhancement ecosystem specifically for women professionals has released the report "Reach and Impact of Sexual Harassment Policies in India", According to this study, Almost 30 percent of women experienced unprofessional touch, demand for sexual favours, or physical harassment in their team. Nearly 80 percent of female's employees are well informed of guidelines against sexual harassment at the workplace, however, almost 30 percent of female dithered when it comes to complaining about such incidents to appropriate authority.

Social media platforms are being merged with people's lives to a great extent; circles are increasing, and are being used for various purposes (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). One informal definition of Social Media is the following: "Internet-based applications that carry consumer-generated content which encompasses "media impressions created by consumers, typically informed by relevant experience, and archived or shared online for easy access by other impressionable relevant experience, and archived or shared online for easy access by other impressionable consumers" (Blackshaw, 2006). Jenkins defines. Social media are also an extension of participatory culture. Jenkins defines participatory culture as a culture "in which fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 331).

As per Karla, Mantilla Misogyny is adapted by new media in the form of gender trolling. Online Media enabled a new form of virulent sexism that requires more significant analysis. Aggressive behaviour is called trolling in online media language, and it is omnipresent. It is worth mentioning the particular misogyny variant "gender trolling" (Mantilla, 2013).

## **5. Research Methodology**

Qualitative and Quantitative methodology is used for the study. A structured questionnaire is used as a tool for conducting the survey. A survey of working women to understand the impact of chosen office memes on colleagues its influence on official conduct if any. The population is consists of digital migrants between the age of 30 -45 years. The samples are selected based on simple random sampling.

## **6. Scope of the Study**

This research studies the extent of an internet meme in the office environment. This work examines the reach and impact of the meme which are becoming a part of office humour.

The research studies the impact of memes on digital migrants/workforce in India and its influence on official engagements. The selected memes were carefully chosen after content analysis of using women as the centric theme of office humour. The survey also discovered the impact of memes on digital migrants from a cognition and behavioural perspective.

## **7. Data Analysis**

### **Mememes Communicate Gendered Stereotypes**

54 percent said that yes the mememes do communicate gendered messages and reiterate the stereotypes. 40 percent do not believe so and 6 percent were not sure of the above. Most of the people who filled the questionnaire felt that mememes do have a gendered tone and it pushes the stereotypes under the Vaile of humour. When "women" come to office humour are used to make joke upon and stereotypes like women are bad bosses or women change their definition of sexual harassment whichever way they want are prevalent.

### **Memes as Innocent Humour**

When it comes to memes as innocent humour, participants were divided almost equally. 52 percent believes that memes should be taken at face value and should not overthink. Only 4 percent were undecided. 44 percent acknowledged that memes have undertones and could mean something very different from the indented humour.

### **Meme Makes Harassment casual**

44 percent of participants said that memes do make them less sensitive towards casual that casual sexual harassment like women creates drama women harassment is women made thing and women should not take it too seriously. 34 percent is of the opposite view and do not think that memes can make them any less or more sensitive towards the said topic. A comparatively larger number of partakers are in maybe zone and not sure about either-or.

### **Memes and its Influence on Behaviour and Conduct**

This is where most of the contributors said no, that memes don't affect their behaviour towards their female colleagues. 56 percent believe that memes don't change their behaviour or conduct. Only 20 percent stated that memes do influence their behaviour and conduct but don't know the extent of it.

## **8. Conclusion**

Memes work as a medium to share jokes, humour, or satire to entrain the people. It also devolves the issue of harassment at the workplace as casual humour. For working digital migrants memes might be derogatory in some context or gendered in the approach. It still does not change their behaviour or conduct on a significant level.

## **9. Memes act as Innocent Humour or Carry a Gendered Undertone**

Participants think memes could be or could not gendered as they are innocent and harmless if you take them with jest. Memes only turned gendered when the reader looks at them critically and tries to analyze the undertone. So we can say that individual perceptive plays a huge role when it comes to interpretations.

## **10. Role of Internet Memes in Promoting Casual Attitude towards Harassment**

Memes do promote a casual attitude by promoting stereotypes and undermining the seriousness of harassment. It turns a significant topic wage gap or men should behave into a joke or satire.

## **11. Impact of Memes on Behaviour and Conduct towards a Female Co-worker**

Even though memes can be gendered or make people casual towards harassment, or make them laugh.

They are a big part when come to sharing online content and also comes with the freedom to create one. It is still seen as a tool for entrainment that does not bring change on the behavioural level.

However, this study proves that even though change is not happening behavioural level but mindset does get affected and thus a long-term effect can be seen in the future.

**Thus the null hypothesis:** Internet memes make digital migrants less sensitive towards casual sexual harassment but do not influence the behaviour of the digital migrants in India proves correct.

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## **Role of Information Technology in Agri-Business**

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### **Abstract**

Agriculture is a vital element in the Indian agrarian economy, as per the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) Agriculture sector serves as a fundamental source of livelihood for nearly 60 of percent India's population. And it emerges as 2<sup>nd</sup> largest contributor to India's GDP i.e.18 percent in the lower quartile of 2020-21. India is the fastest developing nation, since last few decades, agriculture industry is facing several issues such as Small and split land-holdings, Seeds, Manures, Fertilizers and Biocides, Irrigation, Lack of mechanisation, Inadequate transport, Inadequate storage facilities, Agricultural Marketing, along with these the major problem or need is the requirement of an adequate supply of agri-produce. In addition, agri-Business is influenced by universal factors and speedy changes. These particulars point out that there is enormous demand for the intervention of information technologies (IT), it can be benefited to manage agricultural problems with the risk, uncertainties and to get better agricultural marketing. However, the possibility of Information Technology is not completely utilized in agri-business. Performance of Agri-business based on ICT and countryside is comparatively slow in association to the third segment of the nation where existing Information Technology has been executed at sky-scraping speed. The purpose of this article is to know the, need and importance of ICT in agri-business and to analyse the opportunities and benefits for the use of the latest technology in agri-Business.

### **Keywords**

Agriculture, Agri-business, Information technology, E-choupal, and E-nam.

## **1. Introduction**

Farming at all times hanging on the information like climate, weather condition, rain forecasting, market fluctuations, etc. It is not constant in nature, So to be a good farmer one must have the knowledge of everything which is primarily related to production and marketing. Especially in marketing of agri-produces, the farmers are facing problems, a large number of peasants are more in India producing in small quantities. But the market depends more on big farmers. In the agriculture sector business and its marketing intermediaries are more, so the major part of the profit goes to intermediaries. The agricultural goods pass through all these intermediaries and the farmers have to pay commission to all of them and consequently, the farmers do not receive the actual reward for their efforts. The other reasons farmers do not reach their expected returns are poor knowledge of markets, prices of their produces. Information technology in agri-business is playing an important role in eradicating the problems of marketing of agricultural produces. Information technology in agri-business is the most exciting and fastest growing way for commercial transaction. In the world, India has the maximum amount of internet users of around 75.5 crores of the total population. The growing smartphone user rate is more in rural markets even farmers and educated youths buying smartphones this benefits e-business models and agri-business and can reform Indian agriculture. Now presently rural India's computer literacy is developing to some extent almost all villages in the country have internet connections through communication networks. Through this, the farmers can adopt the modern technology in their day-to-day lives which may help them in reducing the operating cost, time-saving, and they will get the awareness of the suitable price for their produces as in India many technologies based agri-markets are available for farmers.

## **2. IT based E-agricultural Markets in India**

E-choupal: In June 2000, ITC Limited launched E-choupal in India and now E-choupal is the largest Internet-based Agri market in rural India. E-choupal is the virtual platform which connects farmers of India via

internet. The start-ups have provided PCs and Broadband connections in rural communities throughout numerous agrarian sections of the country. where the farmers can sell their Agri products at agreed prices. This online platform enables farmers to get information on market prices. The principle aim of this e-market is to empower the farmers, it should not only empower but also facilitates these farmers to face the competition. This service is provided in many states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan. eNAM: National Agriculture Market or eNAM was projected on 14 April 2016 by the Ministry of Agriculture Govt. of India. It is an internet based agricultural products buying platform in a India. The market enables the farmers, traders, and buyers in single virtual spot. This helps the farmers in getting the best prices for their products. On this platform, more than 90 commodities are included for trade. This market is connected with 785 APMC's in 17 states and 2 Union territories, more than 45 lakh farmers have membership from 17 states. AGMARKET: India's first e-agricultural market system was established in 2000 to empower the Indian agricultural market. It maintains and Provides data on daily reasonably high estimate rates for about 300 products and over 2,000 types in many regional languages from its well-maintained database. Digital Mandi: IIT Kanpur and BSNL have developed this agri related mobile application, which facilitates the farmers to access the current rates of specified crops, and farmers can choose suitable time and market to sell their crops for maximum returns.

### **3. Objectives of the Study**

**This is a conceptual paper and the main objectives of the study are:**

- To study the role of information technology agri-business in Karnataka, India.
- To understand how information technology promotes the efficiency and effectiveness of agri-business.
- To suggest the suitable recommendation.

#### **4. Research Methodology**

This study is confined to the state of Karnataka particularly north Karnataka in India. In north Karnataka highly committed, hardworking farmers are growing agri-business crops in large numbers, and only a few are selling or engaging in agri-business. This is the conceptual study and it focuses only on commercial crop growers.

#### **5. Limitations of the Study**

- This study is a conceptual paper based on the observations and the suggestions cannot be generalised.
- This study is not focused on any specific agriculture product.
- This study does not elaborate on the mechanism of IT usage in agri-business.

#### **6. Scope of the Study**

In the introduction part, we saw the advantages of information technology in agri-business, the northern part of the country like Panjab, Hariyan, Uttarpradesh, and few other states are aware of e-agriculture markets. In south India, the awareness of these market facilities are rare and farmers are following the traditional method of selling their products. This study is confined to the state of Karnataka especially to the Northern part of the state which includes 13 districts namely Belagavi, Vijayapur, Bagalkot, Bidar, Bellary, Gulbarga, Yadagir, Raichur, Gadag, Dharwad, Haveri, Koppal, and Vijayanagar. Farmers of this region are growing cash crops like Rice, Jowar, Maize, Gram, Tur, Groundnut, Sunflower, Cotton, Sugarcane, etc. Farmers in spite of being dedicated to agriculture, lack of awareness and low literacy is the hurdle to associate them with the modern agri facilities. Farmers of this geography are not organised as in the northern section of the India. In recent days, agri-business forums are getting attention and farmers understand the modern scenario and benefits of these platforms. Efforts are required to make them more aware and educated to understand and reap the benefits. In rural areas, farmers are restricted by the buyers in APMCs because at the time of cultivation, more than 50 percent of farmers are dependent on licensed agents to take their inputs or they have taken loan from them so at the end farmers must

sell their agri produces to these traders in APMCs, on the lower prices as determined by these agents only. It is a traditional barrier to uplift the farmers in rural Karnataka it is more prevalent in north Karnataka. In the Union Budget 2019-20, announcement, the Government in the Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DAC & FW) has approved an innovative Central segment proposal titled “Formation and Promotion of Farmer Produce Organizations (FPO)” to structure and endorse 10,000 new FPOs with a total budgetary prerequisite of Rs. 4,496 crore for five years (2019-20 to 2023-24) with an additional committed responsibility of Rs 2,369 crore for the period from 2024-25 to 2027-28 in the direction of handholding of each FPO for five years from its aggregation and formation. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has revealed that at present there are approximately 6,000 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) active in the country, which has been promoted by the Government to help the farmers, but still, farmers are unaware of these schemes. Another initiative by the union government is the KISAN RAIL scheme which is also helpful for transportation of notified fruits, vegetables that helps farmers to market their products in different region of the country. These schemes are added to support the farmers’ development with the help of information technology that is adding value to the agri-business.

## **7. Findings**

- North Karnataka is having fertile land coupled with the Ganga-Krishna River and farmers are producing commercial crops.
- The educated youth is not venturing into agri-business start-ups.
- A start-up ecosystem for agri-business requires support particularly related to learning communication, better transportation, and financial support from the banks.
- Agri-business is an evergreen and rising sector. It has a great potential for entrepreneurs, farmers, and society at large.
- The majority of the present generation possess mobiles and are good in using Information Technology and they also know the basic usage of IT in agri-business.

## **8. Suggestions**

- Taluq and District headquarters under agriculture departments must provide training to college dropout youths to start agri-business.
- Agri-business is a noble profession, young and educated youth must take interest in agri-business.
- Educated youths must take risks to create value for society.
- Educated youths are becoming employees, they are searching for jobs, instead, they may involve in agriculture activities or agri-business.
- Information technology is a facilitator and capacity builder to the young and knowledgeable ones to start agri-business.

## **9. Conclusion**

Innovative agri-business with the help of information technology is possible that may increase agricultural productivity, provide work, and create a value chain in the society to achieve goals. Technology can play a key role in agri-business and help the small landholders to get a remunerative price, farm technology is the rising sector of the future in north Karnataka particularly and India in general. At present, the rural youths are better than their urban counterpart's interims of honesty, hard work, and computer literacy. The rural educated youths understand more than two languages and they can create wealth and value through agribusiness, from this initiative the small and secondary peasants can get good remunerative prices for their products. ITC is the major backbone to agriculture and agri-business. The positive impact and role of information technology in Agri-Business will certainly bring the a difference in the outcome.

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