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A Comprehensive Exploration of Human Resource Management in Advancing Sustainable Organizational Growth

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ABSTRACT

This study conducted a systematic review of the literature from the Scopus database (2019–2024) to explore the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in advancing organizational sustainability. For the same, data for the present study were gathered from the most relevant data base for social science that is Scopus, from the period 2019-2024 (5 years). The database search was restricted to keywords, title and abstract. The search resulted in 177 articles on “Green Human Resource Management”, “Sustainability”, “Sustainable Development Goals” articles. As businesses increasingly prioritize employee well-being, community impact, and environmental responsibility alongside financial growth, Sustainable HRM has emerged as a vital field. By integrating “Green” practices aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sustainable HRM fosters eco-friendly and socially responsible workforce strategies, balancing economic, social, and ecological goals. With automation transforming industries, the demand for highly skilled workers is rising, particularly in manufacturing and large-scale service sectors, where HRM plays a key role. This requires advanced competency models to prepare employees for Industry 4.0’s technology-driven environment. The study delves into methods for designing these models, addressing challenges and opportunities faced by HRM in adapting to evolving industrial landscapes. It proposes strategic frameworks for HR leaders to enhance adaptability, resilience, and sustainability within organizations. Future research directions include examining cross-cultural influences, technology’s role in Sustainable HRM, employee engagement, industry-specific practices, and robust sustainability metrics to help organizations adopt sustainable practices tailored to diverse contexts.

Keywords: Advance techniques, Green, Human Resource management (HRM), Innovative ideas, Industry 4.0, manufacturing process, Sustainability, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



INTRODUCTION

The sustainability paradigm in human resource management (HRM) has the potential to transform HR's traditional focus on economic outcomes into a more comprehensive, multidimensional approach. This emerging perspective incorporates economic, environmental, and social dimensions, reflecting the growing recognition of sustainability as a critical business priority. Scholars have identified various HRM approaches linked to sustainability, such as socially responsible HRM and green HRM. These approaches aim to embed sustainability into HR practices by emphasizing environmental stewardship, employee well-being, and social responsibility. Additionally, corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are increasingly associated with sustainable HRM, underscoring HR's potential role in promoting ethical and responsible business practices.

Despite this potential, HR departments have been slow to fully embrace social responsibility concerns. They often lack the strategic influence required to develop comprehensive CSR policies. In many organizations, HR's role in sustainability initiatives remains limited to operational tasks, such as executing internal CSR activities, rather than shaping overall corporate strategies. This marginalization suggests that HR is frequently sidelined in decision-making processes related to CSR, with greater influence residing in departments such as legal affairs, public relations, and marketing, as well as with members of the board of directors.

Generational shifts in workforce expectations are further challenging organizations to rethink their priorities. Millennials and Generation Z, in particular, are advocating for companies to adopt missions that prioritize people—employees, consumers, and society at large—over profits. A recent survey revealed that 62% of respondents believe it is worth investigating why HR is not more actively involved in sustainability and CSR activities. This sentiment reflects a broader call for HR to adopt a more strategic role in fostering sustainability within organizations. The growing demand for purpose-driven organizations has heightened the need for HR to lead in aligning corporate practices with societal values.

Historically, HR departments have faced significant challenges in asserting strategic influence within organizations. They are often perceived as primarily administrative, which limits their capacity to shape corporate strategies. This limited influence raises questions about the authenticity of corporate sustainability efforts: are these initiatives genuinely aimed at

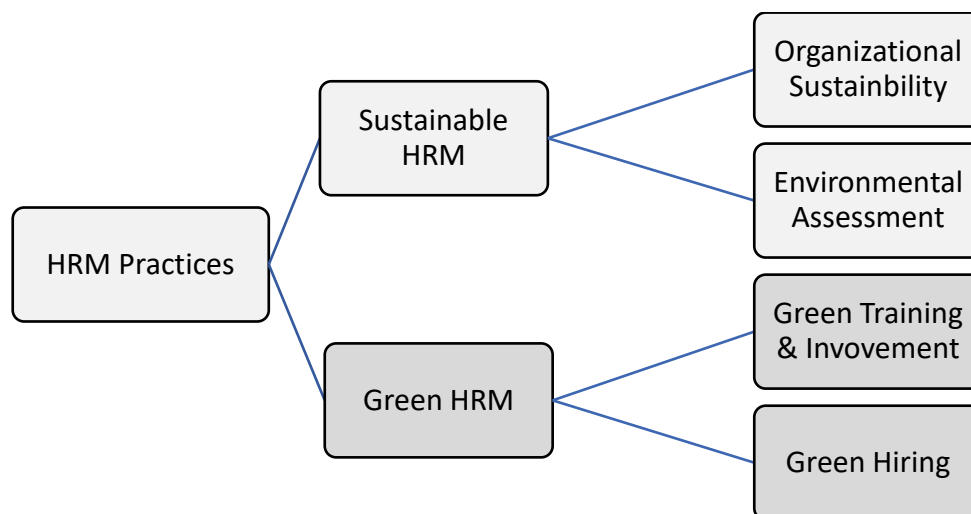


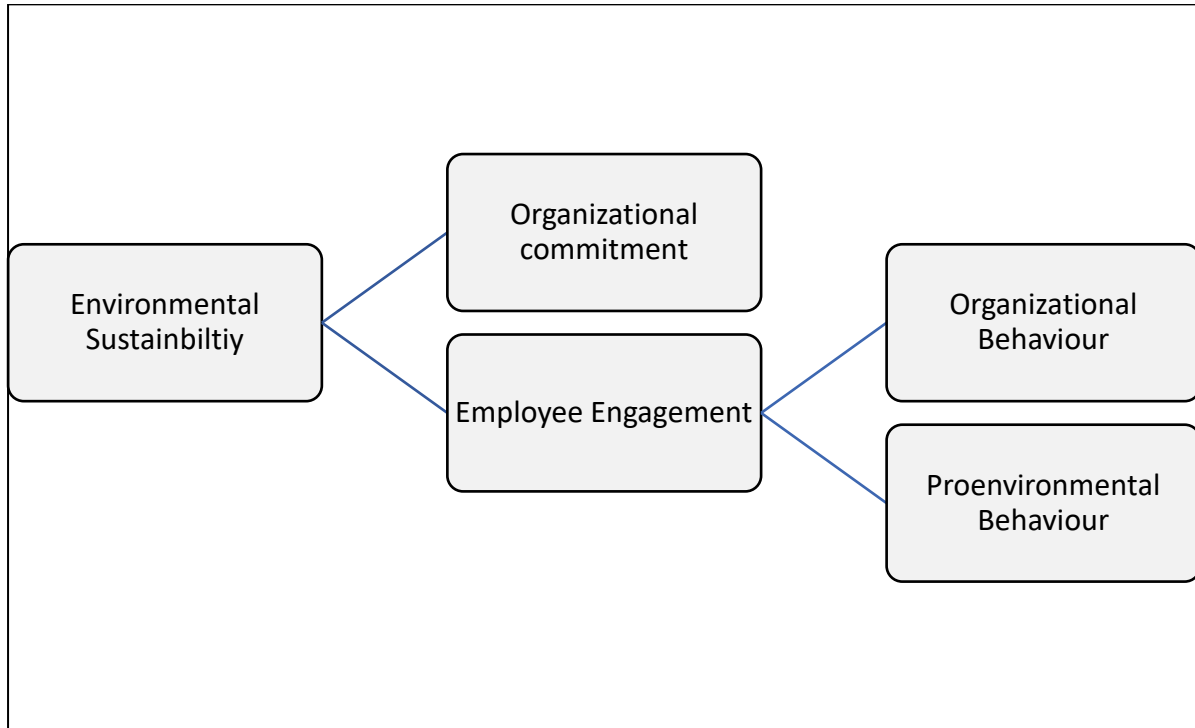
addressing social and environmental challenges, or are they merely symbolic gestures? Many sustainability initiatives appear self-serving, using “greenwashing” language to enhance brand reputation without a true commitment to sustainable practices. Such marketing-driven approaches often exclude HR from meaningful engagement, as these efforts are superficial rather than integrated into the company’s core values.

In contrast, authentic sustainability requires deep HR involvement and a genuine commitment to long-term goals. Examples of meaningful sustainable practices include improving working conditions throughout the supply chain, reducing organizational carbon footprints, and supporting corporate volunteering initiatives. These efforts go beyond symbolic gestures and demonstrate a commitment to addressing societal needs. When sustainability is integrated at this level, HR plays a crucial role in shaping and implementing policies that balance “economic”, “social” and “environmental objectives”.

In conclusion, while the potential for HR to drive sustainability is widely recognized, many organizations have yet to fully leverage HR’s strategic capabilities in this area. To realize this potential, companies must reassess HR’s role in sustainability and empower HR leaders to contribute meaningfully to CSR initiatives. This shift would not only enhance the credibility of corporate sustainability efforts but also align with societal expectations for organizations to prioritize people and the planet alongside profits. By doing so, HR can serve as a catalyst for authentic and impactful sustainability practices.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework





Source: Authors Study

Human Resource Management (HRM) is evolving to address the rising demand for sustainability by embedding environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles into corporate culture. This transformation aligns HR processes with the broader objectives of sustainable growth and responsible management. Moving beyond a singular focus on financial performance, modern HRM emphasizes human-centric approaches that support environmental sustainability, as reflected in the Natural Resource-Based View (NRBV). This perspective suggests that sustainable HR practices—such as eco-conscious hiring, green training, and incentivizing sustainable behaviors—can simultaneously enhance organizational profitability and corporate responsibility.

Green HRM, which incorporates environmentally focused HR practices, integrates sustainability into core HR functions like recruitment, training, performance evaluation, and rewards. For instance, hiring employees who prioritize sustainability helps cultivate a workforce aligned with eco-friendly objectives. Similarly, providing incentives for reducing waste and emissions reinforces these values across departments. By supporting environmental initiatives, green HRM empowers employees to engage meaningfully in sustainability efforts, ultimately shaping the organization's ecological footprint. These practices not only bolster



environmental contributions but also enhance employee satisfaction, reduce operational costs, and foster a corporate culture centered on ecological mindfulness.

Building a sustainable organization requires collaboration among all departments, united under shared environmental goals. In this effort, HR serves as the backbone, guiding employees through necessary changes and aligning these shifts with organizational sustainability targets. HR practitioners play a pivotal role in facilitating the adoption of environmentally responsible practices, fostering new work habits, and encouraging interdepartmental collaboration. This transition to green HRM enables HR professionals to act as key agents of change management, promoting innovation and collaboration that can lead to a competitive advantage.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are universal framework of seventeen targets which were designed to end poverty, to protect the planet, to ensure equality and to promote prosperity through inclusive and environmentally responsible and collaborative global action by 2030.

A central tenet of green HRM is the recognition of human capital as a critical asset for sustainable growth. Human capital—comprising employees' skills, knowledge, and competencies—represents a unique, inimitable resource that contributes to long-term sustainability. According to the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, such distinctive resources can provide a competitive edge, especially when aligned with sustainable practices. In this context, HRM plays a vital role in developing employee capabilities that support sustainability and creating an adaptable, environmentally conscious workplace.

Implementing green HRM, however, presents challenges. Resistance from within the corporate hierarchy, higher initial costs, and a scarcity of required skill sets can hinder these efforts. To overcome these obstacles, organizations must prioritize clear communication, engage leadership, and provide continuous training to align employees with environmental objectives. Proactive initiatives such as employee workshops on environmental issues and community involvement programs can reinforce the company's commitment to green HRM. These efforts not only help reduce the organization's carbon footprint but also foster a loyal and engaged workforce.

As environmental responsibility becomes a growing priority, green HRM has proven to be more than a passing trend—it is a fundamental component of organizational strategy. Companies like India's ONGC demonstrate that green HRM practices can drive cultural shifts,



fostering employees' commitment to both corporate goals and environmental stewardship. In conclusion, green HRM lays the groundwork for a lasting commitment to sustainability, advancing organizational objectives while instilling a strong sense of purpose among employees.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

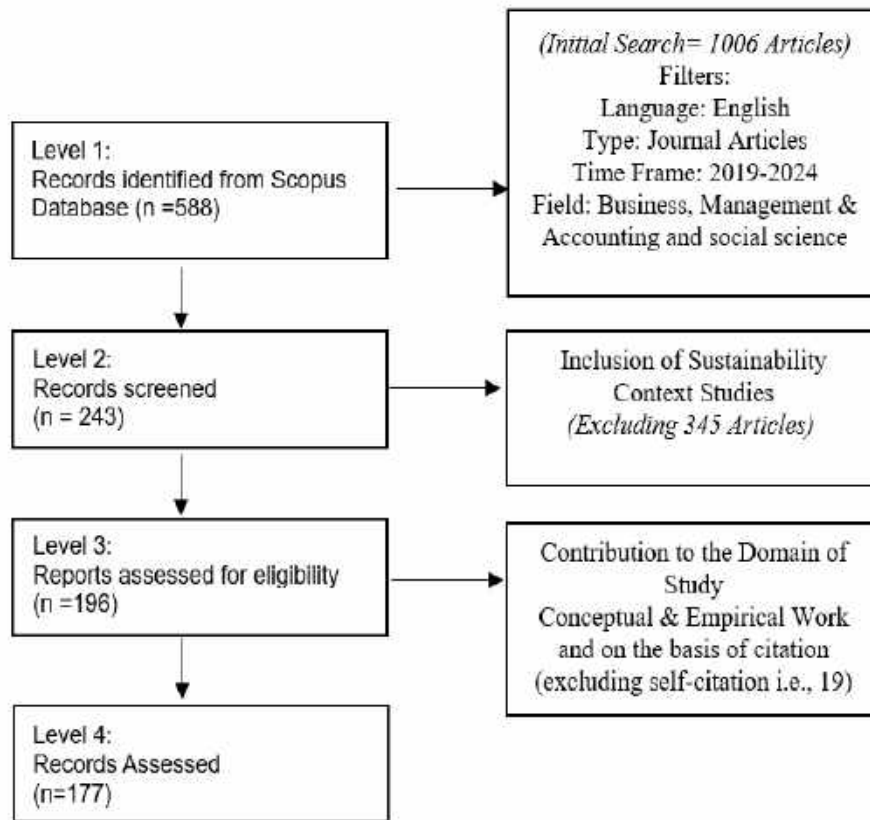
The study conducted systematic review literature from the Scopus database (2019–2024) to explore the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in advancing organizational sustainability. The objective of the study is to propose and suggest a new role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in advancing organizational sustainability.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A literature review is an essential component of research as it establishes familiarity with current research, identifies gaps in knowledge along with this provides a rationale for the study. For the present study, only peer-review publications are published in academic journals were considered to uphold the quality of the quality of the research. For the same, data for the present study was gathered from the most relevant data base for social science i.e., Scopus from the period 2019-2024 (5 years). The database search was restricted to keywords, title and abstract. This resulted in 177 articles on “Green Human Resource Management”, “Sustainability”, “Sustainable Development Goals” articles. The search terms used in the query of the list of eligible publications in English are contained within the title, keywords or abstract of every publication and also limit has been mentioned here: Green Human Resource management, Innovative ideas, Sustainability, Sustainable Development Goals.

- Only articles published only in Scopus database, peer-reviewed journals were considered,
- Articles written in English language only were included.

Figure 2. PRISMA Chart



Source: Authors Study

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Primary goals of sustainability

Sustainability ambitions to achieve equilibrium among economic growth, social progress, and environmental protection, commonly known as the "three pillars" of sustainability (Talan, Pathak, & Tyagi, 2020). These pillars guarantee that present prerequisites are met without compromising the ability of future generations to thrive (Dabija, 2021; Johnston, 2023).

1. Economic Development: Sustainable economic growth focuses on creating systems that are inclusive and resource-efficient. Rather than prioritizing profits alone, it emphasizes generating value that benefits the economy, society, and the environment. This approach involves minimizing waste, optimizing resource use, and adopting practices that support a long-term, resilient economy, fostering prosperity while preserving natural resources (Talan, Pathak, & Tyagi, 2020; Bedenik, 2018; Henriksen, Thapa, & Elbanna, 2021).



2. **Social Inclusion:** Social sustainability prioritizes well-being by addressing issues like poverty, inequality, and access to essential services. It focuses on building a fair and equitable society, ensuring access to education, healthcare, and employment for all. By promoting human rights, gender equality, and community participation, it fosters inclusive systems where everyone can contribute and thrive (Bedenik, 2018; Henriksen, Thapa, & Elbanna, 2021).

3. **Environmental Protection:** Environmental sustainability focuses on preserving and restoring natural ecosystems. It involves safeguarding biodiversity, reducing pollution, and promoting practices that prevent environmental degradation while enhancing resilience to climate change. These efforts are essential for maintaining a healthy planet capable of sustaining life for future generations (Talan, Pathak, & Tyagi, 2020; Dabija, 2021; Srivastava, 2022).

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY

Achieving sustainability requires collaborative frameworks and strategies that integrate global, corporate, and governmental efforts:

1. **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** The United Nations' 17 SDGs provide a comprehensive framework for addressing critical global issues such as climate change, education, clean energy, and sustainable consumption. These goals encourage collective action by uniting governments, organizations, and individuals to tackle pressing challenges and drive sustainable progress worldwide (Muñoz-Arteaga, García, & Collazos, 2022; Srivastava, 2022).
2. **Corporate Responsibility:** Businesses play a crucial role in advancing sustainability by adopting practices that balance profitability with positive social and environmental outcomes. Companies committed to responsibility focus on conserving energy, reducing waste, and ensuring ethical supply chains while fostering long-term societal and ecological well-being.
3. **Policy and Regulation:** Strong policies and regulations provide the foundation for sustainable development by establishing standards that promote accountability and responsible practices. Governments, in collaboration with international organizations, design and enforce policies that protect ecosystems, support vulnerable communities, and encourage sustainable growth.



CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABILITY

While the path to sustainability is well-defined, there are following challenges to address:

1. **Developmental Gaps:** Many regions face significant inequalities, with some areas lacking the resources needed to meet sustainability goals. Bridging these gaps requires targeted support and cooperation to ensure all communities can work toward sustainable progress (Talan, Pathak, & Tyagi, 2020).
2. **Resource Management:** Managing resources efficiently, especially in urban areas, is a key challenge. Sustainable urban planning, conserving water, and increasing the use of renewable energy are vital to addressing resource limitations (Tionardi & Wijaksono, 2023).
3. **A Balanced Future:** Sustainability is not just about implementing policies; it is about adopting a balanced approach where economic growth, social well-being, and environmental health coexist. By following frameworks like the UN's SDGs and promoting responsible business and policy practices, society can build a future that thrives in harmony with nature. This holistic strategy is essential for creating a fair, strong, and lasting world (Muñoz-Arteaga, García, & Collazos, 2022; Henriksen, Thapa, & Elbanna, 2021; Dabija, 2021; Srivastava, 2022).

Role of HRM in Promoting Environmental Sustainability Within Organizations

Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a key role in promoting environmental sustainability within organizations by adopting various strategies and practices:

1. **Incorporating Sustainable Practices:** HRM integrates sustainability into core HR processes like recruitment, training, and employee engagement. These efforts create a culture of environmental responsibility, improving the organization's overall environmental performance (Kaur, 2024; Singha, Singha, & Jasmine, 2024; Ravesangar, Ping, & Pachar, 2024).
2. **Green HRM Practices:** Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) focuses on eco-friendly policies and practices. This includes green hiring, training, performance management, and rewarding employees for sustainable behaviors. These initiatives enhance environmental performance while boosting employee satisfaction (Issac, 2023; Zihan & Makhbul, 2024; Raja & Manoharan, 2024).



3. Employee Engagement and Motivation: HRM encourages employees to actively participate in sustainability programs and environmental policies. This engagement fosters a sense of responsibility, builds a culture of environmental care, and helps achieve long-term sustainability goals (Tony et al., 2016; Jain & D'lima, 2018; Hong et al., 2024).

4. Strategic Role of HR Professionals: HR professionals play a critical role in driving organizational change toward sustainability. By integrating sustainability into performance management, reducing waste, and promoting eco-friendly commuting options, they help build a culture of environmental stewardship (Singha, Singha, & Jasmine, 2024; Ravesangar, Ping, & Pachar, 2024).

5. Support from Top Management: Support from leadership is crucial for the success of GHRM practices. When top management values and prioritizes sustainability, it strengthens the organization's performance and environmental outcomes (Sathasivam, Che Hashim, & Abu Bakar, 2021; Chatterjee, Chaudhuri, & Vrontis, 2023).

6. Examples from Industry: Companies like McDonald's, Unilever, and Toyota have implemented GHRM practices successfully, showcasing their positive impact on sustainability and workplace culture (Issac, 2023).

Human Resource Management (HRM) plays an essential role in making environmental sustainability a core part of organizations. By integrating green practices, involving employees, and gaining top management support, HRM helps promote sustainable performance (Kaur, 2024; Singha, Singha, & Jasmine, 2024; Ravesangar, Ping, & Pachar, 2024; Issac, 2023; Chatterjee, Chaudhuri, & Vrontis, 2023).

Traditionally, HRM has focused mainly on economic goals, often measuring its success by how well it demonstrated a return on investment (ROI) through financial outcomes. For many years, this approach limited HR's potential to contribute to broader goals like corporate sustainability and social responsibility. By concentrating on profits alone, HR often overlooked its ability to serve as a connection between business growth and larger environmental and social priorities. As a result, HR's involvement in sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts has sometimes been minimal, despite its potential to create meaningful change for both organizations and their stakeholders.

In recent years, however, this perspective has started to change. The growing focus on sustainability and environmental awareness in both developed and developing countries has



reshaped the corporate world. International environmental standards and the rising demand for environmentally responsible practices have made green initiatives essential for businesses that want to remain competitive and relevant. This shift has sparked the development of “green HRM,” where HR takes on a proactive role in promoting eco-friendly and sustainable practices within the workplace.

Green HRM merges traditional HR functions with environmentally conscious strategies. It aims to create a balance between efficient resource use and encouraging employees to adopt sustainable behaviors. By embedding an eco-friendly mindset in the organization, green HRM fosters a culture where employees are motivated to contribute to sustainability both at work and in their personal lives. Examples of green HRM initiatives include encouraging resource conservation, reducing waste, and implementing energy-efficient practices in daily operations. These efforts not only reduce the environmental impact of the organization but also boost employee engagement, improve retention, and align individual values with corporate goals.

A strong green HRM strategy is built on two main pillars: environmentally responsible HR practices and the preservation of organizational knowledge. By creating a workplace culture focused on environmental responsibility, companies can boost employee morale, attract environmentally conscious talent, and save costs. For example, HR can incorporate sustainability into recruitment by selecting candidates who prioritize eco-friendly values. Similarly, HR can design training programs to educate employees about sustainability and equip them with the skills needed to support environmental initiatives, such as reducing the company’s carbon footprint.

Research highlights that a successful Environmental Management System (EMS) depends on employees who have specialized knowledge and skills related to sustainability. This means HR’s role goes beyond hiring and involves creating development programs that train employees to be effective environmental stewards. Additionally, green HRM can incorporate performance reviews and reward systems that recognize and encourage environmentally friendly behaviors, reinforcing the importance of sustainability within the organization.

By adopting green HRM practices, organizations can move away from a narrow focus on profits and embrace a broader role where sustainability is at the forefront. These practices help build a workforce that supports the organization’s environmental goals while also meeting the growing societal demand for responsible business practices. Green HRM not only provides



companies with a competitive edge but also allows them to make a meaningful contribution to the planet's sustainability.

In conclusion, green HRM is a strategic approach that enables HR departments to shift their focus from purely financial outcomes to fostering practices that benefit both businesses and society. By embedding sustainability into recruitment, training, performance management, and workplace culture, organizations can create a motivated and eco-conscious workforce. This shift positions companies as forward-thinking and responsible, helping them thrive in a world that increasingly values environmental stewardship. Green HRM represents a win-win strategy—improving organizational performance while supporting the broader goal of a sustainable future.

Challenges in Implementation of HRM strategies for Environmental sustainability

Implementing Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies to promote environmental sustainability, often called Green HRM (GHRM), faces several challenges that are:

1. **Economic Constraints:** Sustainable practices often require significant financial investment, which organizations may find difficult to justify due to unclear immediate returns (Ye, Liu, Wang, & Zhang, 2023; Tanveer, Yusliza, & Fawehinmi, 2024).
2. **Political and Regulatory Issues:** Inconsistent or weak regulations fail to incentivize sustainable practices, making it harder for organizations to implement GHRM strategies effectively (Ye, Liu, Wang, & Zhang, 2023).
3. **Cultural and Educational Barriers:** Lack of awareness and knowledge about sustainability within organizations can lead to resistance to green initiatives. Training and orientation are often needed to overcome this (Ye, Liu, Wang, & Zhang, 2023; Tanveer, Yusliza, & Fawehinmi, 2024).
4. **Organizational Support and Leadership:** Strong backing from senior management is essential for the success of GHRM initiatives, but such support is often lacking (Ahmad, Rabbany, & Ali, 2019; Zihan & Makhbul, 2024).
5. **Integration with Organizational Culture:** Aligning sustainability with organizational culture requires a holistic approach and consistent effort, which can be challenging to achieve (Coelho, Couto, & Ferreira-Oliveira, 2024; Tunio, 2024).



6. Complexity and Variability: Organizations differ in their commitment to sustainability, making it difficult to create and implement universal GHRM strategies (Gollan & Xu, 2013).
7. Employee Engagement: Engaging employees in sustainability initiatives is challenging and requires continuous training and development to build skills and promote environmental responsibility (Tanveer, Yusliza, & Fawehinmi, 2024; Okunhon & Ige-Olaobaju, 2024).

These challenges highlight the need for comprehensive strategies and support systems to effectively implement HRM strategies for environmental sustainability.



CONCLUSION

Human Resource Management (HRM) must adopt innovative approaches to address the skill and knowledge challenges brought by advanced technologies in Industry 4.0. Modern HRM emphasizes the need to balance traditional profit-oriented goals with social, ethical, and environmental objectives. This shift highlights the importance of creating comprehensive strategies and support systems to effectively implement HRM practices that promote environmental sustainability. The study, which reviewed research from the Scopus database over the past 5 years (2019-24) acknowledges its limitations in scope. Future research could explore HRM's role in fostering organizational sustainability across diverse cultures, long-term impacts, and the integration of technology to advance sustainable practices. Additionally, examining HRM's influence on achieving environmental goals and incorporating insights from other disciplines, such as psychology, could enrich understanding.

Other areas for future exploration include industry-specific HRM approaches, social sustainability initiatives like diversity and ethical practices, and the development of effective metrics to measure the success of sustainable HRM strategies. By addressing these topics, future studies can enhance sustainable practices and adapt HRM strategies to meet the unique needs of organizations in various cultural and industry contexts.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All Authors confirm lack of any conflict of interest.

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Displaced Colonial Archives of Northeastern India: Ethnographic Documentation by Colonial Administrators

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ABSTRACT

Northeast India's indigenous communities were influenced by the complex power relations, exchange of cultures and socio-political developments during the colonial period. Inspired by antiquarian interest the British officials and ethnographers began to understand and record the region's distinct cultural heritage, indigenous rituals, agricultural practices and social systems. This ethnographic documentation sometimes reflected imperial viewpoints and intentions, though it provided information.

Displaced archives are a serious obstacle to modern historiography and cultural studies since they are physically and contextually fractured. Local access and research are hampered by the migration of these documents to institutions in UK. Furthermore, a critical re-examination of the interpretive frameworks utilised by colonial ethnographers is necessary. Digitising these archives would facilitate interdisciplinary approaches to researching the history of various communities in Northeastern India and assist academia worldwide, particularly in Asia.

This research will attempt to understand the process of displacement and fragmentation of archival records on Northeast India and its impact on historical research. It would also attempt to analyse the methods of archiving undertaken in the past, the documentation content, and their influence on the history of Northeastern India. It looks at the procedures used by British administrators, the kind and the extent of their records. The influence of the colonial archives can be seen in the historical understanding of Northeastern India. The objective of this study is to enhance the understanding of the past of the Northeastern region by examining the colonial documents and their historical and contemporary implications and emphasise on the current



initiatives to recover and reframe these lost archives and reinterpret these documents to investigate the nature of the displaced colonial archives.

Keywords: displaced archives, northeast India, Ethnography

INTRODUCTION

“If the ‘taste of the archive’ is in the heady rush of discovery, in the sensations and desires the archives stir.....the colonial archives are the bitter aftertaste of empire, the morsels left for us, their voracious contemporary readers.”

(Ann Laura Stoler ‘The Pulse of the Archive’ 2002)

Historians have confronted many challenges over the last few decades, some of which focus on the status of the archive itself, the seemingly immovable beginning point of the historian’s search. The displacement of Northeastern archival material in Europe refers to the scattering of historical documents and records from Northeastern India, particularly during the colonial period. Many archival materials were taken to European countries, mainly the UK, for various reasons. British Colonial administrators took these documents back to the UK for record-keeping and reference purposes. The experience and delight of the historical artefacts is not just restricted to the feelings of historians but to a larger audience. The Archive is deep-rooted and integral as a part of our inherent heritage. The history that we are reading is a colonial sense of reading, and researchers do not have access to indigenous archival sources. After the process of decolonisation, the archival records are available to Indians during the post-independence period only and accessing the archives has been a major challenge. The Colonial collection of Photographs is also a representation of the colonial gaze and there is a need to construct the colonial gaze with our indigenous methods.

The difference between archives and museums lies in the nature of their collections and how they use them. Archives are primarily concerned with original records, documents, papers, or digital files created or received by an individual, family, or organisation in the transaction of business or other transactions. The importance of the archival material lies in its context, its organic relationship to the records surrounding it, and its function as evidence of an activity.



Museums primarily collect and conserve artifacts, objects, artworks, and specimens that are valued for their cultural, historical, scientific, or aesthetic significance as individual items. While museums often hold records (archives of their own operations or manuscript collections), their core mission involves interpreting and exhibiting these tangible objects to the general public on a regular basis. Thus, archives are engaged in record preservation and context for evidence, while museums prioritise object preservation and interpretation for public education. An on-site museum is set up where the artefacts were originally used, created, or excavated. The artefacts can be viewed within their original, physical context, enhancing the sense of place and authenticity. A museum is geographically separated from the site or culture whose relics it holds and portrays. These museums are often located far from the place of origin of the artefacts. This geographical separation raises critical questions about ownership, cultural context, and accessibility for the originating community. The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and the Cambridge University Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology can be viewed as two sites, where the displaced colonial archive is visible. These institutions provide unrivalled insights into the cultural and historical fabric of the River Brahmaputra, a mighty river that flows through this region. These museums provide unmatched insights into the river's complex cultural and historical fabric, due to their extensive collections of images, letters, diaries, and narratives that document the travels and boat journeys of several officials giving an account of ethnic groups and villages along the river, their life-ways, myths, beliefs and practices. These archives highlight the river's importance as a lifeline and demonstrate how it has shaped local identities, customs, and means of subsistence. These records provide a significant contribution to our understanding of the River Brahmaputra's complex role in forming the past and present of the communities it supports through interdisciplinary research.

The river Brahmaputra being a formidable river defines the region. M'cosh, a surgeon by profession (1837), in his extensive account, refers to "that extensive tract of country on either side of the Brahmaputra". The river Brahmaputra has moulded the history and culture of the region from the earliest times. Surgeon-Major L. A. Waddell (1886-87), based on a Tibetan legend, associates the Brahmaputra with the River Tsangpo near Lhasa. It is interesting to note that the Tibetan word Tsang-po is the literal equivalent of the Sanskrit Brahmaputra, and means the son of Brahma. It is known as the 'River of Tibet and North East India' in the colonial



accounts due to its sheer size and utility; the Brahmaputra ranks among the most important rivers in the world (Gazetteer of Bengal and North East India, 1905:167). Northeastern India is a fertile region shaped by the river Brahmaputra, known for its rich agricultural production, including rice, tea, and jute. It is bordered by the Eastern Himalayas to the north and the Patkai and Naga hills to the south. The area is also noted for its biodiversity and cultural diversity, home to various indigenous communities.

PAST SCHOLARSHIP

The North-eastern region has been of interest to scholars of varied backgrounds. Since the colonial period scholars have been involved in writing their accounts about this region. Apart from the ethnographic and general accounts there exists the whole genre of data, that came about due to the antiquarian interest of the colonial administrators. The colonial perceptions filtered down and is even visible in the present day scholarship. The Missionary and Colonial accounts are the first to have looked at the history of this region. In 1838, Captain Francis Jenkin documented his experiences in Assam in his diary and the British documents mention the Assam-Burma path to China.

The Brahmaputra valley is described as "that extensive tract of country on either side of the Brahmaputra" by McCosh, in his 1837 book *Topography of Assam*. He does a commendable job, outlining precise routes from the valley to China, Tibet, Bhutan, Bengal, and Burma. He chronicles the history of Assam following the Ahom invasion, starting in the thirteenth century. Discussions cover a wide range of topics, including animal species, metals, political organisations, health issues, revenue systems, and hill tribes. He saw the tribes as "criminals" and "barbarians."

In her study, Stoler (2002) makes the case that anthropologists working on post-colonial studies take a historical stance and depend on the archives. Their archival research tends to be less anthropological and more extractive. Documents are still interpreted in a fragmented way to demonstrate how cultural claims are suppressed or to validate the colonial construction of particular practices. The unusual placement and form are rarely taken into consideration while mining the content of government commissions, reports, and other archival records. Instead of using the "archive as a source," scholars should consider the "archive as a subject." The study



makes the case that academics should see archives as monuments of knowledge production rather than as locations for knowledge retrieval.

The records produced and preserved at the National archives in India are the result of various entanglements of India as a colony and its people as colonial subjects, and these records were extensively used by historians of late medieval and modern India to write a "definite" history of India. Professional historians with a positivist background in colonial as well as post-colonial India considered the "empirical facts" embedded in colonial archives as the primary sources and claimed their "factually correct" version as "true" history. However, in the later period, historians from different historiographical schools used the same colonial archives contradistinctively, along with non-archival sources, to write alternative histories of "many Indias." Contouring Indian history in political terms alone, and being silent on other issues, has tended to blot out the historical veracity of these source materials. Further, major epistemic shifts in subaltern and feminist historiographical discourse have prompted scholars to raise serious questions about the "unquestionable" validity of colonial archives, apart from trying to fill the vacuum created by the selective employment of colonial archives by a variety of scholars from different schools. Despite these developments, one can still see a significant space for studying the archives their genesis, collection, preservation, and accessibility (Aziz 16: 33).

This paper will highlight the nature and problems associated with the repositories of culture on Northeast India in UK museums and the need for the process of decolonisation as these repositories can be viewed not only as repositories of culture but these are also a reflection of the knowledge possessed by the ethnic communities belonging to the Northeastern region.

Sites of Cultural Repository: A Case study of Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford)

General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers (1827–1900) is renowned as an early British archaeologist and was the donor of the founding ethnographic and archaeological collections to the Pitt Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford in 1884. The Museum was established in 1884, when General Pitt-Rivers, a prominent figure in the development of archaeology and evolutionary anthropology, gave his collection to the University of Oxford. Augustus Henry



Lane Fox was born in 1827 in Yorkshire. In 1882 Pitt-Rivers was appointed as the first Inspector of Ancient Monuments and he died in 1900, at the age of 73. The Museum houses the ethno-archaeological collection bequeathed to Oxford in 1884 by him. Four years before this, Fox inherited 32,000 acres of wooded estate, and the surname Pitt-Rivers, from his cousin Horace. In this estate, Pitt-Rivers carried out some of the first scientific archaeological excavations. It was in vogue to mostly account for exotic trophy items. Pitt-Rivers accounted for all the material that was unearthed (Yadav 2025: 15).

Pitt-Rivers' fascination with gathering archaeological and ethnographic artefacts stemmed from his initial professional interests in firearm development. Eventually, he began amassing a diverse range of weapon types, along with items like textiles, wooden carvings, and decorative pieces. It is widely thought that Pitt-Rivers personally engaged in minimal field collecting; however, he did acquire items while stationed in Malta and during the Crimean War. As he got older, it appears he gathered items during his business-related travels and vacations overseas. The majority of the items were sourced from dealers, auction houses, and other members of the Anthropological Institute. He donated his collection to the University of Oxford with the stipulation that they construct a museum to accommodate it, hire a lecturer to educate about it, and uphold the overall method of exhibition. The Museum showcases archaeological and ethnographic artifacts from various regions around the globe. General Pitt Rivers' initial donation featured over 26,000 items, yet today there are more than half a million accumulated over the years (Official website of the Pitt Rivers Museum).

The primary strength of the Museum's Asian photography collection is its Tibetan section, considered among the most important globally. A significant project funded by the Trades and Humanities Research Council from 2003 to 2005 digitised 6,000 Tibetan photographs from the Museum, captured between 1920 and 1950, along with an abundance of visual and interactive content. Other important collections include those gathered in Nagaland; Robert Woodthorpe's collections from the late nineteenth century, J.H. Hutton, Henry Balfour, and Charles Pawsey during the 1920s, Ursula Graham Bower in the 1930s and 1940s, Charles Robert Stonor in the



1940s, and Milada Ganguli in the 1970s mark it as one of the most crucial collections for comprehending the social history of North-East India.

The documents of prominent early administrators and anthropologists linked to the Museum, along with records pertaining to the Museum's establishment and early history are accessible. Documents and correspondence associated with the Museum's collections encompass special collections of field notes, works on paper, and other materials particularly relevant to the Museum's focus. The collections of handwriting serve as a significant resource for researchers examining the history of galleries and anthropology. The documents of James Philip Mills (1890-1960), an administrator and ethnographer, contain a box of materials primarily concerning Nagaland and Assam, which includes correspondence, a journal, and notes. This leads to a break in access to libraries because archival records needed to study community history are unavailable.

The papers of Robert Gosset Woodthorpe (1844-1898), a British army officer, consist of a box of materials primarily connected to India, including Nagaland, as well as Thailand. The content comprises journals, notes, and watercolour drawings, along with a reprint of a composition. The library also contains the Papers of Henry Balfour (1863-1939), who was a British archaeologist and the inaugural curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum. Thirty boxes of items comprise fourteen related to musical instruments and one roll of drawings, specifically pertaining to Balfour's role as the inaugural curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum (1891-1939) along with his study of the collections and also disorganised notes. The collection consists of letters, diaries, scrapbooks, scattered notes, drawings, critique articles, and various other items. There are twenty-three drawings of the Naga Hills, created between 1922 and 1923, primarily illustrating individuals, dwellings, and tattoo patterns. There are two field journals and sketchbooks without dates.

The collection of Ursula Violet Graham Betts, formerly Bower (1914-1989), included significant documents from her role as a pioneering anthropologist in the Naga Hills, containing one box of materials regarding Bower's study of Naga textiles. The documents consist of letters, a diary, a notebook, and preliminary calligraphic and typed drafts. The



documents have not been recorded in detail as of now. There exist documents of Sir Henry Walter George Cole (1866-1932), a military officer, and Lady Mai Kathleen Cole (fl. 1915- fl. 1920). There exists a box of resources associated with the language and writing system of Manipur. The documents consist of letters, written remarks, and a reprint of a paper. The collection of John Henry Hutton (1885-1968), anthropologist and administrator, consists of five boxes of material primarily concerning Nagaland and Assam. The content consists of letters, memos, and drawings (Official website of Pitt Rivers Museum). The majority of these documents have not been thoroughly catalogued, creating a significant obstacle for visitors and researchers trying to locate these papers for their current or future studies. Many of these documents have yet to be digitised, rendering them unavailable to the researcher.

Study of North-eastern Textiles and the Role of UK Museums and Archives

Northeastern textiles bring forward a rich and a very complex tradition of artistry, spirituality, and ecological knowledge. The British colonisation in the nineteenth century, in Northeast India resulted in the growth, adaptation and also displacement of many of these artefacts. British colonial rulers distributed across European institutions such as the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Pitt Rivers Museum and the Manchester Museum. Textiles, ornaments, manuscripts, and ritual objects from Assam, Nagaland, and Meghalaya embody deep local histories but have been reframed through imperial narratives of progress and preservation (Goswami, 2019; Thomas, 2020). The British annexation of Assam after the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826 marked the beginning of a systematic colonial encounter with the material cultures of the region (Anderson, 2015). Administrators and Missionaries continued looking at documenting, collecting these and archiving as an extension of their ethnographic mission. Edward Tuite Dalton (1872/2002) defined the region's communities according to racial hierarchies by acquiring objects which later became the foundation to museum collections like those in Oxford and London. These collecting practices were justified as preservation efforts for "vanishing" cultures, obscuring the role of colonial disruption in producing such disappearance.



Image 1: Eri Silk moth as displayed in Manchester Museum, UK.

Among the most emblematic textiles, the artefacts from Northeast India which are displayed in England are mainly Assamese silk textiles which talk about the history of *Muga*, *Pat* and *Eri* silk of Assam that have long been a specialised art of Assamese rearers and weavers, who produced and wove well-crafted silk that has an ecological atonement and socio-cultural identity as well (Devi, 2016). Craftmanship that includes rearing, producing silk, dyeing the fabric, designing them with local motifs gave a separate value that the rest of the fabrics gave a distinct identity. Under the Ahom dynasty, silk acquired a royal value with weaving becoming



a part of every household of Assamese community and eventually got a ceremonial status. However, British administration commodified these textiles, sending them to international exhibitions including the 1851 Great Exhibition, where they were interpreted as exotic yet technically advanced products (Sen, 2017). The Vrindavani Vastra was shifted and relocated to the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Vastra came to signify universal sacred art rather than a living Vaishnavite tradition (Chakraborty, 2019).

The term Vrindavani Vastra was first used in *Katha-Gurucharita*, which is believed to be a work of the 18th century, much after the birth of Sankaradeva. According to Blurton (2016), few folk narratives regarding Krishna may have been weaved in this Vastra. This shift exemplifies the colonial curation redefined devotional artefacts within secular museum paradigms. This further epitomises the exquisite craftsmanship and sustainability of eco-friendly characteristics of Assamese textile. Further collection of raw materials of *Muga*, *Eri*, *Pat* cocoons and showcasing them in the museum of Manchester is another pleasant part of the British collections.

The Pitt Rivers Museum, displayed cultural objects based on function—tools, ornaments, weapons—under an evolutionary logic that placed Indigenous societies at early stages of human progress (Ames, 2010). Objects that once held ritual vitality became aestheticised specimens. A Naga headhunting necklace or a woollen coat or a Khasi ceremonial basket was interpreted as evidence of cultural primitiveness rather than complex social symbolism (Thomas, 2020). Assamese silks were prized for craftsmanship but detached from the women's communal labour that sustained them (Goswami, 2019). The museum's glass case thus became a metaphor for colonial containment—a visual strategy that neutralised the vitality of cultural difference. Various agricultural tools mostly used by several Northeastern communities like the Bodo, Tiwa, Naga, Karbi and Manipuri are being archived in here. Naga implements and weapons like Naga *Daos* of different shapes and sizes are displayed here. Textile tools such as flying shuttles of north-eastern communities are also available here.



Image 2: Assamese Textile Weaving Shuttles, collected in 1923, displayed in Pitt Rivers Museum



The cultural heritage of Northeast India preserved in British museums summarises the histories of belief, skill, and imperial extraction. Each displaced artefact is weaved, woven, carved, or inscribed and handcrafted that reveals the tension between colonial domination and indigenous resilience. However, the history of Northeastern textile craftsmanship coming down during the British colonial period can be contradicted with the presence status of resurgence and reestablishment of these textile archival units.

CONCLUSION

Efforts are being made to digitise and make available to the researchers these artefacts of cultural representation and the ethnographic writings of the administrator and Anthropologists. Despite the efforts towards digitisation much remains to be done even in the institutions of UK, making it a challenging task for researchers and scholars from the North- Eastern region and other regions of India to research their own artistic and literal heritage. During our present (2025) visit to the libraries and museums in UK, the problems of accessing these records could be experienced. Due to shortage of manpower in most archives and museums, researchers who are visiting for a short period are unable to access these documents. And there is always the colonial gaze and biasness, that is present and continues that researchers face. With many libraries and museums providing financial support to the researchers for a short period of study, yet the decolonisation of the mind and the archive needs to be carried out.



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EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH MSMEs IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

In India, MSMEs are essential to promote social inclusion and economic growth. The empowerment of female entrepreneurs is among their most important accomplishments. This study examines how MSMEs, particularly in India, facilitate women's economic involvement by offering easily accessible entrepreneurship options. Through Financial Inclusion, Skill development and Government backed programs like MUDRA loans and the Stand up India initiative, the MSME sector provides a supportive ecosystem. By lowering Barriers to entry, these programs have made it possible for women to launch and grow businesses in a variety of Industries like handicrafts, food processing, and textiles. MSMEs have greatly improved women's self-reliance, income production and leadership roles in spite of obstacles such social limitations and restricted access to financing. The current study focuses on the status of women entrepreneurs in MSMEs and hurdles as well as difficulties that Indian women entrepreneurs confront. It also focuses on government initiatives and schemes designed by MSME to support female entrepreneurs.

Key Words: *Women Entrepreneurs, Empowerment, MSME, Problems & Prospects, Government Initiatives.*



INTRODUCTION

Acting on an idea is what entrepreneurship is all about. Typically, the goal is to create a new product or service that disrupts an existing market. Beginning as a tiny firm, entrepreneurship typically has a much larger long-term goal, achieving high profits and gaining market share through unique, ground-breaking ideas. Gender equality has become essential in the current economic climate. Female entrepreneurs are an important part of the workforce and play a crucial role that can be separated from advancement and the economy. Women who start, plan, and run their own businesses are referred to as entrepreneurs. Thus, a self-assured, imaginative, and creative woman becomes an excellent entrepreneur. Seeking financial independence on an individual basis, while providing job possibilities for others. According to Wube (2010), a woman entrepreneur is a person who consistently engages with the financial, economic, and supportive sectors in order to make a positive impact on the community. In the MSME sector, which used to be flooded with businessmen, women from all social levels and backgrounds are now warmly welcomed. More Indian women are stepping up as a result of the government's implementation of various incentives for female entrepreneurs. Programs from the central and state governments are featured. The MSME sector has begun to embrace female entrepreneurs with open arms. India has made significant progress in the previous several decades in terms of offering sufficient and equitable incentives for female entrepreneurs. This has significantly improved the Indian economy in addition to raising women's position in the nation. In recent years, women entrepreneurs have also had a big impact on the nation's socioeconomic demographics. There is so much employment in the nation today that women are involved in the labor force, the working class, private and public positions, and most importantly, starting their own enterprises.

SAFE FRAMEWORK

The acronym SAFE, which stands for Sustainable, Autonomous, Formal and Employment generating Enterprises, was introduced for MSMEs. The goal of this strategy approach is to make the MSME sector a more robust and growth-oriented ecosystem.



Sustainable: A large number of women work from home as part-time entrepreneurs who heavily rely on contractors and middlemen to get access to markets. These businesses are quite vulnerable to outside shocks like COVID-19. According to a survey by Bain and Company 2020, COVID-19 negatively impacted over 73% of women-owned businesses in India, and roughly 20% of female entrepreneurs saw their revenue completely disappear. The majority of female entrepreneurs are focused on micro and small businesses in non-professional services, including dressmakers, Tailors, shopkeepers, street vendors, vendors of arts and crafts, and honors beauty parlours, among other sectors and industries heavily impacted by the pandemic.

Autonomous: Even when women own businesses, they might not have the exclusive authority or autonomy to determine how to manage the company, give priority to investing in their business, and manage how earnings and profits are spent. They rely heavily on men for important business decisions, raw material procurement, pricing information, and market access.

Formal: About 95.6% of women-owned businesses are unofficial or unregistered. Their entrepreneurial rights and the expansion and durability of their businesses are harmed by a high degree of informality. Additionally, decreased production and revenue are faced by informal economic units.

Employment Generating: Employment-wise, the MSME sector in India supports about 111 million jobs (NSS 73rd Round 2015-16) and accounts for 30% of the country's GDP (India Brand Equity Foundation). According to Bain and company 2019, 22 to 27 million individuals are employed by women-owned MSMEs. (NITI Aayog, 2022)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hackler et al. (2008) demonstrated that women who work for themselves attain their educational goals at a faster rate than women who work for other employers. When compared to other working women, the percentage of self-employed women who hold managerial jobs is shown to be somewhat greater. Subramanyam and Reddy (2012) examined the performance of MSMEs in India. It looks at the illness of MSME and compares the growth of the MSME sector with that of the entire industrial sector. According to the report, the MSME sector makes a substantial contribution to the GDP and export revenue of India. Additionally, it was



discovered that industrial illnesses take 5 to 7 years to weaken an industrial unit's health. Sharma (2013) concludes that men predominate in Indian society and that women are expected to be economically and socially dependent on men. Numerous issues confronting women business owners included a lack of education, societal hurdles, formal legal requirements, high production costs, a society dominated by men, a lack of managerial skills, a lack of confidence, etc. With particular reference to Coimbatore city, Jayan (2013) analyzed women's entrepreneurship in MSMEs and the relationship between industry-related characteristics and entrepreneurship success. The study found that human relations and accomplishment motivation are the things that drive women to become successful business entrepreneurs. Bade and Rao (2020) examined that to support the overall growth of women entrepreneurs, it is critical to establish a system for raising awareness among them, offering foundational entrepreneurial education, committing to rigorous training programs, and running successful EDP initiatives. To facilitate the overall development of female business owners. Hasniati et al. (2023) determine that personality traits have a major impact on the traits of female business owners in Makassar city. The results demonstrate that contextual factors significantly influence entrepreneurial decisions through moderating variables. These qualities include accomplishment motivation, future orientation, leadership, responsiveness, and innovation. The choice of women entrepreneurs also plays a role in maintaining the viability of the family economy. The purpose of the research is to investigate how MSMEs contribute to the advancement of Female Entrepreneurs' economic empowerment. Women still encounter obstacles in Entrepreneurship in spite of legislative initiatives. MSMEs provide a strategic path to boosting women's economic participation because of their accessibility and flexibility. Identification of opportunities and gaps for further support are goals of the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the current status of women entrepreneur in MSMEs.
2. To study the problems faced by women beneficiaries while availing the benefit to entrepreneurial initiatives.
3. To study the MSME schemes for empowering women entrepreneurs.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper produced is primarily a descriptive study. The secondary data and information were thoroughly examined in order to prepare the study. The secondary data was gathered from annual reports, books, articles, and conference proceedings published in various magazines and publications, as well as paper and online resources. The percentage analysis technique, diagrammatic presentation, and graphic presentation are all used in this study.

DISCUSSIONS

Women Entrepreneurs in India

According to the Ministry of MSME's (2024) **Udyam registration portal**, women-owned MSMEs account for 20.5% of all MSMEs registered on the portal since it was launched on July 1, 2020. The employment created by all Udyam registered units is increased by 18.73% by these women-owned MSMEs, which account for 11.15% of the total investment. 10.22% of all MSMEs registered with the Udyam are made up of women-owned businesses. The following table contain information on the overall number of women-owned MSMEs as well as their contribution to employment, investment, and turnover:

Category	Total	Employment	Investment (rupees in crore)	Turnover (rupees in crore)
Women MSMEs	4667278	28407069	126845.12	1714992.98
MSMEs	22819417	151668034	1137237	16784358
Percentage of women owned MSMEs	20.5%	18.73%	11.15%	10.22%

Table-1: Women owned MSMEs under Udyam Registration portal (Up to 31st January 2024)

(Source: Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, 2024)



According to data from the platform, which registers informal micro enterprises, women-owned IME have contributed 70.49% of all IMEs since the portals launch on January 11, 2023, and they have contributed 70.84% of employment. Total number of women-owned IMEs under the Udyam registration portal is given as follows:

Category	Total	Employment (no. of persons)
Women IME	9,108,058	11,023,945
IMEs	12,920,177	15,561,967
Percentage	70.49%	70.84%

Table-2: Women owned Informal Micro Enterprises under Udyam Registration portal

(Up to 31st January 2024)

(Source: Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, 2024)

State Name	Micro	Small	Medium	Employment	Investment (In crores)	Turnover (In crores)
MHARASHTRA	8,25,120	9,082	572	32,79,075	18,338.39	2,51,357.15
TAMIL NADU	6,15,385	7,705	402	42,79,608	17,206.32	1,91,942.79
UTTAR PRADESH	3,43,917	6,320	305	21,70,076	8,853.72	1,53,964.46
KARNATAKA	2,83,507	4,756	247	21,74,825	9,053.61	1,13,609
GUJARAT	2,46,403	5,871	277	12,17,957	8,647.54	1,37,919.81
TELANGANA	2,28,450	3,056	179	21,30,624	8,766.43	73,600.24
RAJASTHAN	2,16,179	4,608	206	11,66,292	5,788.93	1,11,004.19
ANDHRA PRADESH	2,13,987	3,228	144	18,03,672	7,229.41	73,435.96
PUNJAB	1,77,253	2191	89	6,77,559	3,966.4	55,3557.98
WEST BENGAL	1,65,798	3,217	145	18,10,762	4,692.07	84,054.67

Table-3: Top Ten Women Owned MSMEs Under Udyam Registration portal

(Up to 31st January, 2024)

(Source: Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, 2024)

States with the Highest Number of Women MSMEs

States differ in the distribution of MSMEs owned by women. Sikkim (0.04%) has the lowest percentage of women-led MSMEs, while West Bengal (23.42%) has the most. The results of the poll show that the southern states of India have an environment that is comparatively more conducive to women entrepreneurs. When it comes to the number of establishments under women-owned firms, these five states rank among the top ten. With 10.73%, Tamil Nadu is in first place, followed by Telangana (7.85%), Karnataka (7.56%), Andhra Pradesh (6.76%), and Kerala (4%).

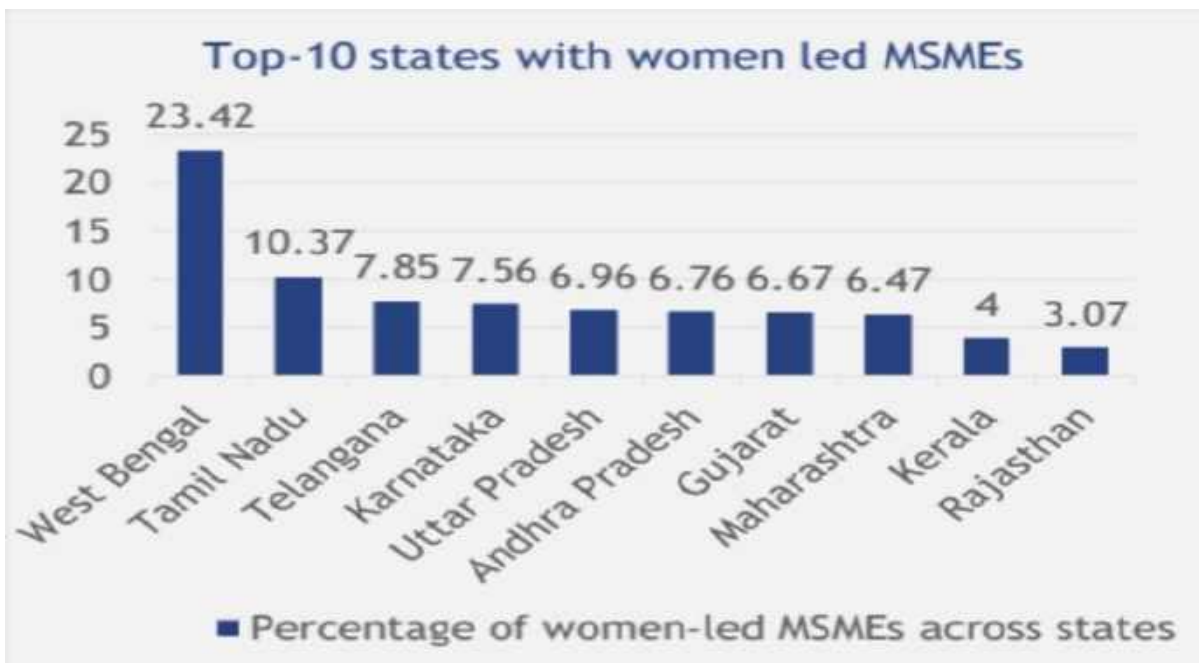


Figure-1: Top 10 states in Share of women MSMEs

(Source: MSME Annual Report 2022-2023)

PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Following are the main problems faced by Women Entrepreneurs:

Fewer Sectors are Women-Friendly: Majority of women-owned companies in the nation are in low-profit industries, with windmills controlling the more lucrative industries like construction and manufacturing. Women entrepreneurs are also compelled by the male-centric



character of many companies to work in what have traditionally been regarded as women-friendly areas such as education, clothing, and beauty care. It severely restricts their experience, opportunities, and skills.

Insufficient Institutional and Social Support: The majority of female entrepreneurs don't receive the social support from peers, family, and local networks that they need to launch their businesses. One of the biggest issues facing women entrepreneurs in the nation is a lack of mentorship from the business community. Even though there are programs to support female entrepreneurs, many women don't get prompt advice or assistance from authorities.

Unsatisfactory Prospects for Funding, Even Though It May Sound Unjust: Due to investor prejudice and other issues, women in the nation do not have easy access to funding. Banks and other financial institutions view women as less creditworthy; many venture capital firms and angel investors hesitate to engage in women-led businesses. Furthermore, a lot of Indian women don't have any assets or property registered in their names, which creates issues when requesting private finance or collateral loans.

Inability to Use Professional Networks: Access to professional networks is another fundamental issue facing Indian women entrepreneurs. The Google Bain pole also shows that a lack of network growth opportunities negatively impacts more than 45% of small business owners in metropolitan areas. Additionally, research indicates that men are predominant in the majority of current professional networks, making it challenging for women to enter or function in these environments.

Pressure to Stick to Traditional Gender Roles: It is expected of women to take care of the home, raise children, cook, and tend to the elderly. It can be difficult to balance work and family obligations, but it becomes much more difficult when you want to establish a brand. One of the biggest obstacles facing female entrepreneurs is the pressure to adhere to established gender stereotypes. They are frequently advised to give up entrepreneurship in favor of an easy career that allows them to spend more time with their families and children.

Absence of an Entrepreneurial Environment: It takes a lot of learning, unlearning, and upskilling to become an entrepreneur. Being in an atmosphere that is rife with entrepreneurial spirit is essential for someone to succeed as a business owner. But a lack of such a productive environment frequently affects a lot of ladies. First of all, family obligations sometimes force



women to run their businesses from home. as a result, pass up chances to network, engage with the business community, and expand their market reach.

Restricted Movement: One of the main issues facing Indian women entrepreneurs is limited mobility. They cannot go on solo trips or stay in hotels for work without being concerned about their safety. In India, there are still more men than women who own motorized vehicles, despite the fact that more financially independent women have begun to invest in automobiles.

Insufficient Schooling: A major qualification for a modern entrepreneur is to have previously managed a profitable company. The entrepreneur should have a business management degree or professional experience working in the relevant field to make up for their lack of experience running a business. Sadly, women's education in India does not receive the attention it deserves.

Limited Capacity to Take Risks: The ability to take on some inherent risk is a prerequisite for investment in and effective business management for entrepreneurs. Women frequently lack financial independence and lack experience making their own decisions. They are also risk-averse because they don't trust the judgments they make.

Juggling Business and Family Responsibilities: Family is frequently viewed as a woman's extension. It is expected of married women to be heavily involved in raising their offspring. Young women are consequently forced to put their families first and take a hiatus from their jobs.

MSME SCHEMES FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTERPRENEURS

The following capacity-building initiatives, which include enhancing women entrepreneurs roles in MSMEs, are carried out by the Ministry of MSMEs:

Entrepreneurship Skill Development Programs: Promoting new businesses, increasing the capacity of already existing MSMEs, and installing an entrepreneurial culture throughout the nation are the goals of the Entrepreneurship Skill Development Programs. It is required that approximately 40% of the beneficiaries of Entrepreneurship skill program come from underprivileged social groups, such as women, SC, ST, physically handicapped people, and women. Participants who are SC, ST, physically disabled, below the poverty line, or women will not be assessed participation fees.



Mahila Coir Yojana (MCY): Mahila Coir Yojana offers a 2-month training program with stipendiary funding with the goal of empowering women craftsmen in the coir industry. Women craftspeople are urged to apply for aid throughout the Prime Minister's employment generation program.

The Mahila Udyam Nidhi Scheme: The Mahila Udyam Nidhi scheme was first created to provide small enterprises with financial support of up to ₹10 lakhs. However, it now also assists women in starting new initiatives and businesses. Women business owners are also free to upgrade their current initiatives under this program. The loans under the Mahila Udyam Nidhi Scheme have a maximum payback term of ten years and a five-year moratorium period. The interest rates vary based on market rates.

The TREAD Program: The goal of the Trade-Related Entrepreneurship, Assistance, and Development, or TREAD, program is to empower women by giving them the credit they deserve for initiatives that include training, guidance, and knowing how to manage them successfully. The goal of this program is to increase the knowledge of women in business. The government contributes up to 30% of the project's overall cost, which is set by the financial institutions under this program.

The Rozgar Yojana of Pradhan Mantri: Women business honors can apply for the Pradhanmantri Rojgar Yojana to get the funding they need to expand their enterprise. The nice part about this system is that it can be used across all services, all sectors, and both new and established organizations. By giving them access to the MSME loans they need to become financially stable, the program seeks to empower women.

Annapurna Yojana: This program is the best choice for any woman who wants to pursue her passion for catering as a company. With the Annapurna Yojana, women can start their own catering businesses by borrowing up to ₹50,000. This program, which has a 36-month payback schedule and collateral requirements, is already helping a lot of women around the nation.

The Udyogini Scheme: The Udyogini scheme is perfect for women who wish to launch any kind of new business. According to the scheme's original design, families with annual incomes under ₹ 1.5 lakhs would benefit most from it. All those in need are to benefit from the Udyogini system, which does not discriminate against any class of women. The 3 lakh rupee loan amount under this initiative has a lower interest rate and is given in cash.



Dena Shakti Scheme: Under this scheme, all female entrepreneurs operating in manufacturing, agriculture, or related fields are eligible to apply for loans. The Dena Shakti scheme offers loans up to ₹50,000 with an interest rate reduction of roughly 0.25%. However, loans up to ₹20,00,000 could be approved for retail commerce, housing, or education.

CONCLUSION

Over the past few years, the micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises sector in the Indian economy has become a highly dynamic and lively sector. Its promotion of entrepreneurship makes a substantial contribution to the nation's economic and social growth. The number of women beneficiaries and women entrepreneurs increases day by day, as guided by the Udyam registration portal. Women who are financially independent are contributing more towards employment and investment and actually helping society grow and develop more quickly. In order to help women attain their business objectives, the Indian government has created programs to make financing available to them. As such, they will have the capacity to grow and offer employment to more women.

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Growth Dynamics and Challenges of MSME based Bakery Industries in India: A SWOT Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a comprehensive SWOT analysis examining the growth and competitiveness of MSME-based bakeries in India, with a specific focus on the North East region. While the sector benefits from robust government support, high technical efficiency, and significant potential for innovation, it is significantly hampered by weaknesses such as outdated equipment, limited access to finance and technology, and a pervasive digital divide. These deficiencies critically impact operational efficiency, product quality, and overall market competitiveness.

The analysis underscores the urgent need for enhanced technology integration within North East MSME bakeries, particularly through the adoption of semi-automatic and fully automatic production operations. Such technological advancements are crucial for addressing current operational inefficiencies, mitigating material wastage, and improving product consistency and safety standards. By embracing modern technology, these bakeries can achieve substantial gains in operational efficiency, leading to higher productivity and reduced costs. Furthermore, technology integration fosters greater competitiveness by enabling faster innovation, better product quality, and improved market access. Critically, it also supports the development of more sustainable practices, from optimized resource utilization to reduced environmental impact. This study employs a descriptive research methodology, primarily utilizing secondary data from official reports and research papers, to conduct a SWOT analysis. The growing domestic production of bakery machinery is helping MSME bakeries cut costs, access easier maintenance, and build skills, enabling stronger growth and competitiveness. This paper argues



that strategic investment in technology is paramount for the long-term viability, sustainable growth of MSME bakeries and ensuring competitiveness in wider markets.

Keywords: *MSME Bakeries, North East region, Technology Integration, SWOT Analysis, Operational Efficiency, Sustainability, Competitiveness.*

INTRODUCTION

India's food processing sector has emerged as a key driver of economic prosperity, job creation, and diversified exports over the past decade. This sector significantly contributed to the nation's Gross Value Added, accounting for nearly 20.2% in 2022–23, thereby highlighting its essential function in connecting agriculture with industrial development. Within this broad sector, the bakery industry has shown remarkable vitality, propelled by increasing urbanization, shifts in dietary habits, and a rising consumer demand for convenient and affordable food options. Bakery items such as bread, biscuits, cakes, and pastries have transformed from supplementary goods into daily staples, particularly for the burgeoning middle-class population.

The contribution of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises to this transformation is especially noteworthy. According to the Ministry of MSME's annual report, approximately 29% of food processing MSMEs operate in bakery-related activities. This trend is attributed to the subsector's low entry barriers, robust local demand, and flexible production capabilities. Governmental support, such as the PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises scheme, introduced in 2020, has further bolstered the ecosystem by facilitating unit modernization, brand building, and cluster-based development. Moreover, the export performance of processed foods, including bakery products, has improved considerably, with their share in agri-food exports growing from 13.7% in 2014–15 to 23.4% in 2023–24.

Despite these advancements, bakery MSMEs continue to face enduring challenges, including limited automation, insufficient capital investment, and intense competition from larger, established producers. These prevailing dynamics position the bakery industry as an excellent focus for studying technology integration within MSMEs, which is paramount for boosting competitiveness, ensuring consistent product quality, and meeting the demands of a rapidly evolving consumer market.



STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

To identify how MSME based Bakery industries despite their crucial role in meeting local demands, generating employment, and fostering entrepreneurship, are grappling with significant challenges. These include issues like low mechanization, limited access to finance, and intense competition from larger, more organized players. In India's Northeast region, these existing problems are intensified by infrastructural deficiencies, weak supply chains, and restricted market access. While new opportunities are emerging, a systematic SWOT analysis is critically needed to develop effective strategies for these businesses to enhance their competitiveness and ensure their long-term sustainability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Identifying enablers of technological innovation for Indian MSMEs using best–worst multi criteria decision making method. Gupta and Barua conducted a study to identify and prioritize factors enabling technological innovation within Indian Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises. Recognizing the pivotal role of MSMEs in economic development and their inherent challenges, the authors utilized the Best–Worst Multi-Criteria Decision Making Method. Their analysis, based on insights from 16 industry and academic experts, revealed that "project resources and capabilities," "technical know-how of entrepreneurs," and "government policies" are the most critical enablers for technological development among Indian MSMEs (Gupta & Barua, 2016). These findings underscore the importance of comprehensive resource availability—encompassing knowledge, infrastructure, capital, and skilled labor—alongside the technical acumen of business leaders and supportive governmental frameworks. Conversely, factors such as "collaborations between industry and academia," "entrepreneur education," "financial support by government for research initiatives," and "SME networks" were found to have a comparatively lesser impact on innovation in this context. While the study's primary focus is on broader MSME technological innovation rather than specific sectors like bakeries, its framework for identifying crucial enablers provides a valuable lens for understanding the systemic challenges and opportunities faced by MSME-based bakery industries in India, particularly when considering their structural features and strategic options within a SWOT analysis.



SME Transformation for Meeting the SDGs in ASIA

The report by Kapoor underscores the significant and growing role of Indian MSMEs in the national economy. This sector is a major employer, second only to agriculture, providing livelihoods for over 110 million people, with micro-enterprises dominating this landscape (Kapoor, 2023). It contributes approximately 26% to India's GDP and nearly 50% to total merchandise exports, demonstrating its economic importance.

Key challenges for Indian MSMEs include limited access to finance, market information, quality human capital, and affordable technology (Kapoor, 2023). A prevalent issue is the sector's informality, which hinders formal growth and scaling. In response, the Indian government has implemented various policies, streamlined processes and promoted digitalization to support MSME growth and resilience, especially after the pandemic.

Productivity Growth in India's Bakery Manufacturing Industry

This paper aims to investigate the Total Factor Productivity (TFP) and its constituent components—technological change, technical efficiency change, scale change, and allocative change—within the Indian bakery industry (Kumar et al., 2022). The study utilizes panel data collected from 35 Indian states, covering the period between 2009-2010 and 2012-2013. To estimate productivity growth, the researchers employed a stochastic frontier function. The findings indicate that TFP in the Indian bakery industry is primarily propelled by technological progress, followed by improvements in technical efficiency and scale efficiency. The research implies that the bakery industry needs to strategically define its innovation approaches, as these are crucial for achieving diverse outcomes that depend on the effective management of resources dedicated to generating and implementing innovations (Kumar et al., 2022)

Draft Detailed Project Report of Karnal Bakery Cluster

The Indian bakery industry represents a significant portion of the global market, with a considerable valuation and a projected growth trajectory. This sector is largely characterized by the dominance of the unorganized segment, encompassing numerous micro and small-scale units, many of which are registered under the Udyog Aadhar Memorandum (Ernst & Young



LLP, 2017). The demand for bakery products has surged over the past two decades, influenced by factors such as globalization, evolving cultural exposures, and dynamic lifestyle changes within the Indian populace. A detailed analysis of these Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in the bakery sector reveals a complex interplay of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. While these units demonstrate adaptability to local market demands, they often grapple with challenges like outdated equipment, insufficient training infrastructure, and limited access to broader markets. Understanding these internal and external factors is crucial for assessing the growth an

MSMEs in Food Appliance Manufacturing and Broader Implications

The manufacturing of domestic electric appliances, specifically food mixers, wet grinders, and food processors, is a critical area for import reduction and domestic growth in India. These appliances are essential in both domestic and commercial food processing sectors, including hotels and restaurants. MSMEs play a vital role in this manufacturing domain, with government initiatives like the Production-Linked Incentive Scheme and support for clusters aiming to boost local production, generate employment, and achieve "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India). Such policies, while focused on appliance manufacturing, signal a broader supportive environment for MSMEs involved in food-related industries. The report (Govindaraj, 2021) also highlights challenges for MSMEs, such as cost-effectiveness in manufacturing components due to low-capacity utilization.

Manufacturing Food Processing Equipment - Industry and Mines Department Government of Gujarat

The manufacturing of food processing equipment is essential for transforming agricultural raw materials into consistent, hygienic food products, supporting the Indian food processing sector which is largely comprised of MSMEs (Manufacturing Food Processing Equipment Industry and Mines Department Government of Gujarat, 2024). The global market for this equipment is projected to grow at a 6.6% CAGR (2023-2027), with India's market seeing a 7.5% CAGR (2021-27) (Manufacturing Food Processing Equipment Industry and Mines Department Government of Gujarat, n.d.). Despite slow mechanization due to labour-intensive processes, it is crucial for quality, waste reduction, and scalability in MSMEs. Policies like the Gujarat Industrial Policy 2020 recognize industrial machinery and equipment manufacturing as a core



OBJECTIVES

- a) To analyze the primary drivers contributing to the growth and productivity of MSME based bakeries across India, including an examination of regional disparities.
- b) To conduct a comprehensive Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis for the Indian bakery MSME sector, assessing its current state regarding innovation capabilities, scalability potential, and formalization challenges, with a specific focus on the Northeast of India.
- c) To investigate the implications of the identified SWOT factors on the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of the Indian bakery MSME sector.

RESEARCH GAP

Existing literature indicates substantial progress in the productivity and technological efficiency of MSME-based food and bakery enterprises. However, these entities continue to face persistent structural and institutional hurdles that impede their scalability and formalization. Key analyses have explored technological facilitators, sectoral efficiency (Meena, 2024; Kumar et al., 2022), relevant policy frameworks, and localized cluster studies, collectively illustrating the dynamic evolution of this sector. Despite these contributions, a notable scarcity exists in empirical investigations that specifically target the Indian bakery MSME sector, particularly those that integrate productivity, innovation, and a comprehensive SWOT analysis.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study will concentrate on bakery businesses that are classified as Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises throughout India, with a particular focus on the Northeast region. We'll look at their organizational structures, the problems they face, the opportunities available to them, and potential strategic choices, all within a SWOT framework. To gain insights into how these businesses can improve their performance and become more resilient, we will use both original data collected by us and existing information.



LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study offers a descriptive overview, examining the growth and competition among MSME bakeries in India, particularly from the perspective of the Northeast region, through a SWOT analysis. However, due to time limitations, this research relies solely on secondary data. Furthermore, given the highly consolidated nature of food processing activities within micro and small-scale MSME food processing industries operating in the remote North Eastern region, more in-depth primary investigation is needed.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive research methodology, primarily utilizing secondary data from official reports and research papers, to conduct a SWOT analysis. The objective is to examine the expansion and competitive standing of MSME bakeries in India, with a specific focus on the North East Region.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This SWOT analysis integrates findings from various sources to provide a nuanced understanding of the landscape for MSME bakeries, explicitly addressing the gaps related to productivity, innovation, and pathways to scalability and formalization.

STRENGTHS

Robust Government Support & Policy Frameworks: The Indian government has significantly prioritized the food processing sector, a key area for MSMEs. Initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana initially allocated ₹6,000 crore and has been further extended with an allocation of ₹4,600 crore until March 2026, sanctioning 1,608 projects including 41 Mega Food Parks and 394 Cold Chain projects (From Farm to Retail: Make in India's Push for Food Processing Excellence Empowering Farmers, Enhancing Value, Expanding Markets, 2025, n.d.). The Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises scheme, launched in June 2020 with a total outlay of ₹10,000 crore, aims to benefit 2 lakh enterprises through credit-linked subsidies and an "One District One Product" approach. Furthermore, the Production Linked Incentive scheme directly supports 70 MSMEs, with



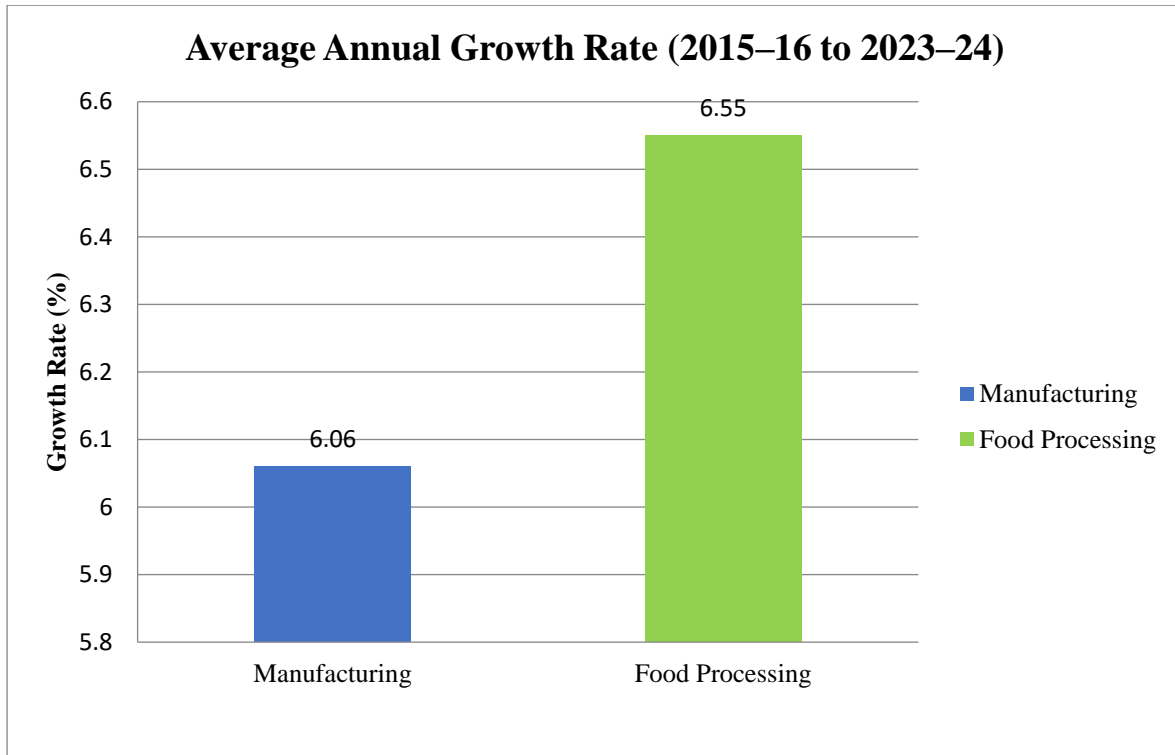
another 40 contributing as contract manufacturers for larger companies. These policies foster innovation, enhance competitiveness, and expand market access, contributing to the sector's formalization and scalability (Gupta & Barua, 2016).

Scheme	Value	Description
PMKSY	₹10,600 crore	Includes ₹6,000 crore initial + ₹4,600 crore extension till 2026
PMFME	₹10,000 crore	Supporting 2 lakh micro food units (ODOP approach)
PLI Supported MSMEs	70 units	Direct beneficiaries under Production Linked Incentive
Budget Increase	30.19%	MoFPI 2024–25 budget hike

Table 1: Depicting government support for MSME-Based Food Processing industries (2020–2025)

Source: Author's own compilation

High Technical Efficiency in Bakery Sector: The bakery and beverage products sub-sector demonstrates "frontier-level efficiency" within the Indian food manufacturing industry, indicating strong productivity (Meena, 2023). The Indian food processing industry as a whole has witnessed remarkable growth, with an Average Annual Growth Rate of approximately 6.55% between 2015-16 and 2023-24, surpassing the 6.06% in manufacturing at 2011-12 prices (FOOD PROCESSING Towards Sustainable Growth Opportunities Sector Profile Bakery, 2024). The bakery manufacturing sector contributes 1.14% to India's Gross Domestic Product and directly employs over 1.6 million people, with an additional 120 million jobs supported indirectly through its supply chains (Kumar et al., 2022). India's baked goods exports surged by a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 10%, from US\$346.7 million (₹2,426.9 crore, using 70 INR approx. against USD) in FY19 to US\$557.6 million (₹4,630.08 crore, using 83 INR approx. against USD) in FY24, signalling its growing presence in the international market



(FOOD PROCESSING Towards Sustainable Growth Opportunities Sector Profile Bakery, 2024).

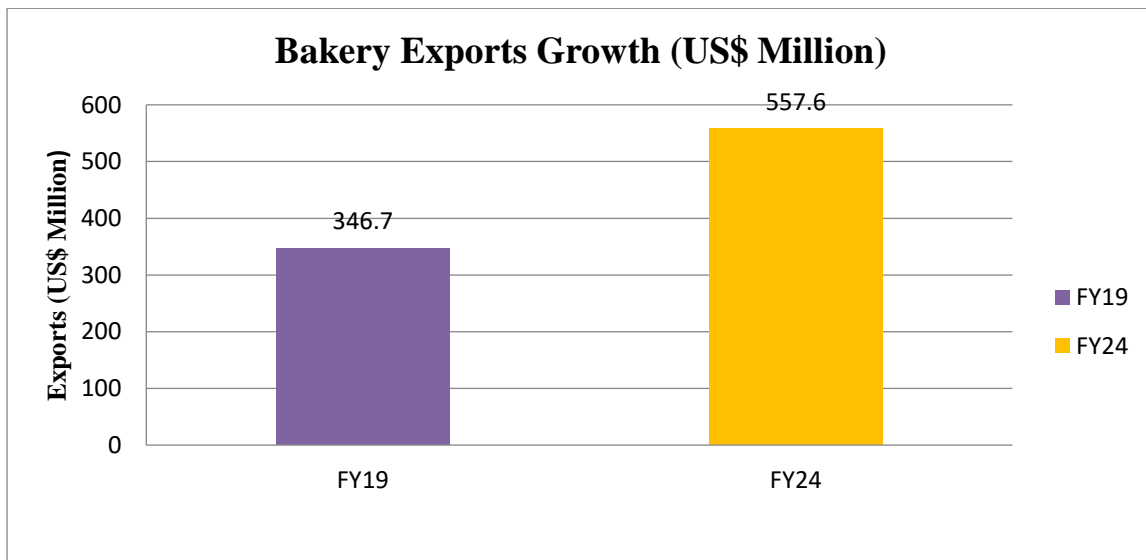


Fig 1: Highlighting Performance and Export growth of India’s Bakery sector

Source-Source: Author’s compilation



Hence, a strong **CAGR of 10%** in bakery exports reflects India's rising global competitiveness and increasing adoption of automation and technology by MSMEs.

High Potential for Innovation and Product Quality Improvement: Innovation is a critical driver for competitiveness in developing countries like India (Ahmed et al., 2022). Small enterprises primarily focus on improving product performance and quality, directly impacting productivity and competitiveness (Gupta & Barua, 2016). The government actively supports Research and Development and skill development for baked goods, recognizing its potential to meet evolving consumer demands for healthier and more convenient products (FOOD PROCESSING Towards Sustainable Growth Opportunities Sector Profile Bakery, 2024).

Strategic Economic Contribution of MSMEs: MSMEs are pivotal to India's economic development, contributing approximately 26% to the national GDP and nearly 50% to total merchandise exports (Gupta & Barua, 2016). This sector is a major employer, providing livelihoods for over 110 million people, second only to agriculture (Gupta & Barua, 2016). The broader food processing industry itself generates nearly US\$40 billion (approximately ₹3,32,000 crore, using ~83 INR/USD for FY24) in export earnings from agricultural and processed food products (From Farm to Retail: Make in India's Push for Food Processing Excellence Empowering Farmers, Enhancing Value, Expanding Markets, 2025). Its employment intensity is notable: for every ₹1 million invested in the organized food processing industry, 18 direct and 64 indirect jobs are created (Rais et al., 2013). The food sector's economic multiplier effect is estimated at 2 to 2.5, meaning every rupee of revenue generates 2 to 2.5 rupees for the broader economy (Rais et al., 2013).



Indicator	Value
MSME Contribution to GDP	26%
MSME Share in Exports	50%
Employment Generated	110 Million People
Export Earnings (Food Processing)	₹3,32,000 Crore
Jobs per ₹1M Investment	82 including direct and indirect jobs
Economic Multiplier Effect	2–2.5 times

Table 2: Economic Contribution of MSMEs and Food Processing Sector in India

Source: Authors own compilation

WEAKNESSES

Outdated Equipment & Insufficient Training: Many bakery MSMEs utilize outdated machinery, leading to the production of substandard products and hampering quality (Shankar, 2017). A significant challenge is the lack of training facilities for workers, with most training being on-the-job, which can result in material wastage and production delays. These technological deficits impede competitiveness and the ability to meet food safety standards.

Limited Access to Finance, Market Information, Human Capital, & Affordable Technology: Indian MSMEs face significant hurdles, including limited access to finance, market information, quality human capital, and affordable technology (Gupta & Barua, 2016). For instance, insufficient credit and a lack of skilled labor are identified as primary causes of inefficiency in the unorganized food processing industry. The difficulty in securing capital and technology prevents these businesses from modernizing and scaling effectively (Bongarala & Maddala, 2022).



Prevalence of Informality: The Indian food processing industry is highly fragmented and predominantly characterized by its unorganized sector, which accounts for approximately 42% of the total output and commands about 75% of the market share (Rais et al., 2013). Furthermore, a substantial 82% of the total workforce in the food processing industry is employed by the unorganized sector (Rais et al., 2013). This informality hinders formal growth and scalability, limiting access to formal credit and government benefits (Gupta & Barua, 2016).

Digital Divide & Inadequate Digital Integration: The adoption of Information and Communication Technologies in informal microenterprises is largely restricted to mobile phones, with minimal application to core business activities. Structural barriers, such as reliance on walk-in customers, cash transactions, and a lack of electricity, further impede the positive impact of ICTs on productivity or growth.

Poor Sustainability Practices & Infrastructural Deficiencies: Inadequate infrastructural facilities represent a critical challenge, with a weighted response of 44.25% in industry surveys (Rais et al., 2013). This includes issues with packaging, storage, and fragmentation, contributing to substantial post-harvest food losses, estimated at around 74 million tonnes annually in India (Gupta & Barua, 2016). Such inefficiencies not only lead to waste but also impact profitability and sustainability.

OPPORTUNITIES

Rapid Urbanization & Shifting Dietary Habits: Rapid urbanization, coupled with evolving dietary patterns and an increasing demand for convenient and affordable food options, drives significant growth for the bakery industry (Gupta & Barua, 2016; National Institute of Nutrition, 2021). The consumption of bakery products is expected to rise due to population growth, increasing incomes, and a preference for convenience (FOOD PROCESSING Towards Sustainable Growth Opportunities Sector Profile Bakery, 2024). On average, an Indian household allocates about 50% of its expenditure to food items (Sarangi, n.d.).

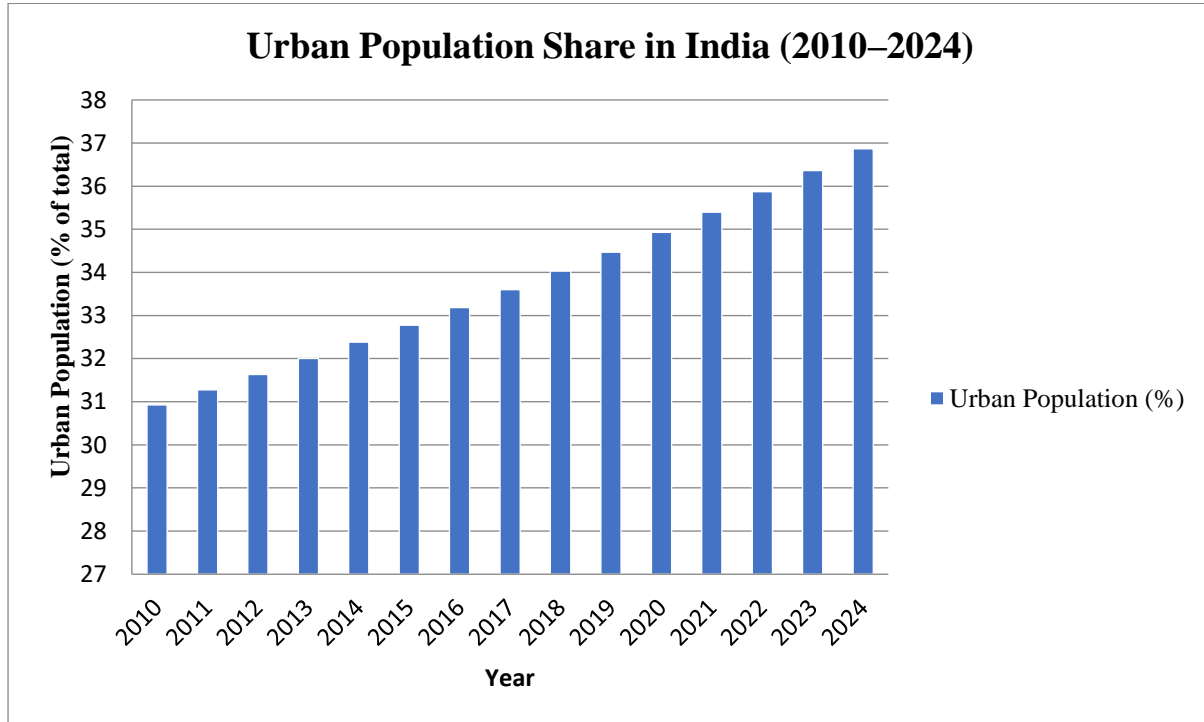


Fig 2.: Rise in Urban Population in India (2010–2024)

Source: Author's compilation from World Bank report, 2024

Low Entry Barriers, Robust Local Demand, & Flexible Production: The sector benefits from relatively low entry barriers and strong local demand, encouraging new entrepreneurial ventures (CHOUDHURY, 2024; Gupta & Barua, 2016). This allows MSMEs to exhibit flexible production capabilities, enabling them to respond effectively to niche demands and localized preferences (Gupta & Barua, 2016).

Increased Consumer Awareness for Nutritional & Ecological Benefits: Growing consumer awareness regarding the nutritional and ecological advantages of traditional ingredients, such as millets, presents a significant opportunity. Millets are recognized for being nutrient-dense and resilient crops, even in challenging climates (Al-Khusaibi et al., 2019). This trend, coupled with policy efforts to promote these grains, allows entrepreneurs to explore alternative ingredients and develop health-conscious and sustainable bakery products (Shah et al., 2022).



Growing Appreciation for Traditional & Healthy Ingredients: New national dietary recommendations and health research underscore a growing return to traditional and whole-grain foods, including millets like jowar, bajra, and ragi, as well as chakki atta, in Indian eating habits (National Institute of Nutrition, 2021). These whole grains are now acknowledged for their nutritional density and high fiber content, which help in lowering the risk of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases. According to Misra, Rastogi, and Joshi (2009), consumers in Asian India are showing an increasing preference for food products made with whole grains, such as multigrain bread and millet-based baked goods. This consumer behavior aligns with government policies that promote indigenous cereals for improved nutrition and food security. This presents an opportunity for MSME bakeries to innovate their product ranges, focusing on traditional, millet-based, and whole-wheat items. Doing so could boost their competitiveness while meeting the demands of health-aware urban and semi-urban populations.

THREATS

Intense Competition: The Indian bakery sector faces intense competition from both organized players and numerous unorganized local businesses (De et al., 2018). The industry is largely dominated by the unorganized segment, with a production capacity of 3 million tonnes, creating a crowded and competitive landscape (Shankar, 2017). Without continuous innovation and quality improvements, MSMEs risk losing market share to more agile or better-resourced competitors (Ali et al., 2021).

Risk of Losing Market Share Due to Lack of Innovation: A sluggish adoption rate of new technology within the food processing equipment sector can lead to MSMEs being outpaced by more technologically advanced competitors (Gupta & Barua, 2016). This technological lag can result in a loss of market share for MSMEs that fail to innovate and improve product quality (Ali et al., 2021).



Unpredictable Market Conditions & Evolving Regulations: The food processing sector is complex, governed by multiple acts across nine ministries and 13 central orders, in addition to various state-level regulations (Rais et al., 2013). Such an intricate and evolving regulatory environment, coupled with unpredictable market conditions and rising maintenance costs, can create instability, making it difficult for resource-limited MSMEs to adapt and maintain long-term operational stability (De et al., 2018).

Increasing Pressure for Sustainable Practices & Eco-Consciousness: There is growing pressure for adopting sustainable practices and eco-consciousness within the industry (Shaposhnikov et al., 2023). The Indian food processing industry's reliance on labor-intensive processes often leads to slow mechanization, despite its importance for consistency, quality, and scalability (Gupta & Barua, 2016). Moreover, a high import dependency for food processing equipment adds another layer of vulnerability, potentially increasing costs and hindering efforts toward greater sustainability (Gupta & Barua, 2016).

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growing domestic production of bakery equipment, leading to cost reductions.• Robust government backing through policies like PMFME, CEFPPC, and NEIDS.• Rising consumer demand for bakery and confectionery goods.• Development of a skilled workforce and fostering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research, development, and innovation in indigenous equipment design are limited.• Rural MSMEs heavily rely on manual or semi-automatic production methods.• Remote regions lack adequate cold chain and packaging infrastructure.



<p>entrepreneurship via institutions like IIE and NIFTEM.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•• Enhancement of quality through mechanization and standardized processes.• Improved preparedness for export markets, demonstrated by certifications such as EHEDG and ISO for MSMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessing affordable financing for modernization remains a challenge.• Quality control and food safety compliance are inconsistent.•• Brand visibility is low beyond regional markets.
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Threats</p>
<p>Increased Bakery Consumption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growth of Domestic Equipment Clusters• Expanding Digital Sales Channels• Export Opportunities• Training and Incubation Support• Sustainable Local Sourcing	<p>Import dependency for advanced machinery components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competition from large industrial bakery chains• Price fluctuations in raw materials• Technological lag and low digital adoption• Regulatory challenges for export product standardization• Climate-related risks impacting local ingredient availability

Fig 3. SWOT analysis of MSME-based bakeries in India

Source: Author's own compilation based on the above detailed SWOT analysis



Category	Description
Strengths	<p>The government is strongly supporting this sector through initiatives like the Ministry of Food Processing Industries' North East Mega Food Park Scheme, PMFME, and NEIDS, which provide significant financial incentives such as up to 70% capital subsidies and tax benefits. The region also boasts a plentiful supply of raw materials, including locally grown wheat, rice, and millets, which are essential for bakery production. Growing urban areas like Guwahati, Agartala, and Shillong are consistently driving demand for bread and other bakery items. Furthermore, micro and small bakery units offer substantial job creation opportunities, particularly for women and young people.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Most bakery units primarily depend on manual production methods, indicating low levels of automation. The region also faces challenges with an underdeveloped supply chain infrastructure, leading to high transportation costs due to difficult geographical conditions. Products often have a short shelf life, compounded by insufficient cold storage and packaging facilities. Furthermore, a high degree of informality exists within the sector, with approximately 70% of bakery units operating without the necessary FSSAI certification (NEDFi, 2022).</p>
Opportunities	<p>Consumers are increasingly aware of nutritional benefits, leading to a higher demand for products like brown bread, multigrain options, and items made from millets. There's also an expansion of MSME support schemes, particularly under PMFME and MoFPI, which are targeting bakery clusters in regions such as Cachar, West Tripura, and East Khasi Hills NEIDS (2017). A significant opportunity exists for adding value through the development of organic and gluten-free bread varieties, utilizing local</p>



	grains like ragi and bajra. Additionally, subsidies and tax exemptions provided by NEIDS are stimulating increased entrepreneurship and investment in the sector.
Threats	The bakery sector faces significant competition from well-established national brands and cheaper imported products from neighboring regions. High costs associated with transportation and energy further restrict profitability and growth potential. There's also a notable shortage of skilled labor, compounded by the absence of specialized bakery training institutions in the area. Additionally, climatic conditions, particularly humidity, pose challenges by negatively impacting product quality and shelf life.

Table 3: SWOT analysis of MSME based bread industry in the North Eastern Region of India

Source: Author's own compilation based on data and NEDFi (2022), and MSME Annual Report (2024–25). insights from MoFPI (2019, 2024)

The long-term health and competitive standing of India's bakery MSME sector are profoundly influenced by the interplay of its inherent strengths and weaknesses, alongside external opportunities and threats. Governmental support, including significant initiatives for financial aid and market access, provides a solid foundation for growth, fostering innovation and contributing to formalization and sustained investment. The sector also exhibits a notable efficiency in its bakery and beverage segments, yielding cost advantages that allow businesses to maintain competitive pricing and profitability, which are crucial for enduring operations.

However, the sector faces substantial internal vulnerabilities that can impede its progress. Many bakery MSMEs struggle with outdated equipment, inadequate training, and limited access to both broader markets and essential resources such as finance, market intelligence, skilled labor, and advanced technology. These deficiencies collectively hinder modernization,



technological adoption, and workforce development, making it difficult for these businesses to innovate and compete effectively against larger entities. The widespread informality within the sector further complicates growth, restricting access to formal credit and benefits. Additionally, a significant digital divide persists, with many small businesses lacking internet connectivity and facing organizational challenges that undermine operational efficiency, limiting their ability to leverage digital marketing, streamline supply chains, or engage in e-commerce. Furthermore, resource constraints in an emerging economy often lead to suboptimal sustainability practices, resulting in inadequate infrastructure, packaging, storage, fragmentation, and a lack of transparency, all contributing to significant waste.

Despite these challenges, external opportunities offer a pathway to sustainable growth. Rapid urbanization, evolving dietary patterns, and a growing demand for convenient and affordable food products act as powerful stimulants for the bakery industry. Businesses that can adapt to these trends stand to gain from market expansion, product diversification, and increased revenues. The sector benefits from low entry barriers and robust local demand, which encourage new entrepreneurship and provide flexible production capabilities to meet specialized and local preferences. A rising consumer awareness regarding the nutritional and ecological benefits of traditional grains, particularly millets, coupled with supportive policies, opens new avenues for developing healthy, sustainable, and innovative products. Yet, these opportunities are tempered by significant external threats. Intense competition from both organized and unorganized players poses a constant risk, requiring continuous innovation and quality improvements to avoid market share erosion. Unpredictable market conditions, evolving regulations, rising operational costs, and increasing demands for sustainable and eco-conscious practices further challenge the sector. The ability to strategically identify and prioritize these factors is critical; a failure to do so could render MSMEs ineffective in responding to market dynamics, ultimately jeopardizing their long-term survival and competitiveness.

The North East Indian bakery MSME sector operates within a distinctive environment where the typical strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats observed nationally are significantly amplified. The region benefits from substantial natural advantages, including



diverse agro-climatic conditions that provide an abundant supply of raw materials essential for food processing. There is also a valuable human resource base, with an educated workforce ready for engagement in the sector. Government support and the potential for cross-border trade further enhance entrepreneurial prospects and market expansion.

However, the familiar challenges confronting MSMEs across India—such as limited mechanization, restricted access to finance, and intense market competition—are often heightened in the North East. This intensification stems from pervasive infrastructural deficiencies, underdeveloped supply chains, and constrained market access, particularly in rural areas. Local assessments consistently identify specific impediments, including financial constraints, inadequate infrastructure, difficulties in labor and management, and problems related to market reach and input procurement. Additionally, businesses in this region must contend with fierce competition within relatively small consumer markets, coupled with elevated operational costs and often a lack of awareness regarding global market trends. The scarcity of large-scale processing units further limits value addition and scalability, impacting the overall agricultural value chain. Consequently, for bakery MSMEs in North East India to achieve lasting sustainability and competitiveness, it is imperative to develop strategic interventions that specifically address these magnified regional challenges while simultaneously capitalizing on the unique local opportunities available.

SWOT analysis of NE region	Sustainability Implication	Competitiveness Impact
Strengths: Local raw materials & cultural demand	Boosts local sourcing, rural income; resilient supply chains.	Cost advantage; unique local product differentiation.
Weaknesses: Limited tech & small scale	Restricts economies of scale; slows productivity growth.	Lower output & limited market reach unless modernised.
Opportunities: Govt policy & PMFME support	Enables upgrades, finance access & cluster development.	Improves efficiency, product quality and market access.



Threats: Logistics & large-brand competition	Higher costs and spoilage risk; distribution gaps.	Market share loss unless logistics, branding & e-commerce improve.
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Table 4 - The impact of a SWOT analysis on the long-term viability and competitive standing of MSME based bakeries in Northeast India

Source: Author's own compilation based on data from MoFPI (2024), PMFME Guidelines (2023), and NEDFi (2024)

Also, there is huge impact of domestic equipment manufacturing on the growth of MSME based bakeries in India.

Local Manufacturing Capacity

Domestic equipment manufacturing significantly influences MSME bakeries by fostering a robust local ecosystem. With 3,388 MSMEs producing bakery-related equipment across India, import dependency is reduced, ensuring a steady local supply and promoting regional entrepreneurship.

Cost & Accessibility

The profitability of domestic manufacturers, evidenced by returns on investment up to 74.8% and 12.8% profit margins, translates into more affordable machinery. This in turn lowers entry barriers and accelerates the establishment of MSME bakeries, especially in the North-East, making essential equipment more accessible.

Trade Performance

While India exported ₹299 crore in bakery equipment in 2019–20, a reliance on imported components (98% from China) suggests a potential opportunity for growth in domestic component manufacturing to further enhance overall competitiveness within the sector.



Government Support

Government support, through schemes like PLI (4–6%), CLCS (15% subsidy), CGTMSE, MSE-CDP, and specific Northeast incentives, actively boosts modernization efforts and reduces capital risks for MSME bakeries investing in mechanization.

Technology Clusters

Existing technology clusters in areas like Coimbatore and Maharashtra, with emerging bakery equipment hubs in Assam and Meghalaya, help reduce logistics costs and ensure the availability of authorized technicians.

Skill Development

Initiatives like CSIR's development of over 300 food machinery designs and subsequent transfer of 1,600 licenses for commercial use, contribute to improving technical expertise and maintenance capacity for MSMEs, particularly those in remote areas.

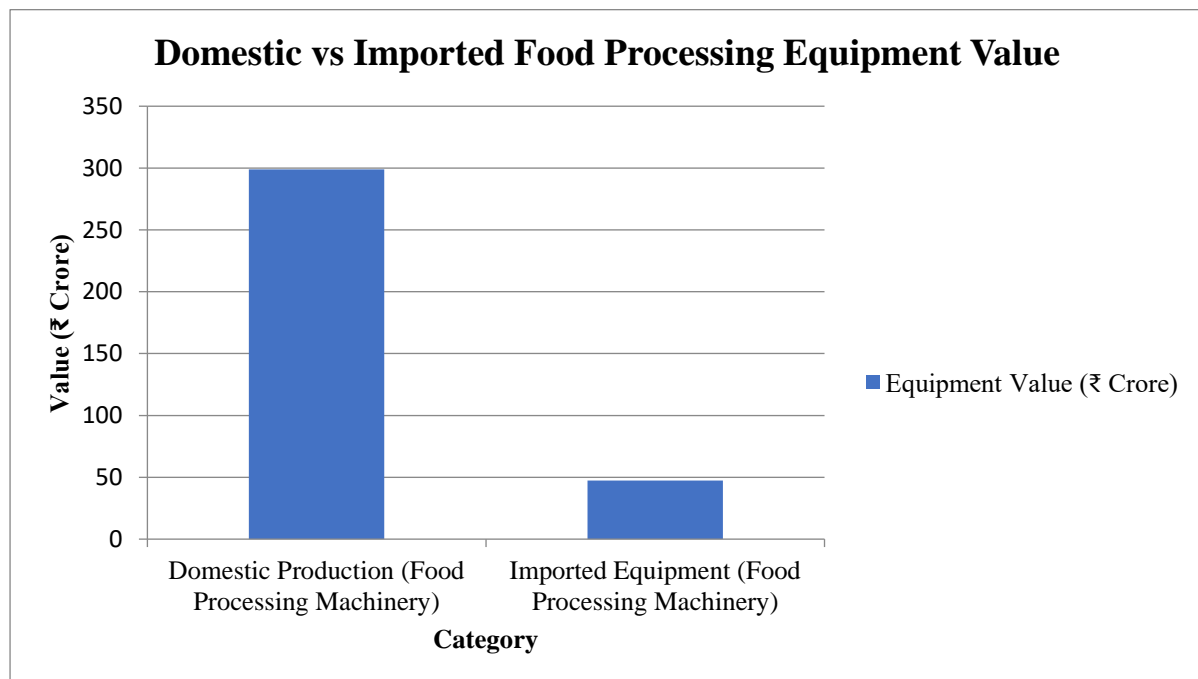


Fig 4.: Trade Comparison Highlighting Growth of Domestic Food Processing Machinery in India

Source: Author's own compilation based on Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) data (2024)



CONCLUSION

The growth and competitiveness of India's MSME-based bakery sector are significantly boosted by the increasing availability of domestically manufactured bakery equipment. This development leads to lower equipment costs, localized maintenance services, improved skill development, and supportive government policies. As a result, MSMEs, especially those in the North-East, are better equipped to increase production, uphold product quality, and pursue export markets. To maintain this progress, it will be crucial to further strengthen local manufacturing clusters and enhance self-sufficiency in component production.

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Students' Perception of the Role of Industry for Successful Skill Development Programs in Delhi

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ABSTRACT

At this juncture, when the world is looking at Indian Skill Development Programs and when Indian human resources are needed all across the globe, it is important to maintain quality assurance of Skill Development Programs. Industrial collaborations with the institutes of training have proven a successful model in developed countries like Germany, Finland, Brazil, etc. Though Skill development has become the buzzword in India, and all stakeholders understand the importance of skill development, it is important that efforts for the same may be synchronized with a clear understanding of the roles of each stakeholder. With this background, through this study, an effort has been made to understand students' perception for identifying areas of industry collaboration that may prove to be milestones in the direction of industrial collaboration in educational institutions, particularly for skill development.

Key words: *Skill Development, Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), Industry Collaboration*



INTRODUCTION

In today's global scenario, a skill-based educational system is of paramount importance for every student in order to build competitive advantage, personal development and professional success. Learning any new specific skill enhances the capabilities of solving real-world problems, develops confidence and contributes creatively in all professional pursuits. Thus, every educational system should encourage students to learn new skills.

Further, we all know that the fundamental purpose of education delivery has undergone a paradigm shift due to enormous advances in science, technology and socio-economics and in recent years, skill development is gaining tremendous importance in our country. Skill Development is defined as a means of preparing for occupational fields and effective participation in the world of work. It also includes aspects of continued learning in order to become responsible citizens and an instrument to promote environment-friendly technologies for a greener and cleaner world.

Though we have already called for an action to think about various basic issues of skill-based education and skill development in our country, however, we also urgently need to address about smooth implementation of a flexible skill development system in secondary and post-secondary education. We need to accord the highest priority to a flexible skill development system to adapt our educational structure to the global context and promote students' skill learning with ease while maintaining overall training and education quality. At the same time, it facilitates not only improving core competencies and practical skills of the student but also introduces additional ways to promote lifelong learning.

India strongly needs an adaptable educational system that can change with the demands of the workforce and society. It is imperative that it may not be possible to effectively educate young minds for the VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) world of today using the customary approach of the educational system. Presently, an educational base should allow our students to choose from a variety of structured and personalized approaches to learning and



development. In other words, a flexible educational system should take into account academic and vocational programs, internships, and apprenticeships, under a flexible educational system. This is important for the students to experience real-world situations so that they know and develop the essential abilities needed for all future prospects.

As per a report by SBI Research, the working-age population in India has witnessed quite an increasing trend since 1971 and is expected to account for 64.4 per cent in the soon-to-be-exercised Census, which is estimated to further increase to 65.2 per cent in 2031. India has been one of the fastest-growing economies in the world in recent years, and in order to sustain the growth momentum, our foremost priority is to make available necessary modern infrastructure and the latest pedagogy practices along with trained trainers in our skill development ecosystem. Though in India, provision of skills training is exemplary and updated to sustain growth, development and business opportunities, still our proportion of trained workforce is among the lowest in the world.

At present, skills and vocational set-up in India is provided mainly through Industrial Training Institutes, Polytechnics and Private Vocational Training Providers. In addition to this, Skill Universities are also providing skill training in certain specialized trades. As our economy is now a skill-driven economy, the Indian government has also introduced various skill development programs to equip the youth population and professionals with industry-relevant expertise. Some of the initiatives taken in the recent past to enhance the quality of skill education by associating the industry as a partner in skill development are:

- improving the infrastructure of the institutes
- training of the trainers
- involving the industry in the training of the students
- improving soft skills and language proficiency
- improvement in the service conditions of the faculty and trainers



OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In India, skill development has become a hot topic; therefore, efforts must be coordinated with a clear knowledge of each stakeholder's role. Industry collaborations are generally made in view of training institutes' infrastructural requirements. However, view of a key stakeholder, i.e., students, is seldom focused. In view of this fact, the present study is guided by the following objectives

- i. To identify various areas of industry participation in skill development programs of NCT of Delhi from the students' perspective.
- ii. To identify the role of industry for successful skill development programs in NCT of Delhi.
- iii. To make recommendations about the industry's contribution to make skill development programs more successful.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study tries to concentrate on the literature about industry collaboration for the betterment of skill training, particularly in the Indian context. The necessity of industry engagement was discovered by Nangia & Pramanik (2011) and Zahid Ali (2008). K. Viswanadhan et al. (2005) have demonstrated the lack of qualified teachers in the skill world. H. Padmini et al. extensively discuss curriculum development in their writings (2009). Most crucially, these reviews acknowledge the connection between social duty, professional growth, and cultural orientation. Despite the fact that academicians are working very hard in the field of educational reforms, several research gaps on themes linked to skill training and education still exist. The biggest gap in the literature is usually found in the areas of skill development, corporate satisfaction, expectations and industry perspectives on skill education. India benefits largely from having a young labour force. It is imperative to concentrate on improving the employability of the students enrolled in undergraduate programs and the quality of workforce required by various business sectors.



Stahl et al. (2012) encompass that most of the companies have already established a world-class training centres and huge learning campuses; they have already started working with the best institutes and universities in the world, where they are using the latest developments being done in leadership for crafting and utilizing tools and technologies for making the best talents. As per contemporary studies on skill development in Technical Education, Author, Greenan et al. (1997) Ireland have explored programmes ought to concentrate on students' needs and be more intuitive in outline; curriculum advancement and on using proper educational methods which upgrade learning and create authority and relational aptitudes.

Reports of OECD released in 2013 have attributed that the unemployment youth are due to basic mismatch that exist between skill-set and available jobs in the markets. The inadequate capacity of vocational educational training centers is unable to respond to the needs of the entire market, and the same has been portrayed by numerous commentators (Akoojee, Gewer and McGrath, 2005; McGrath and Akoojee, 2009, McGrath, 2003). Employers perceive that vocational training colleges are not supplying the kind of skill-set that the industry requires and an alarming rate of increased young generation who have received such training from these institutes or artisan training institutes are not getting appropriate jobs after their graduation course.

According to Vinay K. Nangia and Cashmira Pramanik (2011), India must move forward through creative partnerships between business and academia through collaborative knowledge generation and sharing. There is a great need to develop alternative avenues that must be intensified, stimulated, and above all integrated, for a close academic and industrial interaction through all stages of technology development, starting from conceptualization down to commercialization. Cooperative research is the key to filling the gaps existing in the current structure. Instead of choosing one specific model, technical institutions should investigate many types of collaboration and adhere to a pattern where the institution feels at ease cooperating with the industry. Pfeffer Jeffrey (2007) suggested a list of Human resource (HR) practices that are being adopted by effective firms. One of the prominent practices is to make a high investment in training and skill development. As Schultz, T. W. (1961) defined, human can be considered as the knowledge and skills that people attain through better education and



high-level trainings. This form of resources is measured as a product of pre-meditated investment that yields better returns to individuals. (Nafukho 2004).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is empirical research done on the basis of a review of literature; and the study has formed a self-administered and structured questionnaire which is developed for past, existing and potential trainees. The quota sampling method is adopted for data collection. The sample size of 515 trainees or students has been collected from the total population size of 4155 students undergoing training, as on 31st December 2017; as per the report of the Directorate General of Training (DGT) comes under Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE report, 2017). Mainly, three sectors, i.e., electrical, automobile and refrigeration & air-conditioning have been included in the study, and the impact of the association of prominent industry partners of these areas with government institutes that offer courses in these areas to the secondary or senior secondary passed students has been explored.

The data collected is analysed with the help of statistical techniques and appropriate tests with the help of computer software; Jamovi 1.0.0 has been applied for the final analysis. Cronbach's alpha test was performed in the study to check the reliability of the questions in the questionnaire. (Cronbach; 1951).

The Cronbach's alpha test resulted in 94.5 per cent of scale reliability. It indicates internal consistency of the selected scale is good. Knocke, D., Bohrnstedt, G. W., & Mee, A. P. (1994) suggest that research should come across for Cronbach's alphas of 0.70 or higher. Hence, scale reliability is well established.

PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The sample suggests that 42.72 per cent of the respondents were from the rural areas and rest are from the urban areas. The family income suggests that 40.58 per cent of the respondents are from the income group of five lakhs to seven lakhs, and the second highest frequency of 115 respondents is from the income group of 7.26 lakh to 10 lakh, which suggests that the higher the income group, the lower the chances of the person opting for skill-based education.



The reason behind this may be that the high-income group prefers to send their wards for professional education as compared to skill-based education. The study has considered the ITI students where the vocational education is mainly carried out in India.

Approximately 32.04 per cent of the trainees are aspiring to become executives, just after the completion of their skill-based education, and 51.46 per cent of them are aspiring for government jobs after the completion of the course, as they believe that the course has been initiated by the government of India. Hence, the Government should accept their candidature in the public sector jobs or the government department jobs. Out of total 515, 46.8 per cent of the student joined the ITI just after their 12th class, and 25.05 per cent have joined the ITI course after their 10th class. ITI courses are basically skill-based courses; hence, they lose their importance after graduation. Soft skill training is the major preference of the students to learn just after their school education. However, the second preference has been given to the job, and the subsequent preference is gaining a diploma and pursuing other graduation degree.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ABOUT THE ROLE OF INDUSTRY REGARDING SKILL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

To evaluate the effectiveness of industry–institute collaboration and its perceived impact on teaching–learning processes, a structured questionnaire was administered to the trainees. Respondents rated each statement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”). The mean values, standard deviations, standard errors, and p-values have been computed to assess central tendency, variability, and statistical significance of the responses. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for each statement, highlighting the overall perception of respondents toward the role of industry collaboration in enhancing institutional performance and employability.



S.No.	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	SE	P-Value
1	In my institute many training programmes and guest lectures are organized in collaboration with industry partners which enhance my knowledge	3.65	1.321	0.0582	< .001
2	My principal has been highly enthusiastic to provide industry relevant skills to the students	4.01	1.124	0.0495	< .001
3	Presence of trainers from the industry in the institute makes learning more useful for suitable employment	4.02	0.992	0.0437	< .001
4	Industrial internship has widened my horizon	3.57	1.341	0.0591	< .001
5	The curriculum followed in my institute is industry relevant	4.24	0.838	0.0369	< .001
6	I find latest technologies are used in my institute's workshops and labs due to industry collaboration	3.90	0.910	0.0401	< .001
7	I got enough opportunities to visit industries of my trade while my training in the institute	3.72	1.124	0.0495	< .001
8	Many industrial trainers visited my institute during training and that provided opportunities for regular interaction with the industry	3.52	1.438	0.0634	< .001
9	I feel industries may fund for up gradation of training institutes	3.97	0.962	0.0424	< .001



10	Providing equipment for training is the responsibility of industry	3.90	1.092	0.0481	< .001
11	Inviting resource persons from industry helps not only in building better relationships but also prepare trainees for future job roles	4.07	1.087	0.0479	< .001
12	I feel trainers should often be trained by the industry in real industrial Circumstances	4.14	0.904	0.0399	< .001
13	If industries partner with the institutes capacity building of the institutes may take place	3.83	1.033	0.0455	< .001
14	An industrial partnership with the institute has resulted in very good placements for the students	3.61	1.203	0.0530	< .001
15	Industries should come forward to enrol trainees under the apprenticeship scheme	4.03	1.049	0.0462	< .001

The analysis of responses on industry–institute collaboration reveals an overall positive perception among the trainees toward initiatives that link educational institutions with industry. The data presented in Table 1 show that all statements yielded **mean scores above 3.5**, indicating that most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the items reflecting the benefits and relevance of industry partnerships.

The **highest mean value (M = 4.24, SD = 0.838)** corresponds to the statement “*The curriculum followed in my institute is industry relevant,*” highlighting a strong belief that academic content aligns well with current industry requirements. Similarly, high agreement is observed for statements such as “*Trainers should often be trained by the industry in real industrial circumstances*” (M = 4.14) and “*Inviting resource persons from industry helps not only in building better relationships but also prepares trainees for future job roles*” (M = 4.07). These



responses emphasize that participants recognize the critical role of continual professional exposure and collaboration in maintaining training relevance and enhancing student employability.

Moderate agreement is reflected in statements like “*Many industrial trainers visited my institute during training*” (M = 3.52) and “*Industrial partnership with the institute has resulted in very good placements for the students*” (M = 3.61), suggesting that while collaboration initiatives are present, their frequency and tangible outcomes—such as improved placements—may vary across institutions.

The **standard deviation values**, ranging from **0.838 to 1.438**, indicate moderate dispersion, meaning that while the general sentiment is positive, responses vary among participants. This variation may arise from differences in institutional resources, intensity of industry engagement, or exposure to collaborative programs.

The **p-value** is a statistical measure used to determine the **significance of results**—that is, whether the observed differences or patterns are likely to have occurred by chance. In this study, **all p-values are less than .001**, meaning the probability that these results occurred randomly is **less than 0.1%**. This denotes a **very high level of statistical significance**, affirming that the favorable perceptions toward industry–institute collaboration are **not due to random variation** but reflect a genuine, consistent trend in respondents’ views. The consistent $p < .001$ across all items strengthens the reliability of the findings and suggests a robust relationship between industry participation and perceived institutional enhancement. The above results are summarized below:

Overall perception: Strongly positive (mean range = 3.52 – 4.24).

Highest rated aspects: Industry-relevant curriculum (M = 4.24) and industrial training for trainers (M = 4.14).

Areas needing improvement: Frequency of industrial visits and impact on placement (M ≈ 3.5–3.6).

Standard deviation: Moderate variation among respondents, reflecting institutional diversity.

Statistical significance: $p < .001$ for all items, confirming that the positive perceptions are statistically meaningful and highly reliable.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings highlight the strategic importance of developing sustained and structured partnerships between higher education institutions and industries. The consistently high mean values and statistically significant p-values ($p < .001$) indicate that respondents perceive industry collaboration as essential for enhancing the relevance and quality of education. Institutions should, therefore, institutionalize mechanisms that promote continuous interaction with industry experts, periodic curriculum review, and regular training of faculty in industrial environments. Policy frameworks may also encourage industries to contribute to curriculum design, internships, and capacity-building initiatives. Strengthening such collaborations can bridge the academia–industry gap, improve employability outcomes, and ensure that training programs remain responsive to evolving market demands.

The goals of skill education, training, and development need to be revamped in order to be progressive with the demands of industry and the dynamic global environment. To achieve this objective, there has to be greater involvement of the apex industry associations such as the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASSOCHAM), and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). The present research work has been conducted in NCT of Delhi, which may be replicated all over India.

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Impact of Anthropomorphism & Advertisement Effectiveness on Purchase Intention: A Study of Familiar Brand Vs Unfamiliar Brand under different levels of Product Involvement

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between anthropomorphic appeals and consumer product evaluations has been examined in prior studies, which oddly, have produced disparate verdicts. The paper aims to examine this relationship with specific variables – product involvement and brand familiarity. Prior studies have established the dependency of outcomes of anthropomorphism on several situational factors like brand preference, loneliness. The study adds yet another factor (i.e. brand familiarity) to the list. . The 2 (Product Involvement: high versus low) × 2 (Brand Name: familiar versus unfamiliar) between-subjects experimental design was conducted and ANOVA was used for testing the hypotheses under the four exploratory circumstances. The study establishes that the anthropomorphic advertising of an unfamiliar brand is far more effective than anthropomorphic advertising of a familiar brand implying that marketers using anthropomorphic advertising in launching a new product or re-establishing a long forgotten product, are more likely to create greater acceptance than those who use non-anthropomorphic advertising for the same.

Keywords: *Anthropomorphism, Product Involvement, Brand Familiarity, Entertainment; Information; Memory; Brand Recall; Purchase Intention*



INTRODUCTION

The Oxford Dictionary (Soanes and Stevenson 2006) defines anthropomorphism as the attribution of human characteristics or behaviours to a god, animal, or inanimate object. It is a cognitive bias in which individuals ascribe human characteristics to non-human entities (Epley, Waytz, and Cacioppo 2007). Businesses have been using it extensively, as it is an effective marketing strategy for sustained success (Aggarwal and McGill 2007). Brand anthropomorphism has been shown to reduce the psychological distance between consumers and brands (Stinnett, Hardy, and Waters 2012), enhance the connection between consumers and brands (Delbaere, McQuarrie, and Phillips 2011), and facilitate more effective communication with consumers (Puzakova and Aggarwal 2018). Earlier studies have probed the implications of anthropomorphism spanning different product categories, including high and low safety products (Liu et al. 2022); hedonic and utilitarian products (Jeong and Kim 2021); and search and experience products (Velasco, Yang, and Janakiraman 2021).

Anthropomorphism, as a psychological model, is a intricate phenomenon that can effectuate impressive ramifications, potentially hampering the often suppositional connection between attitude and purchase intention. The authors believe research on the potency of anthropomorphism as a marketing approach is still in its native stage. Given that any psychological thing hardly ever produces same results, stakeholders assert that a widely acknowledged psychological association between anthropomorphism and consumer behaviour must be effectuated. To achieve this longstanding need, the relationship between the two constructs must be investigated from various perspectives, which can be secured only by incorporating more constructs into the investigation. In this context, we assess the influence of Brand Anthropomorphism and Advertising Effectiveness on Consumer Purchase Intention, specifically on familiar versus unfamiliar brands, at varying levels of product involvement. We specifically investigate whether the use of anthropomorphic appeal in advertisements enhances active information processing by positively influencing entertainment, information retention, memory, brand recall, attitude, and purchase intention. The versatility of anthropomorphism merits examination, to comprehend its influence on consumers and potential enhancements, as



individuals tend to assess anthropomorphised brands according to distinct criteria compared to those applied to non-anthropomorphized brands and products (Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018).

The post-pandemic era has witnessed an increase in research on brand familiarity (Ladeira et al. 2022). Brand familiarity often improves customer views (Zhu, Kim, and Choi 2021), although it may also exhibit inconsistent effects (Higgins & Thompson, 2002). Under particular advertising tactics (online) and product categories (hedonistic and mature items), brand familiarity has already demonstrated positive influences on attitude formation (Ladeira et al. 2022). Thus, we proceeded to invigorate its impact in relation to anthropomorphism. Involvement, conceptually defined as a motivational situation that encourages greater allocation of cognitive resources (Başfirinci and Çilingir, 2015) has been shown to significantly affect consumers' responses to advertisements, product attitudes, and purchase intentions. For similar reasons, the study also incorporates involvement as a moderating variable.

This will be perhaps a unique study to empirically explore the role of involvement level and brand familiarity simultaneously in boosting advertising effectiveness by influencing variables used to assess the same. The findings of this paper will educate businesses if the anthropomorphic ad is suitable depending upon the quadrant their product fits within the 2 (Product Involvement: *Low Vs High*) * 2 (Brand Familiarity: *Known Vs Obscure*) matrix. It endows the burgeoning literature on anthropomorphism with additional maturity, particularly in the context of it being an advertising strategy.

Moreover, authors assert that research examining the impact of anthropomorphism on consumer purchase intentions is predominantly contextual, encompassing various domains such as In-store Retail Cues (Londoño and Ruiz De Maya 2022), Pet Fashion Clothing (Apaolaza et al. 2022), Shopper-facing Retail Technology (SFRT) (Barney et al. 2022), beef consumption (Choueiki, Geuens, and Vermeir 2021), and chatbots (Crolc et al. 2021). Previous studies investigating the correlation between anthropomorphism and purchase intention in advertising are notably circumstantial, as emphasised in italics in Table 1.



STUDY	FOCUS OR SCOPE OF STUDY
Hart and Royne (2017)	To explore the effectiveness of anthropomorphism appeals on purchase intention, under the <i>moderating influence of loneliness and product knowledge</i> .
Laksmidewi, Susianto, and Afiff (2017)	To examine the effect of <i>a specific type of anthropomorphism (viz., hero and warrior archetype)</i> in an ad on perceived product efficacy and purchase intention.
Gupta and Jain (2019)	To explore the role of anthropomorphism in influencing consumers' purchase intentions <i>in case of smartphones</i> .
Agrawal, Khandelwal, and Bajpai (2020)	To investigate the effectiveness of anthropomorphic advertising in case of <i>single medium vs use of cross-media</i> , under different levels of product involvement.
Shao et al. (2020) Shao, Jeong, and Jang (2021)	To investigate the effectiveness of using anthropomorphic advertising in <i>promotion of ugly food</i> .
Lu et al. (2021)	To examine the impact of <i>very specific types of anthropomorphism (cute vs cool)</i> of <i>green products</i> under <i>different advertising appeals (Self-interest Vs Altruism)</i>
Fazli-Salehi et al. (2021)	To examine the impact of <i>specified personality traits</i> on brand connection (self and communal) with anthropomorphized brands vis-à-vis the objectified brands.
Our Study	To contrast the impact of brand anthropomorphism and advertising effectiveness on consumer purchase intention, <i>in case of familiar vs unfamiliar brands</i> , under different levels of product involvement.

Table 1: Previous Studies and Ours: A Comparison



Thus, studies have proven there's some relationship between the two, albeit differing under distinct circumstances, but to the best of the knowledge of the authors, hardly any study is available to show the impact of anthropomorphic advertisement on the specified variables of advertising effectiveness, that too with brand familiarity and product involvement as the comparing variables. The current study comprised of both, a well-known and an obscure brand, in order to gauge this effect. The inclusion of both well-known and unfamiliar brands was thought to not only improve the experimental design's robustness, but also consolidate the findings across circumstances.

The paper is structured as follows. In Section 2, we establish our conceptual framework by reviewing the prior research. Section 3 comprises of the methodology, followed by a description of the findings in Section 4. Section 5 of the paper provides the discussions, limitations and recommendations for further investigation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is a widespread inclination among men to conceive of all entities as being like themselves (Hume et al. 2018). People anthropomorphize for a variety of reasons –first, it is the most straightforward thing for them to do; secondly, it facilitates understanding of their environment; and finally, it allows people to perceive their surroundings through a human-centric perspective (Aggarwal and McGill 2007). With customers' unrivalled proclivity to anthropomorphize, businesses and marketers frequently embrace it. Products are routinely attributed with human-like emotions, beliefs, desires, knowledge, and intentions (Severson and Woodard, 2018). Marketers too enthusiastically embrace anthropomorphism. Research indicates that anthropomorphism enhances consumers' brand appraisal (Aggarwal and McGill, 2007); elevates product attractiveness (Labroo, Dhar, and Schwarz, 2008); amplifies brand love (Delbaere, McQuarrie, and Phillips, 2011); and stimulates impulsive purchasing behaviour (Zhang et al., 2020).

Advertising and promotions incur substantial expenses for marketers. They are always keen to know the outcomes of their efforts. There are multitude ways of assessing the advertising effectiveness (Wisker, Kadirov, and Bone, 2019). Due to the challenges of encompassing all



aspects in a study, we selected five metrics from review of literature. *Information* - the principal objective of any advertising campaign. Consumers initiate an information search when they want to make a purchase (Park 2020). Informative advertisements enhance brand appraisal and significantly increase purchase intention (Janssens and Pelsmacker 2005). *Entertainment* - the capacity to evoke aesthetic enjoyment (Oh and Xu 2003), serves as a significant precursor to attitudes towards advertising, as well as a reliable predictor of advertising efficacy (Taylor, Lewin, and Strutton 2011). *Ad Recall* - Recognising the ultimate goal of every brand of being at the forefront of consumers' minds when they think of a particular product category, this construct measures how spontaneously customers recall the brand when they come across that product category. An individual's retention of an advertisement correlates positively with its likelihood of being recalled during shopping (Bushman and Bonacci, 2002). *Memory* - unlike recall, is independent of any cues, making it a difficult thing to do. Nonetheless, the power of memory to gauge the effectiveness of an ad need not be underestimated. *Attitude* - a theoretical construct employed to assess the extent of a consumer's preference or aversion towards an object. In studies on advertising effectiveness, consumer attitude encompasses both attitude towards the advertisement (A_{ad}) and attitude towards the brand (A_b). Various research indicate that A_{ad} and A_b may exert differing levels of influence on purchasing intentions (Lee, Lee, and Yang 2017). *Consumer Purchase Intention* - The literature on advertising efficacy has consistently highlighted customer purchasing intention (Ajzen 2002). To affect consumers, advertisements must navigate them through cognitive, emotional, and conative adoption processes (MacKenzie and Lutz 1989). Consumers make selections depending on their desires and responses to advertisements, which marketers, many a times, strategically curate through anthropomorphism. Notwithstanding its popularity, the authors contend that there is limited evidence linking it to advertising effectiveness. The conceptual model (Figure 1) illustrates the comprehensive link among the constructs.

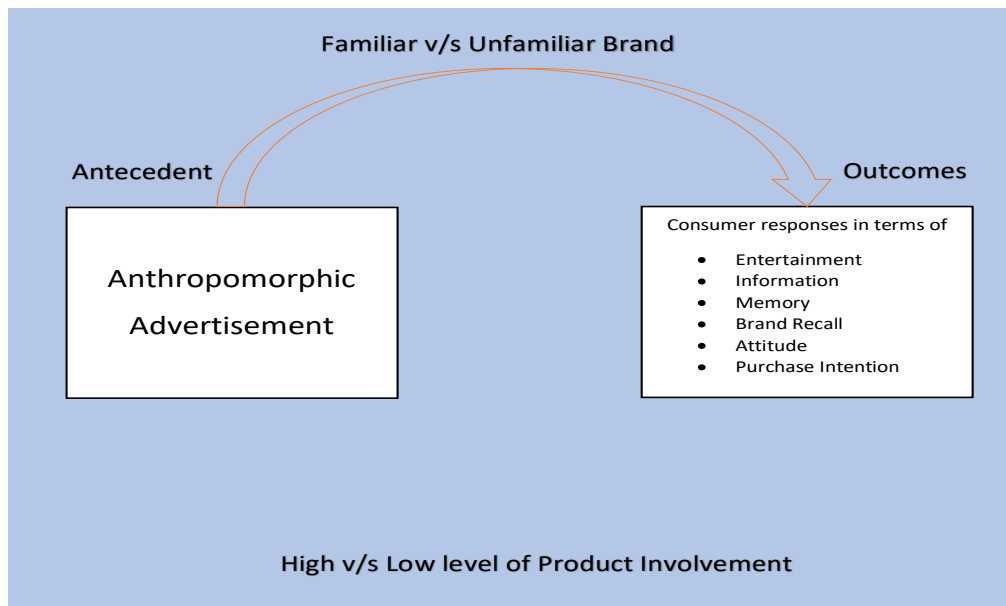


Figure-1: Conceptual Model

It was postulated that anthropomorphic advertisement of unfamiliar brand is more effective than the anthropomorphic advertisement of familiar brand and that audience that viewed an anthropomorphic advertisement of unfamiliar brand will have high entertainment, information, memory, brand recall, more positive attitude and higher purchase intention than the anthropomorphic advertisement of familiar brand under different levels of product involvement (*high vs. low*)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study replicates the research approach utilised by Chen (2015). The research employs a factorial design comprising 2 (Product Involvement: high vs. low) × 2 (Brand Name: familiar vs. unfamiliar) groups to examine the effects of product involvement and brand familiarity on anthropomorphism, advertisement efficacy (information, entertainment, memory, and brand recall), attitude and purchase intention. Product categories indicative of varying levels of involvement were selected using the framework established by Rossiter, Percy, and Donovan (1991). High and low engagement were operationalised using the product categories of mobile



phones and antacids, respectively. Nokia and Eno encompasses the familiar brand names while the unfamiliar brand names Talky and Zest were posited for the appropriate categories.

Considering the complicity of the investigated variables, sample size of 304 respondents was deemed acceptable in concordance with Nunnally's (1978) suggestion. The study made use of student sample with just one intent – to ensure uniformity in demographic characteristics (Calder, Phillips, and Tybout, 1981) including age, educational background, and media consumption patterns, something that’s pivotal for quarantining the fallouts of experimental manoeuvrings.

Before initiating the experiment, a pre-test using a seven-point Likert scale, from "Extremely unfamiliar" to "Extremely familiar” was performed on 60 students (30 in each product category – low and high involvement) to gauge their brand familiarity, with a view to corroborate the effectiveness of the brand familiarity manipulation. The results affirmed the manipulation effectiveness (Table 2).

	HIGH INVOLVEMENT		LOW INVOLVEMENT	
	<i>Familiar Brand</i>	<i>Unfamiliar Brand</i>	<i>Familiar Brand</i>	<i>Unfamiliar Brand</i>
	<i>Nokia</i>	<i>Talky</i>	<i>Eno</i>	<i>Zest</i>
Mean (Standard Deviation)	5.60 (0.82)	1.10 (0.63)	4.63 (0.62)	2.12 (0.53)
t-statistic (p-value)	25.80, p<0.001		23.64, p<0.001	

TABLE 2: Pre-Test Results

In order to ensure conception of a high-quality stimuli, the study made use of a professional graphic designer who was commissioned to create anthropomorphic commercials while regulating extraneous variables, such as product characteristics and prior advertising exposure. Additionally, an e-magazine was curated that included the commercials created by the graphic designer as well as few filler ads, which would be needed for the assessing memory and brand



recall at a later stage. The inclusion of filler ads also facilitated the augmentation of the authenticity of the media environment, giving participants the feel of real-world.

The research employed a randomised 2*2 experimental design, carried out in classroom environments to reduce distractions. Participants were randomly earmarked to one of the four conditions. Participants in the unfamiliar brand conditions were informed of their role in evaluating the advertisements for a novel product all set to venture into the market, whereas their counterparts in the familiar brand conditions were apprised of their task to assess the new advertising strategy for one of the popular brand. They were assured of confidentiality and were informed of the freedom to withdraw at any moment without penalties.

Participants were made to complete a questionnaire measuring variables anthropomorphism, entertainment, information, attitude and purchase intention, immediately after viewing the commercial relevant to their allocated quadrant. Subsequently, they were showed the e-magazine. Thereafter, they were requested to return three days later for a follow-up session on the experiment, during which their recollection of the advertisements and brand recognition was evaluated i.e. brand recall and memory were assessed.

The questionnaire used in the study was formed using established scales (all with seven-point Likert scales) from prior research (Table 3). However, where necessary, slight variations in the scales were made to reflect the anthropomorphic context of the study.

Construct	Statements	Adapted from
<i>Anthropomorphism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The product is like a person.• The product has a mind of its own.• The product has intentions.	Aggarwal and McGill (2007)
<i>Entertainment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I feel that advertisements are enjoyable and entertaining.• Anthropomorphic advertisements are more entertaining than other types of advertisement.• I find anthropomorphic advertisements attractive and fun.	Blanco, Blasco, and Azorín (2010)



Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anthropomorphic advertisements provide the information I need.• Anthropomorphic advertisements offer the data required to make purchase decisions.• I feel that anthropomorphic advertisements are helpful.	Blanco, Blasco, and Azorín (2010)
Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I find anthropomorphic advertisements impressive.• Anthropomorphic advertisements are eye-catching• Overall, I like the anthropomorphic advertisements.	Donthu (1998)
Purchase Intention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The likelihood of purchasing the product from this brand is...• The probability that I would consider buying the product of this brand is...• My willingness to buy the product from this brand is...	Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991)

Table 3: Scales Used for Measuring Constructs

Following a 3-day interval, memory was assessed with the word-fragment completion test, a method devised by Yoo (2007). Participants were given a list with few fragmented brand names under different product categories, which they were requested to complete, on the basis of the e-magazine they were made to view 3 days prior. The target brand name was encoded as a binary variable (Yes = 1, No = 0), offering an objective assessment of memory for the advertised brand.

Similarly, brand recall was checked by a retrospective thought-listing technique, also propounded by Yoo (2007). In this, participants were requested to enlist all brands they could remember from the e-magazine, with the existence of the target brand name, again entered as a binary variable (Yes = 1, No = 0).

Data were analyzed by performing a one-way ANOVA using SPSS Software.



RESULTS

At the outset, the assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variances, and independence were checked prior to one-way ANOVA analysis. Errors were normally distributed as showcased by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$), homogeneity of variances was confirmed via Levene's test [$F(1,302) = 1.84, p > 0.05$]. Furthermore, since participants were randomly assigned, observations were independent.

The findings, illustrated in Table 4, demonstrate notable variations between familiar and unfamiliar brands in both high and low engagement product categories.

CONSTRUCT	HIGH INVOLVEMENT					LOW INVOLVEMENT				
	Familiar Brand		Unfamiliar Brand		F _{1,302}	Familiar Brand		Unfamiliar Brand		F _{1,302}
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
Anthropomorphism	5.236	0.872	5.678	0.916	6.494*	5.141	0.772	5.728	0.824	9.035***
Entertainment	4.125	1.051	5.001	1.124	11.392***	3.221	1.001	5.641	1.112	13.191***
Information	4.274	0.891	5.172	0.920	7.617***	4.374	0.881	5.004	0.898	7.945***
Memory	4.016	0.841	4.941	0.974	21.311***	4.001	0.612	4.114	0.742	12.517***
Brand Recall	5.221	1.112	5.997	1.567	9.238***	5.125	1.221	5.847	1.324	30.533***
Attitude	4.841	0.864	4.945	0.991	3.862*	4.129	0.842	5.645	1.252	48.754***
Purchase Intention	5.221	1.195	5.912	1.314	32.572***	4.644	0.895	5.004	0.945	18.383***

TABLE 4: Results of One-Way Anova

* = 10% Level of Significance *** = 1% Level of Significance

The results indicate that anthropomorphic advertisements substantially influence all dependent variables, but with variations in intensity between familiar and unfamiliar brands, as well as between high and low involvement products. The mean values for unfamiliar brands were consistently higher than those for familiar brands across all dependent variables, demonstrating that anthropomorphising marketing has a more pronounced effect when the brand is unfamiliar.



The impact of anthropomorphic aspects in advertising on consumer perception was substantial across varying levels of involvement and brand familiarity conditions. The most significant effect in entertainment was observed in the low involvement product-unfamiliar brand quadrant ($M=5.641$, F -Statistic= 13.191), whereas in information, the most dramatic influence was evident in the high involvement-unfamiliar brand quadrant. Memory and brand recall were markedly affected by anthropomorphism, with the most pronounced impacts noted for unfamiliar brands in high-involvement categories. However, for memory the F -statistic for high involvement was much more than it was for low involvement whereas for brand recall the F -statistic of low involvement significantly outweighed its high involvement counterpart. It can be concluded that anthropomorphism may assist unfamiliar brands in distinguishing themselves in consumers' perceptions. The results indicated substantial variations in attitudes towards the advertisement contingent upon brand familiarity and product involvement. The effect was particularly significant in low involvement products, where unfamiliar brands ($M = 5.645$, $SD = 1.252$) greatly surpassed familiar brands ($M = 4.129$, $SD = 8.842$), yielding an F -statistic of 48.754 at the 1% significance level. The impact of anthropomorphism on purchase intention was substantial across all conditions, yielding the highest intention for unfamiliar products in the high involvement category ($M = 5.912$, $SD = 1.314$).

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Humanised stimuli are typically employed in advertising and marketing communications for many purposes. Previous research has frequently demonstrated beneficial impacts of anthropomorphism on customer reactions. Nonetheless, contradictory evidence has surfaced over time. Puzakova, Kwak, and Rocereto (2013) cautioned against the use of anthropomorphic advertising, however Yuan and Dennis (2017) shown minimal to no impact of anthropomorphic appeals on product assessments. The varied outcomes of these research have presented considerable difficulties for marketers. The findings of this research contribute meaningfully to the ongoing debate.

Effectiveness of anthropomorphism, as past research shows, is contingent upon factors like brand preference (Aggarwal and McGill 2012), desire for dominance (H. Kim and Kramer



2015), social factors like loneliness (Feng 2016) and feelings of social power (S. Kim and McGill 2011). This study further substantiates this assertion and adds another element to the constructs influencing the relationship between anthropomorphism and consumer behaviour. It enhances the comprehension of anthropomorphism in advertising by investigating the effect of brand familiarity on the efficacy of anthropomorphic advertisements. The influence of anthropomorphised advertisements is more pronounced when the brand is novel to the consumer, regardless of the extent of product involvement. This finding corresponds with the notion of effectance motivation, which posits that humans are compelled to anthropomorphise stimuli to enhance their comprehension of intricate or unfamiliar phenomena (Epley et al. 2007). When consumers see unfamiliar brands, anthropomorphism acts as a cognitive heuristic, facilitating comprehension. This increased engagement results in more favourable outcomes with regard to entertainment, information retention, memory, brand recall, attitude, and purchase intention, prompting consumers to react positively to anthropomorphic advertising for unfamiliar brands, in contrast to familiar brands, where consumers possess pre-existing perceptions and experiences.

The study further elucidates the influence of product involvement on enhancing the effectiveness of anthropomorphic advertising. The findings demonstrate that anthropomorphism amplifies customer reactions for both high and low involvement items, with more significant effects observed in low involvement products, particularly in terms of entertainment and attitude. For high-involvement products, memory and purchase intention are significantly elevated. A plausible argument could be that buyers of low participation items may be influenced by emotional appeals and peripheral cues. In high involvement products, where consumers are already highly engaged, anthropomorphism may only exert a nuanced influence. The intensified emphasis on details may enhance brand memorability, hence augmenting consumer intent. Consumers engaging with high-involvement items may necessitate more than mere anthropomorphic signals to alter their attitudes or perceptions.

This study offers practical insights for marketers. Anthropomorphic advertising has been shown to be particularly effective for unfamiliar brands. When aiming to launch a new product or revive an overlooked brand, anthropomorphic aspects can enhance consumer engagement by simplifying product complexity and encouraging trial sales. In today's era of information



overload, customers need emotional connections and experiences. Anthropomorphism satisfies this requirement by endowing products with personality, exemplified by successful advertising campaigns such as “Brook Bond Red Label Tea,” which highlights the “taste of togetherness.” Marketers should concentrate on creating innovative and imaginative anthropomorphic ads that consistently astound and delight consumers, keeping the emotional appeal fresh and engaging.

The study has certain limitations that open up avenues for future research. Foremost is the narrow scope of product categories examined. The Rossiter-Percy Grid provides a broader classification of products- such as informational versus transformational products, which could be leveraged in future studies. Future research could also investigate the comparative effects of anthropomorphic versus non-anthropomorphic appeals, and different advertising variables such as creativity and emotional appeal. As digital marketing and social media advertising continue to grow, researchers could examine whether the benefits of anthropomorphic advertising extend to online platforms. Mutum et al. (2018) highlighted the increasing consumer hostility toward online advertisements, and it remains unclear whether anthropomorphic appeals would mitigate such negative reactions. Such studies in totality would help refine our understanding of when anthropomorphism is most effective, and under what conditions alternative advertising strategies may prove more beneficial.

Note: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.



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City Through the Lens of Poetry: Ramdhari Singh Dinkar on Delhi

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ABSTRACT

Delhi, having served as the capital of India for centuries, has been a resort to many remarkable figures over time. It is often referred to as 'Mir and Ghalib's Delhi,' an evidence to the city's deep connection with these legendary poets who captured Delhi in moments of prosperity and decay. Their legacy shaped how people memorise Delhi a space where Dreams were built, shattered and reborn. From 1911 onwards when the capital was shifted to Delhi by King George V, it again became a hub of cultural activities even before independence. In the light of this, the paper explores poems written about Delhi by the renowned Hindi scholar Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, composed between the 1940s and 1960s. It dives in to three of his most significant works: “Dilli”, “*Chuhe Ki Dilli Yatra* and “*Bharat Ka Reshami Nagar*”. Ramdhari Singh Dinkar’s poem ‘Dilli’ portrays the city's tragic downfall from a glorious empire to a helpless widow. He exposes the rulers' false display of power, which masks oppression and suffering, he questions the true cost of its so-called progress. “*Chuhe Ki Dilli Yatra*” explores the journey of a timid mouse symbolizing the weak and downtrodden who remains fearful even after independence. The British were replaced by Indian babus, proving that power only changed hands. The poem leaves us questioning— has anything really changed? “*Bharat Ka Reshami Nagar*” explores a city draped in luxury, while the real India struggles in shadows. Dinkar unveils the bitter reality of post-independence India where freedom came, but equality did not. Yet beneath this illusion of prosperity, a storm is brewing, carrying the hope of change, ready to break the



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chains of injustice. The paper compares these poetic themes with historical records, showcasing how literature reflects city's past. This paper will come out with a new way to see Delhi's history through the lens of poetry and provide a bridge between literature and history for understanding Delhi's evolution.

Keywords: *Delhi, Poetic themes, Independence, post-Independence*





INTRODUCTION

Delhi has always been a city of poets and power, evolving through time—from ancient rulers to modern administrators. As capitals shifted and dynasties faded, Delhi remained the heart of cultural and political influence. Urbanization brought progress, yet it deepened the divide between those who thrived and those left behind. Poets have long captured this contrast, and Dinkar was no exception. Through his works, this research explores how, despite its grandeur, Delhi remained a city where the common man struggled for recognition.

Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, often called Rashtrakavi, gave voice to the struggles of the ordinary citizen. His poetry, blending history, mythology, and social critique, carried both the roar of rebellion and the whispers of reality. Writing in a newly independent India, he exposed the illusion of Delhi's grandeur, where power shifted hands but inequality endured. As Sharma (2016, 278) notes, Dinkar's poetry critiques how Delhi became an exclusive urban hub, where the ruling class distanced itself from the rural poor rather than uniting the nation. His poems, such as *Bharat ka Reshami Nagar* and *Chuhe ki Dilli Yatra*, reveal this disillusionment, questioning whether freedom truly reached every doorstep or simply changed its disguise.

दिल्ली (Dilli)

The poem “दिल्ली” (Dilli) written by Ram Dhari Singh Dinkar is a beautiful portrayal of Delhi's transformation from a city of cultural grandeur to a symbol of decay and false pride. This poem mainly revolves around 1911 event and post -1911, when the capital was shifted back to Delhi from Calcutta by king George V. Though the entire city was revamped however, Dinkar views this event through the lens of downtrodden people who paid a huge cost for the so called ‘reorientation’ of the entire city by Edward Lutyens and Hebert Baker. Dinkar urges Delhi to remember its cosmopolitan past and warns it to be proud of its rich cultural heritage. In the poem Dinkar delineates Delhi's syncretic past and laments its lost. He uses various metaphors for Delhi which is reflected in the stanzas of the poem.



“यह कैसी चाँदनी अमा के मलिन तमिस्र गगन में!

कूक रही क्यों नियति व्यंग्य से इस गोधूलि-लगन में?”

(‘What kind of moonlight is this in the impure, dark sky of a moonless night? Why is destiny mocking with sarcasm in this twilight hour? Delhi! Why are you adorning yourself like a bride in a graveyard? Oh! Is this a false show of spring in this ruined garden?’) (Dinkar n.d., 1-4, Trans.by the author)

The above lines depict a powerful contrast between the *mirage of beauty* and the *underlying despair*. The line “यह कैसी चाँदनी अमर के मलिन तमिस्र गगन में!” symbolizes a ray of *illusory hope* shining amid surrounding destruction and gloom. Delhi is metaphorically compared to a bride— “मरघट में तू सज रही दिल्ली! कैसे श्रृंगार?”—a striking image that highlights the irony of adornment in a land of death and devastation.who tries to adorn herself in graveyard

which seems a futile idea as city is surrounded by the clouds of sorrow and despair. The imagery of the spring suggests superficial prosperity in a place where true life and vitality have long vanished. The above lines bring in to limelight the revolt of 1857, which was brutally suppressed by the British victors

Delhi is metaphorically depicted as celebrating this subjugation by the new victors, but it is not voluntary rather imposed from above. post -1857 the control of the colony went in to the hands of crown, which was a major landmark. Ghalib in an introspective mood wrote for inhabitants of Delhi ‘we had only one thing left /the wish to reconstruct the city/ Everything else was plundered’(Gupta 1981, 31) British governance was hypocritic, for they justified there rule their rule as bringing peace, but it was enforced through suppression, thousands were killed and surviving inhabitants were expelled (Gupta 1981, 21)

“इस उजाड़, निर्जन खँडहर में,

छिन्न-भिन्न उजड़े इस घर में,

तुझे रूप सजने की सूझी



मेरे सत्यनाश-प्रहर में!”

*(“In this desolate, deserted ruin,
In this broken, destroyed home,
You thought of adorning yourself,
In the hour of my complete destruction!”)*
(Dinkar n.d., 5–8, trans. by the author)

The above lines portray a shattered Delhi in the aftermath of the Revolt of 1857. The central paradox highlighted here is that the city attempts to adorn herself—“तुझे रूप सजने की सूझी”—amid chaos, devastation, and turmoil. Delhi’s identity, pride, and independence were brutally crushed under colonial oppression. The phrase “निज्जन खंडहरों में” alludes to the large-scale plunder of Delhi by the so-called “victors.” The city’s immense wealth was treated as a prize by both civilian and military officers. These officials were less concerned with the ethics of acquiring wealth or power than with the sheer quantity they could seize (Gupta 1981, 21).

Following the British reconquest, Delhi was reduced to a “ghost city,” as nobles and artisans were either displaced or forced into exile. The Red Fort, which once symbolized Mughal grandeur and sovereignty, was transformed into a “howling desert of barracks—hideous, British, and pretentious” (Gupta 1981, 57).

“डाल-डाल पर छेड़ रही कोयल मर्सिया तराना,
और तुझे सूझा इस दम ही उत्सव हाय, मनाना;
हम धोते हैं घाव इधर सतलज के शीतल जल से,
उधर तुझे भाता है इन पर नमक हाय, छिड़काना!
महल कहाँ? बस, हमें सहारा



केवल फूस-फाँस, तृणदल का;

अन्न नहीं, अवलंब प्राण को

गम, आँसू या गंगाजल का;”

*(“The cuckoo sings a song of mourning on every branch,
And yet you thought of celebrating at this moment!
Here we wash our wounds with the cool waters of the Sutlej,
But there you choose to sprinkle salt upon these wounds!
Where are the palaces? We have only the support
Of straw and grass leaves. There is no food, and for survival we rely
Only on sorrow, tears, or the holy waters of the Ganges.”)*
(Dinkar n.d., 9–16, trans. by the author)

These lines foreground the deep irony and collective sorrow that mark Delhi’s condition after its devastation. The phrase “मलसज्जय तरन” signifies a city in lament, mourning its loss and trauma. British colonial rule drastically altered Delhi’s physical and social landscape, leading to the large-scale displacement of its indigenous population. Economic control of the capital came to rest in the hands of Hindu and Jain bankers aligned with British officials (Gupta 1981, 57). While these groups accumulated immense fortunes, those who were exiled or dispossessed struggled for basic sustenance and livelihood.

Delhi’s old aristocracy was unable to reconcile itself with this harsh and callous reality; many were reduced to petitioners in their own city (Gupta 1981, 92). The line “तुझे सूझा इस दम ही उत्सव मनाना” points to the period when Delhi was rebuilt under colonial authority and reduced to the status of a provincial town. A striking example of this transformation is the sale of the Fatehpuri Masjid to Lala Chunna Mal (Gupta 1981, 71), symbolizing the commodification of sacred and cultural spaces.



The line “केवल फूस-फाँस, तिनटू क” underscores the extreme impoverishment of the lower sections of society. Basic necessities of life were heavily taxed to generate colonial revenue (Gupta 1981, 159). Colonial administrators such as Harcourt Butler considered the financing of New Delhi to be of paramount importance, believing that a grand capital would impress Indians and signal the British determination to remain in Delhi (Gupta 1981, 179). The irony, however, lies in the fact that Indians themselves bore the financial burden of the city’s renovation. Resources were systematically extracted from the Indian populace, exacerbating their misery and compelling them to survive on “गम, आँसू या गंगाजल.”

“वह विहगों का झुंड लक्ष्य है
आजीवन वधिकों के फल का;
मरने पर भी हमें कफ़न है
माता शब्या के अंचल का”

*(“That flock of birds is forever a target
Of the hunter’s arrows throughout their lives.
Even in death, our shroud is drawn
From the lap of Mother Earth itself.”)
(Dinkar n.d., 17–20, trans. by the author)*

In the above lines, “विहगों का झुंड” functions as a metaphor for the innocent and vulnerable populace of Delhi, who continually bore the brunt of colonial exploitation. For instance, in 1914 the wheel tax was increased, and protests by the *thelāwalas* of Idgah were ignored. Similarly, *gwalas* in Sabzi Mandi and the militant leather merchants of Sadar Bazaar organized protests in response to their growing impoverishment (Gupta 1981, 187).

Despite enduring violence and suffering throughout their lives, even in death they find solace only in the embrace of their homeland, symbolized by the shroud drawn from the lap of Mother Earth.



This metaphor powerfully underscores the persistent exploitation and helplessness of Delhi's people—individuals who remained victims of power and destruction, yet ultimately returned to their roots in search of eternal peace.

“अपनी गरदन रेत-रेत असि की तीखी धारों पर

राजहंस बलिदान चढ़ाते माँ के हुंकारों पर।

पगली! देख, ज़रा कैसी मर मिटने की तैयारी?

जादू चलेगा न धुन के पक्के इन बनजारों पर।

तू वैभव-मद में इठलाती,

परकीया-सी सैन चलाती,

री ब्रिटेन की दासी! किसको

इन आँखों पर हे ललचाती?”

*(“Slitting their own necks on the sharp edge of the sword,
The royal swans sacrifice themselves for the cries of the Mother.
See how they stand ready to die with unwavering resolve.
No magic can work upon these determined wanderers.
You are intoxicated with the pride and arrogance of wealth—
Alas! You have become a slave of Britain!”)*
(Dinkar n.d., 40–47, trans. by the author)

In the above lines, “राजहंस” symbolizes the brave patriots who willingly sacrificed their lives for the nation, doing so with unwavering courage and dignity. In stark contrast, the poet condemns Delhi by likening it to a prostitute—“परकीय-सी शयन-चिन्ती”—who welcomes all who arrive at her



doorstep. Through this scathing metaphor, the poet accuses the city of moral and political surrender.

The poet further argues that Delhi had accepted British subjugation, a reality exemplified by the *Imperial Durbar*, where the British Emperor and Empress appeared at the *jharokhas* of the Red Fort. Ironically, they were celebrated as the “Mughal couple of the twentieth century” (Gupta 1981, 167). This spectacle symbolized the appropriation of Mughal authority and the erasure of indigenous sovereignty.

Through these lines, the poet urges Delhi to awaken, to rebel, and to be ignited with the fire of resistance. He reminds the city of the immense sacrifices made by the patriots and calls upon her to reclaim her lost spirit. The line “तू वैभव-मद में इठि ती” refers to the extravagant expenditure incurred in rebuilding the capital, which was financed through oppressive taxation—such as octroi, house tax, and other levies imposed on the inhabitants (Gupta 1981, 157–160).

The final line of the stanza suggests that Delhi may have been swayed by the rhetoric of Thomas, a missionary who argued that the British government was *swadeshi* rather than partisan, and that Indians should therefore cooperate with it (Gupta 1981, 166). By internalizing such narratives, Delhi is portrayed as having resigned herself to colonial servitude, thus becoming a “slave of Britain.”

“हमने देखा यहीं पांडु-वीरों का कीर्ति-प्रसार, छिनी सजी-साजी वह दिल्ली

अरी! बहादुरशाह 'ज़फ़र' की; और छिनी गद्दी लखनउ की

वाजिद अली शाह 'अख़्तर' की। छिना मुकुट प्यारे 'सिराज' का, “

(“We have witnessed the glory of the Pandava heroes flourish here.

Akbar and Shah Jahan themselves adorned this city.

That exquisitely embellished Delhi was snatched away—

Alas! From Bahadur Shah Zafar.



The throne of Lucknow was taken away

From Wajid Ali Shah Akhtar.

The beloved crown of Siraj was also seized.”)

(Dinkar n.d., 48, 51, 60–64, trans. by the author)

The lines reflect the loss of India’s composite past and the fall of great rulers who once adorned and protected their kingdoms. Delhi, once the jewel of the Mughal Empire, Bahadur shah’s long reign saw flowering of Delhi’s Urdu Literature and Lucknow, the heart of Awadhi culture, were stripped of their honor and sovereignty (Gupta 1981, 226-27).

The above lines also highlight that Europe’s expansion in to India was slow and piecemeal penetration, moreover as CA Bayly puts that ‘India was made tributary to the capitalist world system.’ The metaphor highlights India’s descent from a land of power and dignity to one of subjugation, where even the symbols of strength and resistance were mercilessly crushed.

“आहें उठीं दीन कृषकों की, मजदूरों की तड़प, पुकारें,

अरी! गरीबों के लोहू परखड़ी हुई तेरी दीवारों”

(“The sighs of impoverished farmers rose upward,

Along with the cries and agony of laborers.

Oh! Your walls were built upon the blood of the poor;

Your towering ramparts stand upon their sacrifice.

O Delhi—

Queen of the farmers’ intellect and labour.”)

(Dinkar n.d., 68–72, 77, trans. by the author)

The lines metaphorically highlight the suffering and exploitation of farmers and laborers whose blood, sweat, and sacrifices built the grandeur of Delhi. The majestic walls of Delhi stand not on prosperity but on the pain and oppression of the poor. Delhi, once considered the queen of agricultural prosperity and labor, is ironically built on the exploitation of those very people who



toiled to create her splendor. Electricity, tramways and railways changed the entire terrain of the city, corn fields which occupied the city earlier were displaced by large railway stations with ten platforms, two polo grounds and the King's camp covered a large area of 85 acres was laid down beautifully with lawns and roads (Gupta 1981, 175). The imagery criticizes the unequal socio-economic foundations that sustained the city's magnificence.

“अरी, हया कर!

यह जर्जर खड़ा कुतुब-मीनार

इब्रत की माँग करता है—यही है, अरी! होशियार!

हूक न उठे कहीं 'दारा' की,

कूक न उठे कब्र मदमाती!

बाबर है, औरंग यहीं है—

बक्सर को मत भूल,

यहीं है विजयी शेरशाह निर्दयी।

न निकल पड़े क्रोध में लेकर

शेरशाह की तलवार!”

(Dinkar n.d., 88, 89, 96, 104, 105)

The lines urge Delhi to honour her rich heritage and to remember the sacrifices of great historical figures such as Dara Shikoh, Babur, Aurangzeb, and Sher Shah Suri. Symbols like the Qutub Minar and the Jama Masjid evoke Delhi's former glory while simultaneously warning that continued moral decline may awaken the wrath of history and of her ancestors. The reference to Nur Jahan and Jahangir—“नूरजहाँ की प्रेम-व्यथा में”—serves as a reminder that the neglect of historical sacrifices inevitably demands moral reckoning and justice.

The poem conveys a profound disillusionment with Delhi's deceptive outward beauty. The line “खिले फूल, पर मोह न सकती हमें अपरिचित छटा निराली” represents Delhi's attempts to reclaim her lost charm; however, the poet remains unmoved. His vision is haunted by the faded redness of wilted roses—



“मुरझे गुलाब”—which symbolize painful memories of past glory intertwined with suffering. Delhi, once described as “खंडहर में हम कंगालों की रानी” (“the queen of the impoverished”), has now become a hollow emblem of splendor, where ruins stand as silent witnesses to a past awaiting revival—a revival that appears tragically unattainable.

Through this metaphor, the poet reveals that superficial beauty cannot conceal the deep scars of betrayal and loss that mark Delhi’s fall. True beauty, the poem suggests, lies not in external adornment but in an unbroken connection to one’s roots, sustained by memory, dignity, and pride.

“चूहे की दिल्ली यात्रा” (CHUHE KI DILLI YATRA) and “भारत का रेशमी नगर” (BHARAT KA RESHMI NAGAR):

Ramdhari Singh Dinkar’s poem Chuhe ki Dilli Yatra exposes the illusion of freedom in postindependence India. माथे पर तिलक लग रहे थे और मैं सोच रही थी कि बनारस से ब्राह्मण किसलिए बुलाए गए हैं ? कारी” क्यों दूँदा जा रहा है ? चंदन क्यों घोला जा रहा है ? (‘Tilak was being applied on foreheads, and I kept wondering—why have Brahmins been called from Banaras? Why is the ‘kaari’ being searched for? Why is the sandalwood being prepared?’) (Kidwai 2000, 4) this statement rightly echoes the essence of this poem i.e. After independence, society, instead of progressing, returned to old religious traditions. Delhi, once a symbol of diversity, started adopting a rigid identity, reflecting the deep impact of Partition on the nation’s mindset. He uses the mouse as a metaphor for the common man, filled with aspirations of reaching independent Delhi, believing they will finally feel empowered. However, this delusion shatters when the mouse encounters the cat, representing the ruling elite (Babus), who monopolize power.

Dinkar states: “इतने में लो पड़ी दिखाई कहीं दूर पर बिल्ली, चूहेराम भगे पीछे को, दूर रह गई दिल्ली” (**Suddenly, from afar, the cat appeared, the mouse ran back, leaving Delhi behind.**) (Dinkar n.d.,25-26) Terrified, the mouse retreats, revealing powerlessness, unmasking vulnerability, and symbolizing the continued subjugation of the weak. Dinkar’s statement-“ पहले जहाँ लाट साहब थे वहाँ आज बाबू है!” (**Where once the Viceroy stood, today there is just a clerk!**) (Dinkar n.d.,13) critiques how only the



rulers have changed, while oppression and exclusivity persist, reinforcing Delhi's artificial prosperity, which overshadows the hardships of the weak.

Similarly, Bharat ka Reshmi Nagar presents Delhi as a "silken city," an illusion of luxury, where the privileged enjoy comfort while the rest of India remains buried in hardship. This divide was not only economic but also intellectual. As Sharma (2016, 277) notes, Delhi's coffeehouses became the new centers of intellectual engagement, dominated by a privileged class of Hindi intellectuals, many of whom were migrants. While these spaces provided a sense of belonging to some, they further alienated those who had lost everything to Partition, reinforcing the idea that freedom was not truly universal. The poem exposes the economic divide between the urban elite and rural poverty. Dinkar denounces Delhi's false grandeur, which conceals the ongoing struggles of the marginalized. The critique is evident in the lines, "दिल्ली में तो है ज्योत की चहल-पहल, पर भटक रहा है

सारा देश अँधेरे में" This reflects the post-independence reality where power shifted but inequality persisted. "Independence was experienced differently depending on class and community, where a 'ruling class celebrated, while a 'refugee class remained displaced and dispossessed" (Pandey 1997, 2264). Just like the mouse in Dinkar's poem, many Indians walked into the dream of freedom (Delhi) but found themselves outsiders in their own nation Dinkar captures this irony when the mouse, full of hope, declares:

"गाँधी-युग में कौन उड़े अब चूहों की दिल्ली?"

आजादी के जश्न देखने मैं जाऊँ दिल्ली"

In Gandhi's era, who would dare mock the mice? I go to Delhi to witness the celebration of freedom') (Dinkar n.d.,16-17). Yet, as the mouse soon discovers, this celebration is not for all, mirroring the disillusionment of the common people, who realized that freedom did not necessarily translate into empowerment. This vision stands in stark contrast with Nehru's Tryst with Destiny speech, where he declared that "India will awake to life and freedom" and that the goal was to "wipe every tear from every eye" (Nehru 1947). Nehru saw independence as a transformative moment, an opportunity for all Indians to rise together. However, both Dinkar and Pandey inquire whether this promise was ever fulfilled. Pandey notes: "The two faces that I have referred to are



represented in Delhi by two very different answers to the question, 'What were you doing on August 15, 1947?' One response is symbolized by Nehru's well-known speech, and the other by the countless displaced individuals who found no place in the celebrations of independence" (Pandey 1997, 2264).

The shift from colonial to national governance did not immediately dismantle the structures of hierarchy and privilege. "Partition, rather than Independence, was the event that decisively disrupted lives, while independence merely continued them in familiar structures" (Pandey 1997, 2261). Sharma (2016, 279) further highlights this continuity, explaining how tea and coffeehouses in Delhi became symbols of modernity but remained exclusive spaces, largely catering to elite intellectuals rather than the displaced masses. This mirrors Dinkar's critique of Delhi's artificial prosperity, where the Babus replaced the British, but true inclusion remained elusive. This suggests that while power changed hands, true transformation never occurred, aligning with Dinkar's critique, where the Babus replaced the British, but the common people still remained powerless "The Congress fought against the Raj, but it was also progressively becoming the Raj" (Sarkar 1983, 3). Dinkar captures this irony in *Chuhe ki Dilli Yatra* when he writes:

“किले पर खूब तिरंगे झंडे का लहराना,

अब न रहे अंग्रेज, देश पर अपनी ही कब्जा है।”

(‘On the Red Fort, the tricolor flies high, The British are gone, but the country is still controlled.’) (Dinkar n.d.,11-12)

Bharat ka Reshmi Nagar further critiques how Delhi's wealth remained confined to elite circles, reinforcing Pandey's argument that "independence was not universal but selective" (Pandey 1997, 2265). Dinkar highlights this disparity when he writes:

“उद्यानों का यह नगर, कहीं भी जो देखो,

इसमें कुम्हार का चाक, नहीं कोई चिंता है।”

(This city of gardens, look anywhere, and you will not find a potter's wheel turning) This divide is also reflected in Kidwai's haunting description of Delhi post-Partition:



“दिल्ली, जिसकी हर गली-कूचा अतीत की खोई हुई किताब है,

अब एक खून में लिथड़ी हुई लाश थी,

जिस पर सैकड़ों गिद्ध और चीलें मंडरा रही थीं” (Kidwai 2000, 15)

This highlights the stark contrast between prosperity and suffering in post-independence Delhi, mirroring the contradictions Dinkar exposes in his poetry. While some celebrated freedom, others were left in the ruins of violence, displacement, and despair. "Partition created refugees in their own homeland, questioning the very meaning of citizenship and belonging in independent India" (Pandey 1997, 2263). Post -independence Delhi's social fabric was redefined through elite-controlled public spaces, reflecting a deeper struggle over who truly belonged in this "free" India. (Sharma 2016, 281)

“आजादी का तथाकथित दिन खून में सना था,

जिसके कदमों में राजधानी की लाशें पड़ी हो रही थीं

और औरतों की इज़्जत लुट रही थी”

(Kidwai 2000, 3)

This reinforces the idea that while the elite celebrated independence, ordinary people faced violence, loss, and uncertainty. Delhi's journey reflects both glory and hardship. Dinkar's poetry reveals that while independence came, true freedom remained uncertain. The rulers changed, but the struggles of the people persisted. Even today, the city carries the weight of its past, still searching for its true identity.

Both history and literature reconstruct the past but through distinct approaches. History relies on objective analysis of sources, while literature re-imagines the past with creativity, offering a more subjective perspective. Though historians often use literary works to enrich historical understanding, these sources require caution due to artistic embellishments and biases. In a nutshell, this paper has examined how Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's poetry reflects 20thce Delhi's history, highlighting how literature adds nuanced layers to historical narratives. Analyzing these works alongside historical texts reveals the interplay between fact and fiction, enriching our understanding of the past.



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