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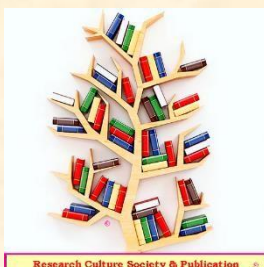
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International Conference on Politics, Law and Journalism

(ICPLJ – 2025)

Date: 13 – 14 December, 2025

Conference Special Issue - 42

The Managing Editor:

Dr. C. M. Patel

(Research Culture Society & Publication)

Jointly Organized by :

**Department of Journalism and Advertising, State University of Trade and Economics,
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Message



Dear Professional Colleagues.

We are happy that Department of Journalism and Advertising (State University of Trade and Economics, Ukraine) in collaboration with ‘Research Culture Society’ and ‘Scientific Research Association’ (Government Registered Scientific Research organization) are organizing ‘International Conference on Politics, Law and Journalism’ during 13 – 14 December, 2025.

The aim of this International E-conference is to provide an interaction stage for researchers, practitioners from academia and industries to deal with state-of-the-art advancement in their respective fields. The main objective is to observe the current scenario and trends of Politics, Law, Media and Journalism.

We believe, this International E-Conference will help in redefining the strong connect between education and digitalization and the holistic development of students in the academic institutions. An additional goal of this international conference is to combine interests and scientific research related to Politics, Law, Media and Journalism to interact with members within and outside their own disciplines and to bring people closer for the benefit of the scientific community worldwide.

Our best wishes to the organizers and Participants of the conference. !

Prof. Diana Fayvishenko (ICPLJ-2025 Conference Chair)
Head, Department of Journalism and Advertising,
State University of Trade and Economics, Ukraine, Europe.

Prof. Yanina Lisun (ICPLJ-2025 Conference Convener/Co-ordinator)
Department of Journalism and Advertising,
State University of Trade and Economics, Ukraine, Europe.

Message from Conference Chairperson



Dr. Bhargavi D Hemmige

Professor & HoD Dept. of Journalism & Mass Communication

JAIN (Deemed-to-be University)

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication which is a part of School of Humanities and Social Sciences, is thrilled with the overwhelming response to our International Conference on Politics, Law and Journalism - 2025.

Selected abstracts / papers will be fascinating to engage in discussions on this topic, as Politics, Law and Journalism have significantly shaped our understanding of life and narratives both in the past and present.

The conference's main theme, along with its various sub-themes, transcends the boundaries of journalism and politics discipline, promising a rich exchange of knowledge and perspectives. Over the next two days, we anticipate engaging and thought-provoking deliberations.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our principal officers, students, colleagues, participants from various universities, critics, and our publication partner, Research Culture and Society, for their valuable articles, research, and contributions to this field.

Thank you all for being part of this enriching experience.

Dr.C. M. Patel

Director, RESEARCH CULTURE SOCIETY

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Message

Dear Professional Colleagues,

It is gratifying to note that Department of Journalism and Advertising, State University of Trade and Economics, Ukraine. Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, JAIN (Deemed-to-be-University) Bengaluru, India. in collaboration with 'Research Culture Society' (Government Registered Scientific Research organization) are organizing - 'International Conference on Politics, Law and Journalism' during 13 – 14 December, 2025.

This international conference will allow the participants and academicians to reveal their endeavors, extend academic professional networks and jointly ascertain the existing and upcoming research instructions guidelines and presented thoughts at international level. I believe that all the presentations in this academic research conference will bring interesting topics with fruitful discussions.

I believe, this International Conference will help in redefining the strong connection between students and academicians from different institutions. An additional goal of this international conference is to combine interests and research related to Politics, Law, Media and Journalism fields academia, researchers and students.

My best wishes to the committee members, speakers and participants of the conference.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dr. C. M. Patel', is positioned above the printed name.

Dr.C. M. Patel

Director, Research Culture Society.

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Binge-Watching Culture and Its Psychological and Social Effects Among Youth in Western Mumbai

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Abstract: OTT platforms have been growing drastically, changing our entertainment viewing habits. The changes can be seen all over India, especially in metropolitan regions like Western Mumbai. The most significant change that can be observed is the phenomenon of binge-watching, which has been normalised as a cultural practice. This research paper examines the psychological and social effects of binge-watching on OTT platforms among youth aged between 16-25 years. Research findings include psychological impacts due to extended binge-watching sessions, like disturbed sleep cycles, reduced productivity levels, emotional dependence, and reduced attention span, leading to ADHD. Socially, binge-watching influences relationships with family and friends, replacing family TV experience with personal viewing and outdoor activities with solitary screen time. However, youth agree to positive changes like emotional comfort, broaden perspectives, and diverse beliefs. The study notes how OTT binge watching leads to subtle yet notable changes in Western Mumbai youth's lifestyle, social relationships, and well-being.

Keywords: OTT platforms, Mumbai youth, binge watching, Western Mumbai, social effects, digital media, psychological effects, web shows.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rise of OTT (Over The Top) platforms has brought a significant change in the entertainment industry over the past decade. A major transformation largely driven by popular digital channels such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, JioHotstar, and SonyLIV is clearly visible in the entertainment viewing culture. Unlike the traditional media, these platforms provide dynamic, personalised, portable, and private consumption. On-demand viewing has brought a significant cultural shift in media viewing habits. The fast-paced metro city of Western Mumbai has diluted the OTT viewing habits with their fast-paced daily routines. The urban lifestyle of the residents of Western Mumbai has been deeply digitally penetrated.

Binge Watching, which means watching multiple episodes in one go, has become a trendy cultural habit. In the beginning, binge-watching was a leisure activity specially scheduled for the weekends or holidays. Now, it has become a part of the lifestyle for many Western Mumbai youth ranging from 16 to 25. This age group is presumed to be more vulnerable due to their academic stress, peer pressure, social influences, technological dependence, and escapism desire.

With a dynamic and rapid growth of OTT platforms, questions about mental health, psychological effects, social influences and cultural impact arise. The youth of Mumbai have frequently reported problems like sleep deprivation, emotional exhaustion, low social interactions, and reduced productivity. Many studies explore the Binge-Watching phenomenon from a macro perspective; we aim to go niche and study binge-watching's psychological and social impacts on Western Mumbai youth. This study aims to research the gap and bring answers to the mental, social and other impacts of binge watching OTT platforms.

2. Objectives:

- I. To study the psychological impact of binge-watching OTT platforms on the youth aged 16-25 of Western Mumbai.
- II. To analyse how binge-watching affects the social relationships, friendships, outdoor activities, and family interactions of Mumbai's youth.
- III. To identify the motivations, patterns, and frequency of binge-watching among the youth of Western Mumbai.

3. Literature Review:

3.1. Rise Of OTT Platforms -

Several reports in India state that there has been a drastic rise in the use of OTT platforms amongst Indians amid the COVID-19 lockdown. Affordable internet access, smartphone demand, and local raw content are major contributors to the rise of OTT channels in India.

3.2. Binge-Watching Becomes Global Trend-

Panda & Pandey (2017) in their study described binge-watching as habit-forming and entertaining. Apart from this, Starosta & Izydorczyk (2020) reveal that binge-watching OTT shows triggers dopamine-driven reward cycles. This leads the binge-watching phenomenon to be addictive and psychologically engaging.

3.3. Psychological Effects-

Several existing studies have linked binge-watching to major psychological effects, including -

- Procrastination
- Sleep disruption
- Reduced productivity
- Emotional dependency on influential characters and their narratives
- Cognitive overload leads to a reduced attention span

Hence, youth often binge-watch OTT shows to escape boredom, stress, and loneliness.

3.4. Social Consequences-

Many studies reveal that private and mobile viewing reduces social interactions, leading to less family bonding time, decreased outdoor activities, and different peer communications. Now, OTT shows have become the preferred topic of conversation amongst Western Mumbai youth.

3.5. Research Gap-

There are many research studies on binge-watching and OTT platforms; however, only a few talk about the impact on Western Mumbai youth. It is important to explore this area as this youth is more exposed to the Western pop culture, living a stressed urban lifestyle, and has a deep social media influence. This study will attempt to fill these gaps.

Hypothesis-

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between binge-watching OTT platforms and the psychological or social effects experienced by youth aged 16–25 in Western Mumbai.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant relationship between binge-watching OTT platforms and the psychological and social effects experienced by youth aged 16–25 in Western Mumbai.

Methodology-

4.1. Research Design-

A mixed-method approach was used, combining qualitative (open-ended questions) and quantitative (survey) tools.

4.2. Sample Selection-

- Population - Youth aged 16 to 25.
- Location - Western Mumbai (Bandra, Andheri, Goregaon, Malad, Borivali)
- Sample Size - 120 respondents
- Sampling Technique - Convenience sampling

4.3. Data Collection Tools-

- Questionnaire on Google Forms
- Likert Scale Responses
- Optional Open-Ended Qualitative Inputs

4.4. Data Analysis-

- Qualitative data were analysed with thematic coding
- Quantitative data analysed with percentages and descriptive statistics

4.5. Limitations-

- The sample was limited to youth actively using digital media
- Only educated youth from Western Mumbai were selected
- Self-reported data may involve bias

5. Research Analysis-

5.1 Pattern of OTT Consumption-

The survey findings revealed extremely high OTT consumption levels. Table 1 reveals 55.8% of participants binge-watch daily, while 25.8% binge-watch only 3 to 4 times a week.

Table 1 - Frequency of Binge Watching amongst Western Mumbai youth.

Frequency Category	Respondents	Result in Percentage
Daily	67	55.8%
3–5 times/week	31	25.8%
Weekends only	18	15.0%
Rarely	4	3.3%

Figure 1 reveals that Netflix and Prime Video lead amongst the Mumbai youth as the most preferred OTT platforms.

Figure 1 - Preferred OTT Platforms.

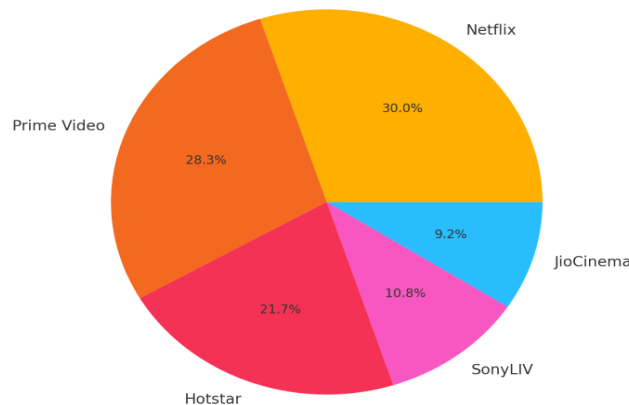


Figure 2- Duration Chart

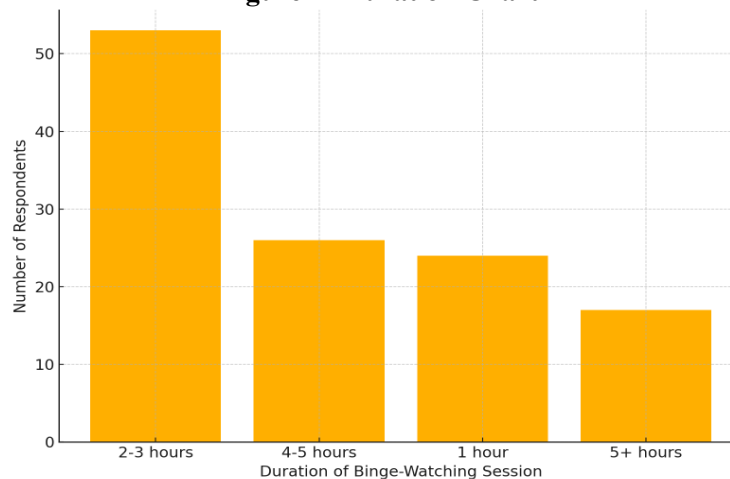


Figure 2 shows that 44.2% of Western Mumbai youth binge-watch for 2-3 hours, meanwhile, there are 21.7% youth watch for 4-5 hours.

Table 2- Device Preferences

Device	Respondents	Percentage
Mobile	66	55%
Laptop	30	25%
Smart TV	18	15%
Tablet	8	5%

Table 2, named device preference, implies that mobile phones are the most used gadgets for watching OTT platforms and binge-watching shows. 55% of the youth prefer mobile phones, enforcing private and flexible viewing habits.

5.2. Binge-Watching Motivators-

According to the data collected from questions (Q9–Q13), the youth revealed the primary motivators for binge-watching.

- Entertainment
- Escaping the academic and personal pressure
- Relief from stress
- Peer influence
- Emotional attachment to the characters and their narratives.

5.3. Psychological Effects-

The responses to questions Q14–Q18 revealed the psychological effects of binge-watching OTT shows among Western Mumbai youth.

- Late-night viewing leading to a disrupted sleep cycle
- Daytime fatigue leading to low productivity
- Emotional dependency on characters, including antagonists
- Reduced attention span
- Change in behaviour and interactions based on the type of content consumption

5.4. Social Effects-

- Personalised viewing leads to reduced family bonding and interactions.
- A steep decrease in outdoor activities and productivity.
- OTT content discussions lead to a preferred theme for peer conversations.
- Massive shift to private entertainment viewing habits.

5.5. Positive Effects-

- Increase in awareness and learning through documentaries and social issues content.
- Globalisation and cultural exposure.
- Strengthens peer relationships.

6. Analysis and Discussion-

After analysing all tables, pie charts, and figures, we have discovered that OTT and binge watching have become normalised in daily routines in the lives of the youth of Western Mumbai. Table 1 and Figure 2 of the duration chart reveal that watching OTT has become a habitual engagement. Meanwhile, Table 2 of the device preferences discloses a decrease in family interaction and social communication due to a high amount of mobile viewing. On the other hand, Figure 1 of preferred OTT platforms tells us that there is now an openness to new cultures and global views.

Psychologically, binge watching does give comfort and relief, but it takes a toll on the Western Mumbai youth by affecting their sleeping patterns, emotional dependency, fatigue and attention span time. Socially, binge-watching is leading the youth towards a solitary routine and increasing their peer bonding digitally.

This proves, while binge-watching provides emotional and meaningful support and values to the Western Mumbai youth, its excessive use can lead to major negative effects on their well-being. Therefore, a balance and self-control in the viewing habit is much required. Here, it is proven that the study supports the alternative hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant relationship between binge-watching OTT platforms and the psychological and social effects experienced by youth aged 16–25 in Western Mumbai.

7. Findings and Results -

The survey of 120 young respondents aged between 16 to 25 in Western Mumbai gave us the following solid findings and key results.

1. High levels of binge-watching-

The findings revealed that most respondents agreed on binge watching regularly, with 55.8% watching daily, 25.8% watching 3–5 times a week (Table 1).

2. Popular OTT platforms-

Netflix takes the number one spot in being the most used OTT platform, with 30%, and Prime Video is at a near second with 28.3%. Hotstar follows them with 21.7%. (Figure 1)

3. Binge-Watching duration-

A majority of respondents, 44.2% accepted binge-watching for 2-3 hours, while 21.7% accepted to view for 4 to 5 hours per session. (Figure 2)

4. Device Preference-

For its mobility and easy accessibility, 55% youth accepted using their smartphones mainly to view OTT content. This indicates a shift towards solitary viewing amongst the youth. (Table 2)

5. Psychological effects-

Commonly, youth reported several psychological issues after binge-watching, including sleep disturbance, fatigue, low productivity, decreased attention span, emotional dependency on shows and characters, and lower academic scores.

6. Social effects-

The findings revealed several social effects, including reduced family interaction, less or no outdoor activities, and increased peer bonding through conversations about popular OTT shows.

7. Positive effects-

Youth revealed that they felt emotional dependency, got cultural exposure, learned new things and got awareness on socially stigmatising topics.

Overall, binge-watching has proven to be a habitual, normalised and widespread phenomenon among the youth of Western Mumbai. While it offers emotional benefits, we can notice psychological and social drawbacks.

8. Recommendations-

We proposed the following recommendations after studying the results and findings of this study.

- **Balanced viewing habits**

It is important to have a balance and control on screen time while binge-watching to prevent psychological and social drawbacks. Having a fixed schedule and timer before binge-watching can be essential.

- **Awareness of digital well-being**

Educational institutes should take an initiative to spread awareness on digital well-being in this tech era. The negative impacts of prolonged screen exposure should be studied and revealed to the youth.

- **Encourage offline activities**

The caretakers and elders of youth should take responsibility to encourage outdoor, offline activities amongst their children. Having hobbies, sports, and other talents can help reduce screen time.

- **Mindful viewing practices**

The makers of OTT platforms should add a mandatory viewing reminder. For eg- "take a break," "you've extended permitted viewing time."

- **Family engagement**

Introducing family activities or having shared viewing experiences will significantly reduce personal viewing habits.

- **Further research**

In-depth, detailed studies should be conducted on the effects of prolonged screen time, binge watching, and OTT platforms among other regions of Mumbai and different age groups.

9. Conclusion-

This study aimed to highlight the key influence of binge-watching OTT shows on the youth of Western Mumbai. We discovered there's a significant impact on the lifestyle, psychological well-being, and social interactions. We surveyed 120 respondents with a convenience sampling technique using a questionnaire of Likert scale responses and optional open-ended qualitative inputs. The findings revealed that binge-watching has become a normal activity and an integral part of the daily routines of the youth of Western Mumbai.

Psychologically, we discovered binge-watching offers emotional comfort and relaxation to the stressed and overworked youth of Western Mumbai. However, the drawbacks recorded were sleep deprivation, low productivity, reduced attention, and emotional dependencies. Socially, the findings revealed that binge watching increases peer bonding over digital content, but simultaneously it reduces family time and leads to fewer outdoor activities.

Regardless of the drawbacks and negative impacts, the youth perceive binge-watching as a positive and balanced activity if practised in moderation. The findings disclose that binge-watching is not inherently harmful; rather, its effects depend on the frequency, purpose, and duration of usage. The results also push mindful digital habits and the need for awareness of OTT consumption patterns among the youth of metropolitan cities.

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Impact of Consumer Mindset and Brand Image on Purchase Decisions: A Comparison of Global and Local Brands

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Abstract: The study examines how brand perception and consumer mindset influence purchasing decisions, with a particular focus on the comparative preferences for global and local brands among men and women in Jalandhar district of Punjab. In today's highly competitive marketplace, consumers' buying choices are shaped not only by price and product quality but also by cultural identity, emotional attachment, and perceived brand value. This research investigates key factors such as brand image, price sensitivity, advertising influence, and cultural connection to understand how they collectively drive consumer loyalty and preference. Employing a quantitative research design, primary data were collected from 200 respondents comprising 100 males and 100 females through a structured questionnaire featuring close-ended and Likert-scale questions. The data were analyzed using the simple percentage method to identify comparative patterns in gender-based brand perception and decision-making. The study aims to highlight differences in attitudes toward global and local brands and identify key determinants of consumer loyalty. Findings are expected to provide insights for marketers in developing culturally relevant and psychologically resonant branding strategies, helping both global and local firms strengthen their market positioning in India's dynamic consumer landscape.

Keywords: Consumer Mindset, Brand Image, Global and Local Brands, Gender Comparison, Buying Behaviour.

1. INTRODUCTION

In modern consumer markets, individuals are constantly exposed to a wide array of global and local brands competing for attention, value perception, and purchase loyalty. Brand selection today extends beyond functional factors such as price or product performance and is increasingly influenced by psychological preferences, cultural identity, personality expression, and overall brand perception (Diamantopoulos et al., 2019). As a result, understanding how consumers evaluate brands has become an important concern for marketers and researchers alike.

Globalization has played a significant role in transforming consumer behavior worldwide. It has expanded economic and cultural connectivity, enabling companies to operate across borders and making global brands accessible in diverse regions (Giddens, 1990; Larsson, 2001). Through the diffusion of ideas, technologies, and lifestyles, globalization has encouraged multinational corporations to create brand identities that resonate across different cultural settings (Srivastava et al., 2021). Iconic brands such as Coca-Cola, Sony, and Nike have become integral parts of daily life for consumers around the globe, illustrating how international branding transcends geography to build universal appeal.

Over the past few decades, globalization has profoundly transformed consumer behavior in emerging economies like India. The expansion of the middle class, higher disposable incomes, and exposure to international trends have all contributed to a growing acceptance of global brands (Kumar et al., 2013). Yet, while international brands are often perceived as superior in quality and prestige, domestic brands continue to thrive due to their deep cultural roots and price competitiveness (Srivastava, 2015). Studies

in the Indian context show that consumer loyalty toward global and domestic brands varies widely depending on socioeconomic status, cultural background, and purchasing power (Lee et al., 2010). Some consumers exhibit a strong affinity for international brands due to their aspirational value, while others remain loyal to domestic brands for their familiarity, affordability, and cultural resonance (Bhardwaj et al., 2010).

Research has identified several key factors influencing brand loyalty among Indian consumers. **Perceived quality and brand credibility** remain central, with consumers often associating international brands with higher reliability and standards. Srivastava et al. (2020) noted that credibility plays a defining role in brand preference, especially in high-involvement product categories such as electronics, automobiles, and luxury goods. **Cultural affinity and emotional connection** are equally influential; domestic brands benefit from aligning with traditional values and local sensibilities (Parida & Sahney, 2017). For example, Indian ethnic wear brands continue to retain customer loyalty despite competition from global fashion labels (Lee et al., 2010). **Pricing strategies and economic considerations** also shape brand loyalty, as many consumers in tier-2 and tier-3 cities prefer domestic products for their affordability and comparable quality (Bhardwaj et al., 2011). Finally, **marketing strategies and consumer perception** play a vital role. Kumar et al. (2013) emphasized that localized advertising and celebrity endorsements enhance relatability, helping both domestic and global brands foster emotional connections with Indian audiences.

Emerging markets such as India have also witnessed rapid expansion in the retail and consumer goods sectors, driven by rising income levels and the emergence of a stable middle class (Kellogg Insight, 2012; Eizenberg & Salvo, 2012). These markets are expected to contribute significantly to global consumption, drawing increasing attention from multinational corporations (He & Wang, 2017; Srivastava et al., 2020). However, local brands have simultaneously strengthened their presence through improved quality, affordability, and cultural resonance (Cambefort, 2020; Liu et al., 2020). This evolving dynamic shows that brand perception in India is shaped by the coexistence of global exposure and cultural identity, where emotional and social factors often outweigh purely functional ones.

Given this competitive landscape, it becomes crucial to analyze the key drivers behind consumer brand choices. The present study focuses on the urban market of Jalandhar city in Punjab, examining how brand image and consumer mindset influence purchase decisions between global and local brands. It also investigates gender-based differences and evaluates the role of product categories and motivating factors. The findings of this research are expected to assist marketers and businesses in developing more effective and culturally aligned branding strategies tailored to the preferences of urban Indian consumers.

2. Review of Literature

Brands in the global marketplace function as more than symbols of a product's origin—they also reflect cultural values, psychological signals, and consumer identity. Early branding research acknowledged functional attributes such as price and performance as key drivers of purchase decisions. However, more recent work points to deeper influences: namely, the consumer's mindset and brand image. For instance, perceptions of brand globalness (PBG) and brand localness (PBL) have emerged as important concepts that reflect how consumers interpret a brand's origin and cultural relevance (Safeer, Zhou, Abrar & Luo, 2022). These concepts underscore that in emerging markets, brand choices are mediated through psychological and cultural lenses, not just economic ones.

Consumer mindset—comprising attitudes such as ethnocentrism, cosmopolitanism, and openness to global culture—plays a central role in shaping brand preferences. For example, Özsomer and Coulter (2015) found that individuals with strong attachment to local culture are more likely to favour local brands, while cosmopolitan consumers lean toward global brands for perceived prestige and superior quality. Sengupta et al. (2022) analyzed consumer-brand relationships in India. The study utilized survey data from various Indian regions and concluded that consumer loyalty significantly varied between domestic and international brands. While international brands were preferred for their perceived global reputation and quality assurance, domestic brands benefited from cultural affinity and economic accessibility. The research further emphasized that the North-East region of India showed

greater loyalty to domestic brands, whereas metropolitan consumers exhibited stronger preferences for global brands.

On the other hand, brand image—including perceived quality, trust, innovation, and emotional connection—serves as a critical mediator between consumer mindset and actual behaviour. Research on PBG and PBL suggests that global brands benefit from associations with international availability, standardized quality, and prestige (Steenkamp, Batra & Alden, 2003), while local brands gain strength from cultural alignment, indigenous narratives, and value-for-money propositions (Rodrigues, Montanari & Azzari, 2023). For example, Liu Xia and Han (2023) demonstrated that self-regulatory focus moderates the influence of PBG and PBL on purchase intention: promotion-oriented consumers preferred brands perceived as local, while prevention-oriented consumers inclined toward global brands. These insights highlight that brand image constructs do not operate uniformly across consumer segments; instead, personal and cultural factors condition how consumers interpret brand signals.

Comparative studies of global vs. local brands in emerging markets reveal that purchase behaviour varies with context and consumer segments. Rodrigues et al. (2023) observed that although global brands in developing markets carry modernity and higher perceived quality, local brands often win on accessibility, authenticity, affordability, and cultural match. Their systematic review of 44 papers found that while many antecedents of global brand preference (such as prestige and innovation) overlap with those for local brands, the boundary conditions differ: cultural norms, income levels, media influence, age cohort, and product categories all moderate brand choice outcomes. Srivastava et al. (2020) examined brand credibility as a key factor influencing consumer choice between global and domestic brands. Using structural equation modeling, the researchers found that consumers relied heavily on brand reputation and perceived credibility when selecting brands. Their findings suggested that international brands often commanded greater credibility due to established global presence, whereas domestic brands gained trust through community engagement and cultural integration. Srivastava (2015) analyzed the impact of demographic factors on consumer loyalty in fast-food chains and found that loyalty towards global brands was significantly higher among younger and urban consumers, while older consumers and those in semi-urban areas showed greater attachment to domestic brands due to familiarity and historical trust. The study also noted that global brands' aggressive promotional strategies heavily influenced younger consumers' purchasing decisions.

3.Objectives

1. To examine consumer mindset differences between male and female buyers regarding global and local brands.
2. To analyze how brand image influences purchase decisions for global and local brands among respondents.
3. To examine whether consumer preference for global or local brands varies across different product categories.
4. To identify key factors such as quality, price, cultural identity, and advertising that drive purchase intentions for global versus local brands.

4.Research Methodology

This study was conducted in the urban area of Jalandhar city, Punjab, to analyze the impact of consumer mindset and brand image on purchase decisions, particularly comparing global and local brands. A total of 200 respondents were selected using a simple random sampling method, consisting of 100 male and 100 female consumers, ensuring a balanced gender representation for accurate comparison. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire that included close-ended and Likert-scale questions designed according to the study objectives. The simple percentage method was used for data analysis, as it enables clear interpretation and comparison of consumer preferences, mindset variations, and the influence of brand image between male and female respondents. This methodology ensured that the findings directly supported the assessment of factors shaping purchase intentions in an urban consumer environment.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Which type of brand do you generally prefer?

Options	Male	Female	Total%
Global Brands	58	53	55.5%
Local Brands	26	34	30%
Both equally	16	13	14.5%
Total	100	100	100%

Table- 1

The data clearly shows that global brands hold a majority preference among respondents, with **55.5%** choosing them over local brands and mixed choices. A gender-wise comparison reveals that male respondents demonstrate a stronger inclination toward global brands, with **58%** favoring them, compared to **53%** of female respondents. This suggests that men are slightly more influenced by international brand image, perceived quality, and trend appeal. In contrast, local brands receive comparatively higher support from female respondents. **34%** of females prefer local brands, against **26%** of males. This indicates that women tend to value affordability, cultural familiarity, and trust in local products more than men do. A smaller segment of the sample **14.5%** overall reported equal preference for both global and local brands, reflecting a consumer group that makes purchase decisions based on need or situational factors rather than brand origin. Overall, the results highlight a notable gender-based variation in brand preference. Males show a stronger inclination towards global brands, while females display a relatively higher preference for local brands.

2. I prefer purchasing global brands over local brands.

Options	Male	Female	Total%
Strongly Agree	23	13	18%
Agree	34	29	31.5%
Neutral	23	27	25%
Disagree	13	21	17%
Strongly Disagree	7	10	8.5%
Total	100	100	100%

Table- 2

The results show that **49.5%** of respondents (Agree + Strongly Agree) prefer purchasing global brands, highlighting a nearly half population with a positive inclination toward global branding. Males reflect a stronger preference, with **57%** favoring global brands compared to **42%** of females. This indicates that male consumers are more influenced by global brand appeal, prestige value, and perceived quality. Meanwhile, **25%** of respondents remain **neutral**, suggesting flexible purchasing behavior where the choice between global and local brands may depend on price, product type, and accessibility. On the other hand, **31.5% of females** show disagreement, indicating a stronger inclination towards affordability and trust in local products. Overall, gender continues to play a notable role in shaping attitudes toward global brands.

3. Which aspect of brand image influences you the most while buying a product?

Options	Male	Female	Total%
Brand reputation and trust	32	38	35%
Product quality	45	34	39.5%
Packaging and appearance	10	18	14%

Social status associated with the brand	13	10	11.5%
Total	100	100	100%

Table- 3

The results indicate that **product quality (39.5%)** is the most influential aspect of brand image for consumers. Males (45%) show a significantly stronger inclination toward quality than females (34%), possibly due to higher involvement in technical product categories like electronics or automobiles. **Brand reputation and trust** is the second most influential factor (35%), especially among females (38%), reflecting a greater emphasis on reliability and long-term satisfaction. Packaging and appearance (14%) holds relatively higher influence among females compared to males, suggesting its role in lifestyle-driven purchases such as cosmetics and fashion products. Only **11.5%** of respondents choose social status as a key influence, indicating that although global brands carry prestige, most consumers prioritize practical value over showmanship. Overall, the findings reveal that **brand image factors are valued differently across genders**, but trust and quality consistently remain the dominant motivators in purchase intentions.

4. A brand with a strong and positive image motivates me to buy its products.

Options	Male	Female	Total%
Strongly Agree	30	35	32.5%
Agree	40	33	36.5%
Neutral	18	20	19%
Disagree	8	7	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	4	5	4.5%
Total	100	100	100%

Table- 4

The results clearly show that a **strong and positive brand image greatly influences purchase motivation**. A combined **69%** of respondents (Strongly Agree + Agree) acknowledge that positive brand perceptions play a major role in their buying behavior. Female respondents show a slightly stronger positive inclination (68%) compared to males (70%), indicating that **brand assurance and visual trust cues matter for both genders almost equally**. Only **12%** of the total sample disagreed with the statement, suggesting that very few consumers dismiss branding considerations while making purchase decisions. The 19% neutral responses indicate a segment that may rely more on functional or economic factors than brand reputation alone. Overall, this finding reinforces the importance of **brand image in driving purchase intentions**.

5. For which product category do you mostly choose local brands?

Options	Male	Female	Total%
Food and grocery	42	49	45.5%
Clothing and footwear	19	25	22%
Personal care products	16	17	16.5%
Household items	23	9	16%
Total	100	100	100%

Table- 5

The data indicates that **local brands are most preferred for food and grocery items**, selected by **45.5%** of respondents. Female consumers (49%) exhibit a stronger preference in this category than males (42%), suggesting higher trust in local food quality and affordability. Clothing and footwear come next (22%), particularly among females (25%). This reflects the strong availability of budget-friendly and trendy local fashion options. Male respondents show a higher preference for local brands in **household items** (23%) compared to females (9%), indicating more price-conscious or practicality-driven choices in utility products. **Personal care products** rank lowest (16.5%) for local brand

preference, demonstrating that consumers especially in urban regions tend to trust global brands more for quality and safety. Overall, the findings confirm that **product category strongly influences brand preference**, which shows how local and global brands are chosen differently based on usage, trust, and perceived value.

6. I prefer global brands mainly for electronics and fashion products.

Options	Male	Female	Total%
Strongly Agree	37	31	34%
Agree	32	36	34%
Neutral	13	19	16%
Disagree	11	8	9.5%
Strongly Disagree	7	6	6.5%
Total	100	100	100%

Table- 6

The findings clearly show that **global brands dominate consumer preference** in electronics and fashion categories. A combined **68%** of respondents (Strongly Agree + Agree) favor international brands in these product segments. Male respondents (69%) show slightly higher preference compared to females (67%), indicating stronger attraction toward branded electronics and trendy apparel among males. Only **16%** remain neutral, suggesting that this segment may decide based on pricing or product availability rather than brand origin. Just **16%** disagreed with the statement, reflecting a small consumer group still satisfied with local alternatives in these categories.

7. Which factor most influences your decision to purchase a brand?

Options	Male	Female	Total%
Quality of the product	39	45	42%
Affordable price	26	29	27.5%
Advertising and media influence	19	16	17.5%
Cultural connection with the brand	16	10	13%
Total	100	100	100%

Table- 7

The findings clearly show that **quality is the leading factor** influencing purchase decisions, with **42%** respondents prioritizing it. Female consumers (45%) are slightly more concerned with product quality than males (39%), suggesting stronger expectations regarding durability and reliability. Affordable price is the second most important factor (27.5%), with females (29%) again showing a higher inclination toward cost-effective purchasing likely reflecting practical household budget considerations. Advertising and media influence impact **17.5%** of respondents, and the influence appears stronger among males (19%), indicating higher receptiveness to brand promotion and digital marketing. Cultural connection shows the lowest preference (13%), which suggests that urban consumers are becoming **more brand-value and performance driven**, rather than emotionally attached to cultural symbolism while purchasing.

8. Price plays an important role in my buying decision between global and local brands.

Options	Male	Female	Total%
Strongly Agree	32	29	30.5%
Agree	38	42	40%
Neutral	14	17	15.5%
Disagree	10	8	9%
Strongly Disagree	6	4	5.5%
Total	100	100	100%

Table- 8

The survey shows that Price is clearly an important factor for the respondents when deciding between global and local brands. A large majority of participants agreed with this statement, with **40 % agreeing** and **30.5 % strongly agreeing**, showing that affordability significantly shapes buying behavior. Gender-wise, **male respondents** displayed slightly stronger agreement, with **70 %** (Agree + Strongly Agree) expressing that price influences their choices, compared to **71 % of females**, showing that both groups have nearly equal sensitivity towards price. Meanwhile, a small proportion of respondents expressed disagreement (around **14 % combined**), indicating that price is not the biggest concern for a few who may prioritize attributes like quality or brand reputation. Neutral responses (15.5 %) suggest that some young buyers may consider price alongside other factors.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the evolving nature of consumer behavior in Jalandhar city, where brand preferences are shaped by a combination of global appeal, trust, quality, and economic considerations. The results confirm that **global brands have a noticeable dominance among young consumers**, mainly due to their perceived prestige, modern appeal, and superior quality. However, **local brands continue to hold a significant market space**, especially in daily-use product categories such as food and grocery items. This indicates that while youth are aspirational toward international brands, they remain connected to familiar, affordable, and reliable local products.

A clear **gender-based behavioral pattern** emerges across multiple dimensions. Male respondents consistently reflect **higher preference toward global brands** and are more driven by factors like trend appeal and marketing influence. Females, on the other hand, show **greater support for local brands**, particularly where affordability, trust, or household needs are concerned. Their stronger inclination toward brand reputation also emphasizes the importance of credibility and long-term satisfaction in purchasing decisions.

Quality and price remain the **two most dominant motivators** influencing buying behavior. The priority placed on quality supports the perception that consumers today are more informed and expect long-lasting value from their purchases. At the same time, the high significance of pricing demonstrates a **value-conscious mindset**, especially among younger and student populations who make rational comparisons before choosing between global and local options.

Another important insight is the **low influence of cultural connection and social status factors**. This suggests a shift towards **practical and performance-driven shopping behaviors**, indicating that modern youth evaluate brands beyond emotional symbolism or prestige imagery. Overall, the study reflects a market environment where global brands continue to gain strength, yet local brands remain essential and competitive due to trust and affordability.

7. Conclusion

This research concludes that **global brands enjoy a higher preference among consumer**, particularly driven by better product quality, attractive designs, and strong brand image. However, the preference for **local brands remains significant**, especially among females and in essential product categories such as food, grocery, and household items.

Brand image plays a crucial role in purchase motivations, indicating that **positive perception strongly impacts buying decisions**. The dominance of quality and price as primary influences shows that consumers are both quality-oriented and price-sensitive, balancing aspiration with practicality. Additionally, while advertising and social status do play a role, they are less influential than functional and value attributes.

The study also reveals that **consumer behavior is undergoing gradual transformation**, shifting away from traditional brand loyalties toward more rational, informed choices. Both global and local brands hold opportunities to expand, but success will depend on adapting to the evolving priorities of modern youth—maintaining quality, competitive pricing, trust, and innovation.

In summary, the market landscape is characterized by **brand-conscious yet value-focused consumers**, highlighting a future where competition between global and local brands will continue and evolve according to shifting expectations and purchasing power of young shoppers.

8.Limitations and Future Scope

The present study is limited to the urban area of Jalandhar district, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different cultural and economic backgrounds. The sample size of 200 respondents, consisting equally of males and females, provides useful preliminary insights but remains limited for broader conclusions. Additionally, the data is self-reported through a structured questionnaire, which may involve personal biases or socially desirable responses rather than fully reflecting actual consumer behavior. The study also considers only a few selected product categories when examining differences in preference for global and local brands, which narrows the overall scope of findings.

Despite these limitations, the study offers strong potential for future extension. Further research may be conducted across multiple cities or states in India to compare regional variations in brand preference. Increasing the sample size and including respondents with diverse socio-economic backgrounds would allow for deeper and more reliable insights. Future studies can also focus more specifically on individual product segments such as electronics, clothing, or FMCG products to analyze category-wise purchase behavior. Moreover, since digital influence is rapidly shaping consumer mindset, future scope lies in examining how factors like social media marketing, influencers, online reviews, and e-commerce platforms impact brand preference and purchase intention among different consumer groups.

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Influence of Indian Football Players on Brand Perception via Social media

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Abstract: *This thesis explores the role of Indian footballers in shaping brand perception via their activity and interaction on social media. With football gradually surpassing the cricket-driven sports profile in India, there is a group of stars such as Sunil Chhetri, Udanta Singh, Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Sandesh Jhingan and a new breed of young icons who are becoming essential digital faces. Online behaviour, including personal storytelling, or even endorsements and interaction with fans, are central in influencing how audiences rate the brands associated with them. The research goes a notch further to examine the ways in which athlete-created content creates trust, authenticity, and relatability, helping to develop strong brand associations among their fans. Based on quantitative consumer perception survey, the study determines the condition that highly influences brand lift.*

Keywords: *Sunil Chhetri, Udanta Singh, Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Sandesh Jhingan, Audience perception, Brand, Ambassadors, Endorsement.*

1.INTRODUCTION:

The emergence of social media has completely changed the communication, communication and branding process of the world, and it has strongly influenced the sports life in India, particularly in the past few years (Pegoraro, 2010). At the present time, India is caught up in a digital surge, which is due to cheap smartphones, growing internet penetration, and growing connectivity at the cities and villages. Due to this fact, social media have become powerful in the sense that individuals form identities, become a part of a community in social media, and engage with commercial contents. This is a significant change in the case of the Indian football. Although football has always played the second fiddle to cricket, the sport is now becoming more exposed and popular among the population. It is in this changing environment that Indian footballers are becoming dominant social media figures that determine fans interactions and perceptions of consumers as a result of their presence in the social media (Abeza et al., 2020). The services of Instagram, X, Facebook, and YouTube have become a daily routine of millions of Indians. On such platforms, these athletes have the direct access to varied audiences on the basis of cultural, regional and social backgrounds. Social media allows the athletes to interact with their fans without a mediator. Together with posts, videos, storeys, match highlights, training snippets, lifestyle content, live interactions, they are able to present authenticity and relatability. Such attributes are important in the market in India, which is endorsement liberal, and the brands seek endorsers who can foster trust and emotional loyalty. As the footballers provide the community with their personal experiences, community engagement, cultural beliefs, or simple life events, it enhances their attachment to the followers (Fink et al., 2020). While this relationship tends to rub onto the brands they promote, the impact on the perspective of its fans on sponsored products and campaigns is noticeable. Such exposure predetermines their desires, ways of living and preferences in consuming the products, which also condition their responses to athlete-led brand endorsements (Lou & Yuan, 2019). This exposure predisposes expectations on how athletes ought to make their appearances online (Hambrick &

Mahoney, 2011). The viewers contrast the material produced by Indian players with those of large international stars who tend to have very media-cleaned and business-like social media profiles. Such comparisons have effects on the perceptions of the audience regarding the authenticity, professionalism and aspirational value. The research, as well, endeavours to know the role of the participation of the audience in the form of likes, comments, shares, sentiment, and community discussions in the success of the brand collaborations. This question will enable the study to generate more knowledge about the increasingly prominent place of social media as a cultural, social and commercial power in the Indian digitalization of football.

2.Review Of Literature:

The article, The Strategic Role of Athlete Endorsements in Augmenting Financial Growth in Indian Athletic Retail Sector, by Sinha, Suganthiya, and Sharma in April 2025, is the source that addresses the impact of athlete endorsements on financial growth as well as brand stuff such as awareness, loyalty, and perceived quality in the Indian athletic retail market. The results indicate that the selection of athletes who resonate with the target market and the maintenance of such associations as consistent and authentic is a strategically very important attribute. On the whole, the study concludes by stating that athlete endorsements can be of great marketing potential within the Indian athletic retail market. They control consumer behaviour, boost brand value, and spur financial expansion particularly when the sportspeople represent the cultural identity and cultural values of the viewers. The study contextualises athlete endorsement beyond being a mere promo gimmick; it forms the core of establishing a strong market presence, and continuing the developmental growth in the Indian booming sports retail market. This study will involve the organisation of documents carried out by previous researchers, highlighting the points that need greater focus. The work will imply structuring of papers conducted by earlier researchers, outlining the aspects that require more attention. (Sinha, Suganthiya, and Sharma, April 2025)

The research study titled "The Effect of a Celebrity Endorser on Purchase Interest through Brand Image: Lionel Messi and Head and Shoulders Case" investigates how an athlete whose name is recognized around the world can affect consumers' desire to make a purchase based on their improved perceptions of a brand. The results indicate that Lionel Messi has a very significant positive effect on consumers' purchase interests when he is used as an endorsing celebrity for Head & Shoulders. An important finding from this research is the fact that brand image acts as a mediator; demonstrating that a celebrity endorser does not only create a direct appeal to a consumer to purchase a product, but also positively affects how a consumer perceives the brand. When the brand image becomes stronger and more favourable, consumers show a higher willingness to purchase the product. (Eldrin Masato & Sopia, KnE Social Sciences International Research Conference on Economics and Business, July 2021).

The article called "Impact of Sports Sponsorship on Consumers Purchase Intention and Brand Image" authored by Jaya Chandra, Dr. A. K. Srivastava and Dr. Rajeev Choudhary explores the issue of the effects of sports sponsorship on consumer behaviour in regard to purchase intention and brand image. These are the questions that the researchers seek to find out: Can sports sponsorship campaigns exposure have a positive effect on consumer attitude about brands, and help create a better brand recall, credibility and emotional attachment? The study employs a quantitative approach with the structured questionnaire as the primary research design to gather data on consumers who had undergone the exposure to diverse sports sponsorship campaigns. By doing this, the authors are in direct control of consumer responses, and the associations between sponsorship and purchase intention, and brand image are measured directly. It analyses correlations using statistical methods to find out the degree by which the sponsorship activities affect consumer behaviour. (Jaya Chandra, Dr. A. K. Srivastava and Dr. Rajeev Choudhary, January 2017).

Theoretical Framework: This study is grounded in the integration of Source Credibility Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory, which together provide a strong foundation for understanding how Indian footballers influence brand perception through social media. These theories were selected because they explain both the persuasive qualities of the athlete and the motivations that guide audience

engagement with digital content, offering a balanced lens for analysing how audiences interpret athlete-generated posts and how these interpretations shape attitudes toward endorsed brands.

Source Credibility Theory, introduced by Hovland and Weiss (1951), states that message effectiveness depends on the audience's perception of the communicator's credibility. Credibility consists of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, which influence whether audiences accept or reject information. On social media, these qualities become especially significant because audiences continuously evaluate the authenticity and reliability of athletes. Sporting achievements, consistency, and openness contribute to credibility, enhancing the impact of endorsements. Ohanian (1990) further notes that credible communicators are more successful in shaping consumer attitudes, making this theory highly relevant to athlete-led branding. [Hovland and Weiss (1951)]

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) provides an audience-centred perspective by explaining why individuals actively choose to engage with particular media. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973) argue that audiences use media to satisfy personal needs such as entertainment, information, social connection, and identity formation. Ruggiero (2000) emphasises that social media strengthens these motivations by enabling interactive participation. Fans may follow Indian footballers for enjoyment, inspiration, or a sense of belonging, and these motivations influence how they respond to branded content. [Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973)]

Together, these theories explain both audience attraction to athlete content and the persuasive power of credible endorsements, forming a cohesive framework for analysing athlete-led brand perception on social media.

3. Research Gap

Although a substantial body of research has examined celebrity endorsements, digital branding, and athlete influence on social media, most existing studies focus primarily on mainstream sports figures, particularly cricketers or internationally recognised athletes, very few studies investigate how athlete generated content from developing sports communities influences brand perception in culturally diverse and rapidly digitising contexts such as India. Important aspects such as audience trust, perceived authenticity, content style, and community driven engagement remain underexplored within the context of Indian football. These gaps demonstrate the need for focused research that examines the relationship between Indian football athletes, their social media behaviour, and audience perception. Such research is essential for understanding how developing sports industries use social media to shape branding outcomes and consumer attitudes within an evolving cultural and commercial landscape.

4. Methodology:

This research study employed the quantitative research design based on the utilization of a structured online questionnaire to investigate the effects of the social media activity of the Indian footballers on brand perception. The main tool of data collection was an online survey developed with the help of Google Forms. The questionnaire was set up to contain structured and semi-structured questions to get the insights on the engagement of the audience and the perception of the images of athlete endorsements and attitude to Indian football players on online platforms. In quantitative research structured questionnaires are the most favourable approach because they enable the researcher to obtain concise data that are similar and to uncover patterns in the behaviour of the audience (Roopa and Rani, 2012). The data collection was done through a five-point likert scale to indicate the degree of agreement and perception accuracy.

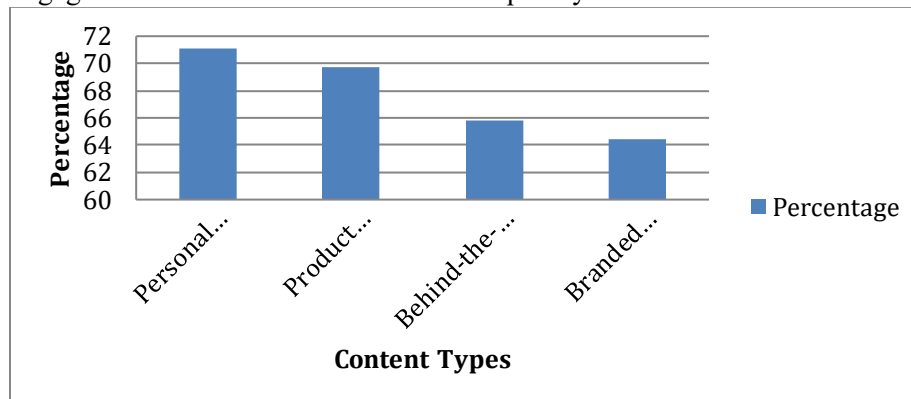
5. Research Objectives:

1. To examine how Indian football players use their social media to engage audiences toward endorsed brands.
2. To understand how audience participation and response influence the success of football players brand endorsements.
3. To evaluate how social media engagement with Indian football players shapes audience perceptions and attitudes toward endorsed brands

6.Data Analysis:

1. Type of content from Indian football athletes most effectively grabs the audience's attention

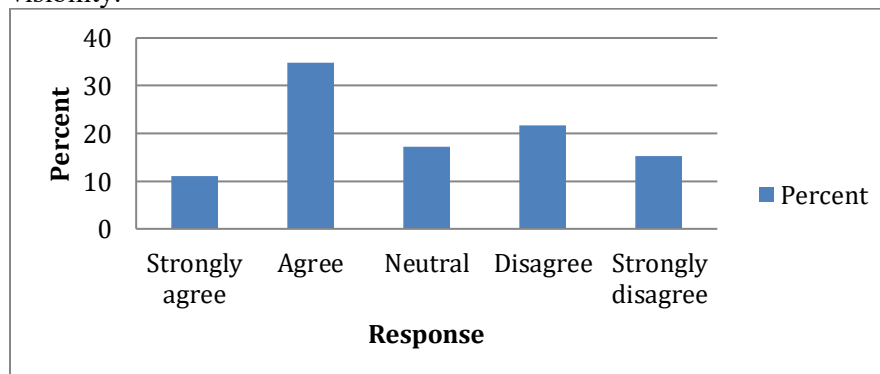
Among the 152 responses, the analysis revealed that most of the content that captures audience attention is personal stories or lifestyle posts featuring the brand, with 71.05% (n=108) of respondents selecting this option. This is closely followed by regular product placement posts, chosen by 69.74% (n=106), indicating that consistently integrated brand visibility also resonates strongly with viewers. Additionally, behind-the-scenes training content featuring the brand was selected by 65.79% (n=100), while branded photoshoots were favoured by 64.47% (n=98). These findings show that while audiences engage well across all content formats frequently.



1. content types preferred by the audience

2. People frequently notice brand endorsements on Indian Footballers' social media pages.

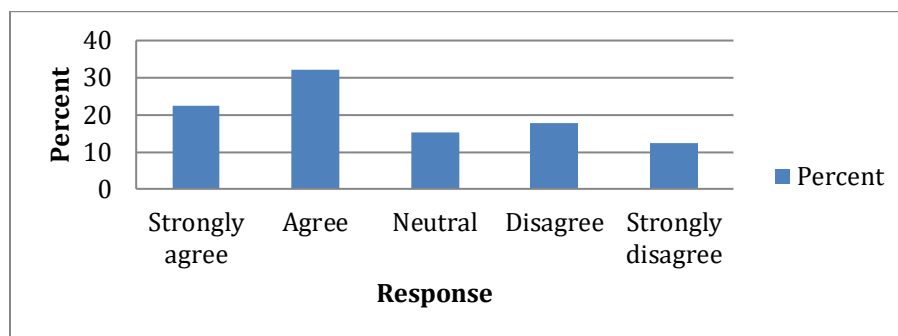
Among the 152 respondents, it is seen that a total of 56.1% (n=70) are in a positive response to the statement as 11.2% (n=17) reported that they 'strongly agree' with the statement. 34.9% (n=53) reported that they 'agree' with the statement, while a total of 36.8% of the respondents recorded a negative response to the statement as 21.7% (n=33) reported that they 'disagree' with the statement, 15.1% (n=23) reported that they 'strongly disagree'. These findings show that while there is a huge visibility of Indian Footballers on social media as brand endorsers, there is yet much to be accomplished in to gain total visibility.



2. Frequently notice brand endorsement

3. Content shared by Indian football player effectively captures my attention toward the brands they promote.

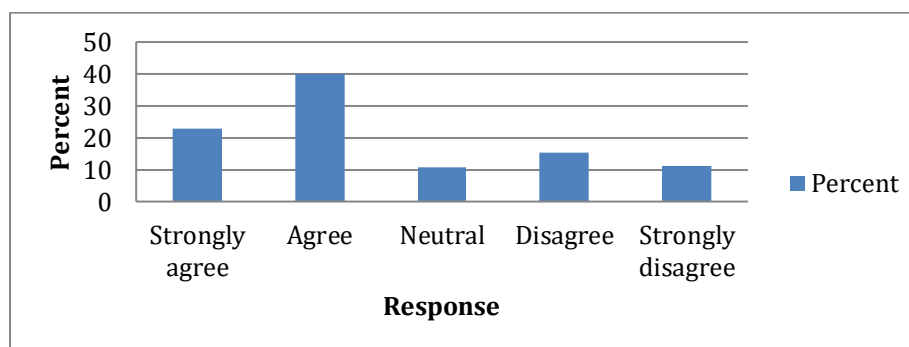
While there is a strong response rate among those who come across Indian footballers being brand endorsers being a total of 54.6% (22.4 + 32.2) i.e. a total of 83 respondents (34 +49) that voted in the Strongly agree and agree category. Meanwhile there is a lot of grey area when it comes to this statement as 15.1% (n=23) responded to be neutral on opinion and there is a total of 30.3% (17.8+17.3) i.e. a total of 46 respondents reported to disagree to stronger levels of coming across and having their attention captured by Indian football player effectively captures my attention toward the brands they promote.



3. Content shared by Indian footballers

4. I find video-based branded content (Reels/shorts) from football athletes more engaging than static posts.

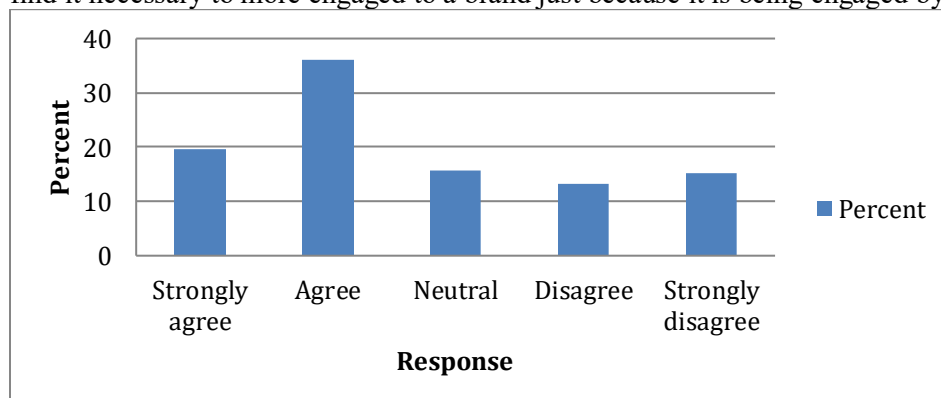
On further analysis of this response, a strong positive turnout of a total of 63.1% (23.0 + 40.1) that is a total of 96 (36 + 61) respondents giving a positive response to finding -based branded content (Reels/shorts) from football athletes more engaging than static posts. While there are 10.5% (n=16) who are neutral, there is a 26.3% (15.1 + 11.2) (n= 40 = 23+17) of the respondents who find static content still entertaining and engaging.



4. Video-based branded content

5. When an Indian footballer respond or interact on branded posts (likes/comments), I feel more engaged with the brand.

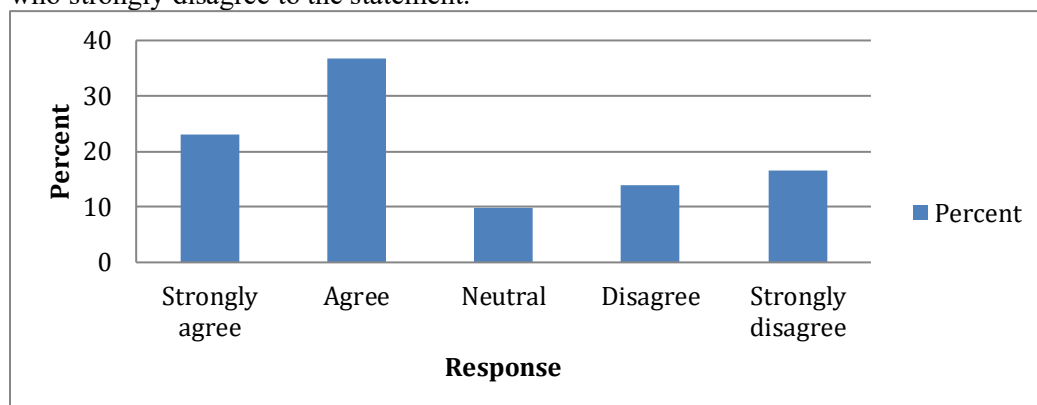
Based on how "Indian footballer responds or interact on branded posts (likes/comments), I feel more engaged with the brand" there is a strong connect with the audience as analysis of the respondents of the study reveal that 54.9% (19.7+36.2) i.e. 85 respondents are influenced by actions and interactions their favourite footballer has on various social media platforms, some 15.8%(n=20) of the respondents find themselves to be neutral towards this statement while a significant portion 28.3 (13.2+ 15.1) do not find it necessary to more engaged to a brand just because it is being engaged by an Indian footballer.



5. Indian footballer respond or interact on branded posts (likes/comments),

6. People are more likely to view a brand positively when it is endorsed by an Indian football athlete they follow.

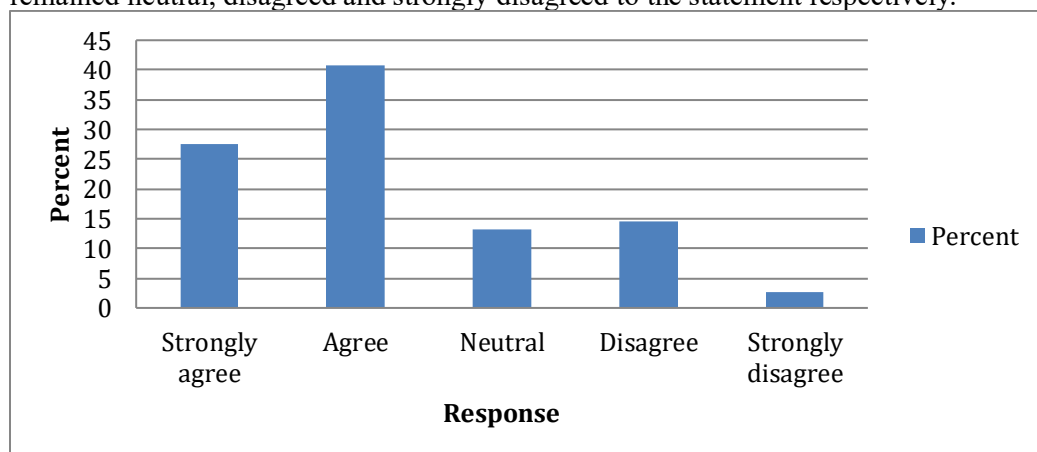
Indian footballers do have an impact in a cricket dominated field of marketing and brand ambassadors, as from this study we can see that a total of 59.8% (23.0+36.8) of the respondents, i.e. 91 respondents have good agreement with the statement, there are a few 9.9% (n=15) of the respondents who may remain neutral there are 13.8% (n=21) who disagree while another 16.4% (n=25) of the respondents who strongly disagree to the statement.



6. People are more likely to view a brand positively when it is endorsed by an Indian football athlete they follow

7. Branded posts that tell a personal story or show the athlete using the product feel more authentic.

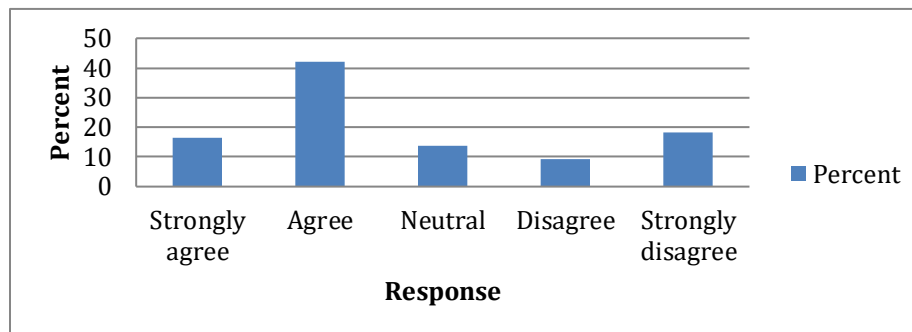
Personal stories are a huge success on social media, that trend is also seen in the analysis of this research, a large number of respondents, 40.8% (n=62) reported to agree on the effectiveness and 27.63% (n=42) strongly agree, a smaller portion of the respondents, 13.2% (n=20) and 14.5% (n=22) with 2.6% (n=4) remained neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed to the statement respectively.



7. Branded posts that tell a personal story or show the athlete using the product feel more authentic.

8. The quality and presentation of branded content shared by an Indian footballer.

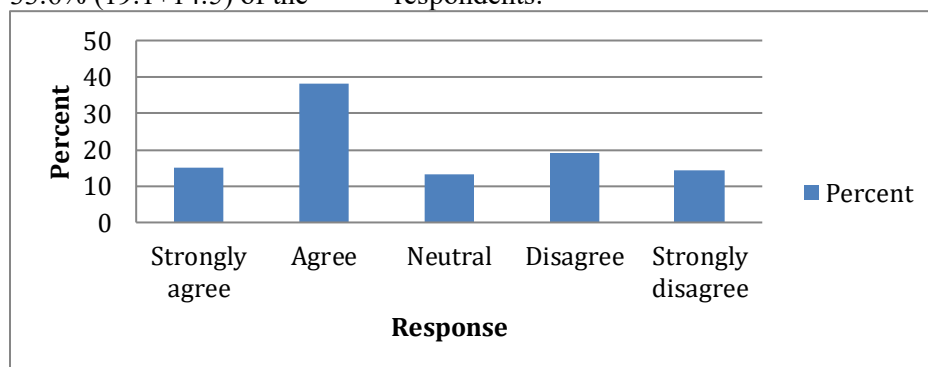
An analysis on how “the quality and presentation of branded content shared by an Indian footballer influence the audience’s willingness to engage with it” revealed that a total of 58.6% (42.1 + 16.5) i.e. a total of 89 respondents were in agreement to varied levels towards this statement. While 13.8% of the respondents remained neutral, smaller group, 27.6% (18.5 + 9.2), i.e. a total of 42 respondents were in disagreement of the statement on varied levels.



8. Influence of the the quality and presentation of branded content shared by an Indian footballer.

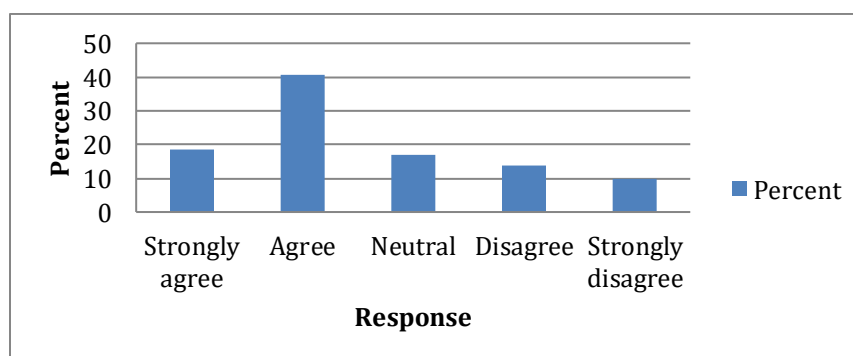
9. I regularly engage (like/comment/share) with branded posts shared by Indian Footballers.

Based on regular engagement (like/comment/share) analysis of the data, it is evident that, many respondents 53.3% (15.1+38.2) i.e., 81 (n=23+58), admit that they regularly engage with branded posts shared by Indian Footballers out of interest and liking for their favourite player, for example one of the respondents commented, “As I know if public figures do any brand endorsement, people tend to believe in that product more and even they want to follow their favourite star's daily routine and what exactly they are using.” While there were respondents that remained neutral towards the statement, being represented in the 13.2%(n=20) of the population. The disagreement towards the statement came from 33.6% (19.1+14.5) of the respondents.



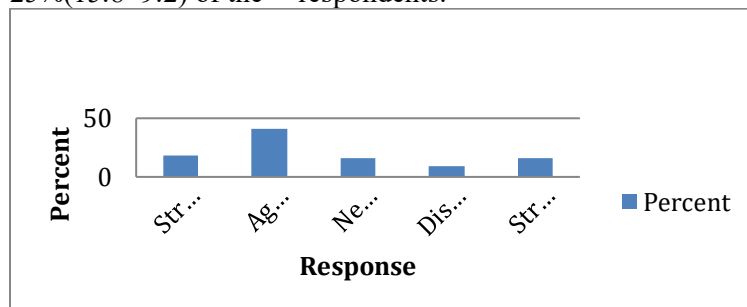
9. regularly engage (like/comment/share) with branded posts

10. High engagement (likes/comments) on an athlete's branded post positively influences how people perceive the brand. An analysis of the responses to this question revealed that 59.2% (18.4+40.8) of the respondents were highly influenced by the branded post having high positive engagement and thus making them perceive the brand in a good light, while there were 17.1% of the audience who stayed neutral on the comment and a total of 23.7% of the respondents were in disagreement that their perception of a brand is influence is based on how well engaged a post is.



10. High engagement (likes/comments) on influencers post.

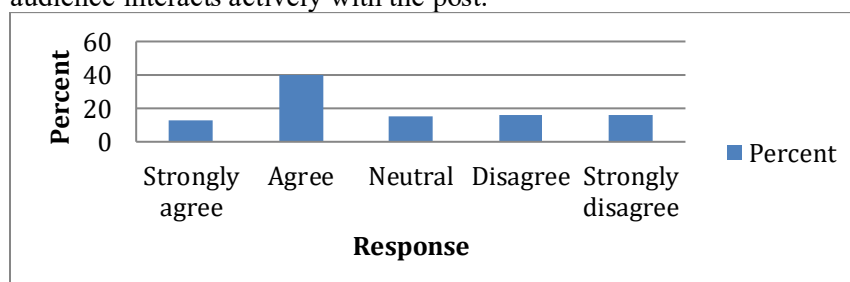
11. Positive comments from other users make an athlete's brand endorsement more trustworthy. Based on the comments there are decisions of trust being made always; hence the influence of positive comments is a contributing factor for any of brand to be trustworthy, this is evident in the data analysis of the study as, the responses recorded in agreement to varied levels of the statement is 59.3% and there were responses that remained neutral, 15.7(n=24) and the disagreement on various levels came from 25%(15.8+9.2) of the respondents.



11. Influence of Positive Responses.

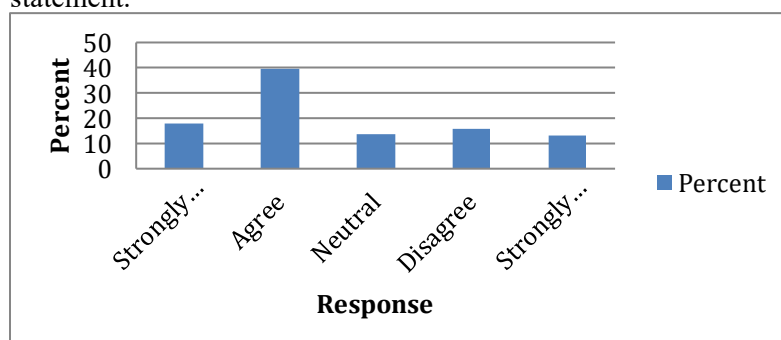
12. People are more likely to trust a brand endorsement when the football player's audience interacts actively with the post.

Based on an analysis of the data 53.28% (13.15 +40.13) of the respondents were found to be in agreement or strong agreement of the given statement as people do find themselves trusting a brand that is endorsed by an idol or role model they look up to, in this case being a football player. The neutral responses were recorded to be, by 15.13(n=23) respondents and a total of 31.58%(15.78+15.78) respondents disagreed on being influenced by when a brand endorsement when the football player's audience interacts actively with the post.



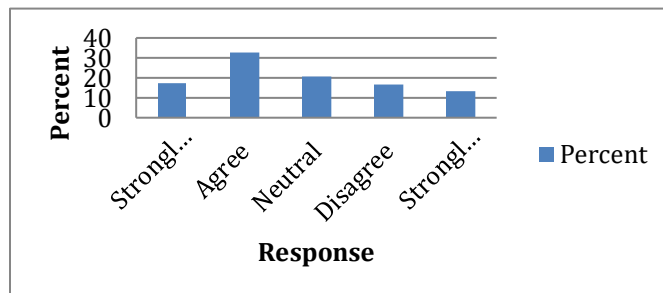
12. Football player's interactivity having an influence.

13. Audience conversations and discussions on social media influence the audience perception of endorsed brands. There is an agreement on various levels from 57.23% (17.76+39.47) of the respondents who admit that audience conversations on social media do have an influence on audience perception of a brand being endorsed. There were neutral responses from 13.82% (n=21) respondents and a disagreement of varied levels came from 28.95% (15.79 + 13.16) of the audience towards the statement.



13. Audience conversations and discussions.

14. Higher audience engagement increases the likelihood of trying or considering the endorsed brand. An analysis of the responses to this question reveals distinct patterns in participant perceptions. The largest proportions of respondents expressed varying levels of agreement or disagreement with the statement, as follows: 17.1% (n=26) reported that they 'strongly agree' with the statement. 32.9% (n=50) reported that they 'agree' with the statement. 20.4% (n=31) reported that they 'neutral' with the statement. 16.4% (n=25) reported that they 'disagree' with the statement. 13.2% (n=20) reported that they 'strongly disagree' with the statement. Overall, these findings highlight how respondents collectively interpret and respond to the statement, offering insight into broader sentiment trends.



14. Higher audience engagement increases my likelihood

7. Conclusion:

Indian footballers are increasingly gaining recognition on social media, where their online activity strongly influences how audiences perceive the brands they endorse. In a market where cricket has long dominated, players like Sunil Chhetri and Gurpreet Singh Sandhu are drawing new levels of engagement by sharing relatable posts, behind-the-scenes moments, and personal experiences. This directly supports the first research objective by showing how footballers use social media to connect with audiences and promote brand partnerships. The study also reveals that audience participation plays a major role in determining the success of these endorsements. High levels of likes, comments, shares, and interactive discussions make branded content more visible and more persuasive. When athletes acknowledge fans or actively engage with their audience, followers perceive the endorsement as more trustworthy, aligning with the second objective focused on audience response.

8. Major Findings:

This study has 5 critical points to reflect on:

1. There are high engagement and noticeability of content from Indian footballers being 56.1%
2. Content shared by Indian football athletes effectively captures the audience's attention toward the brands they promote as 54.6% of the respondents answered in agreement.
3. People in India find video-based content preferable than static content that is evidently shown by 63.16% of the respondents.
4. Branded posts that tell the personal story of the football player that people love is a preferred content for 55.92% of the respondents.
5. The likeliness of the audience to view a brand positively when it is endorsed by an Indian football athlete they follow has been agreed by 59.87% of the respondents.

9. Implications of this study;

This study helps by providing a deeper understanding of how Indian footballers use social media to influence brand perception and audience behaviour. It highlights the importance of authenticity, consistent engagement, and relatable content in strengthening endorsement effectiveness. The findings offer valuable insights for brands seeking to collaborate with athletes, showing how audience interactions such as likes, comments, and discussions enhance credibility and trust. The study also helps marketers identify what types of content resonate most with young, digitally active audiences. For the sports industry, it demonstrates how footballers can elevate the visibility of the sport while building

stronger fan communities. Overall, it supports more strategic and effective athlete-brand partnerships in India.

10. Limitations:

The research faced several notable limitations in the study, especially with regard to constraints of a temporal, financial, and participant-access nature. The limited time devoted to the project reduced opportunities for further in-depth analysis, extended data verification, and the inclusion of longitudinal or follow-up contributions that could have enhanced such findings. The financial constraints further curtailed the scope of research by forbidding the use of paid-for databases, qualitative analysis software of an advanced nature, and travel for in-person data collection, thus reducing the scope of primary evidence available.

11. Scope for future study;

Future research can adopt a more expansive and methodologically diverse approach to deepen the understanding of how Indian footballers influence brand perceptions through social media. This would provide insight into how major events, such as tournaments like the Indian Super League, transfers, endorsements, or controversies shape follower behaviour and brand impact over time. Importantly, future work should prioritise direct engagement with professional Indian footballers, their media teams, and brand managers. Conducting interviews, focus groups, or digital ethnographies with players would help capture nuanced perspectives on how athletes curate their online identities, negotiate branding partnerships, and understand their influence on fan culture. As Indian football continues to grow online and offline, future research can also examine the evolving role of digital communities, fan-generated content, and cross-platform interactions (Instagram, X, YouTube, TikTok).

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From Promise to Pretense: A Study on Misleading Advertisements in Health Drinks and ASCI Guidelines

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Abstracts: *This research investigates the problem of deceptive misleading advertising in the health drinks industry, concentrating on the numerous products that promise health benefits that they do not genuinely deliver. Health drinks are often marketed with exaggerated claims about improving immunity, promoting growth, and enhancing overall health. Usually, in health drink products, images are different, and more eye-catching compared to other products. These kinds of products are promoted by appealing packaging and labels contain terms such as “multi-grains, no added sugar, and 100% natural” product, to attract the attention the consumers. These products are more commonly consumed by gym-goers, sports athletes, and children, with malt beverages being especially popular among children compared to adults. It thoroughly examines how such advertisement indirectly influences consumer purchasing behavior, through a review of case studies, this paper highlights the gap between advertised claims and actual product standards and also includes the need for clearer regulations, truthful advertising. (Dr S. Suguna, 2024)*

keywords: Advertising, misleading advertisement, health deinks, influence, consumer decision.

1. INTRODUCTION:

In recent years, health drinks, particularly those containing protein and natural components, have gained popularity. Numerous companies market and advertise the drinks as beneficial for health development and full of benefits, often using green and eco-friendly labels to attract customers. However, not all these claims are true. Companies engage in influencing the consumer, often promoting the use of eco-friendly, natural, nutritional- based health drinks. Mostly advertising and influential promotion. “A study on the impact of misleading advertisements on customer preference for soft drinks.” Advertising is an encapsulated communication about the product or service, beautifully designed, clear and concise, giving an appealing message which is intended to attract the target consumers. Misleading advertisements not only cause health issues; it’s also held the power to destroy the consumer’s trust in the particular brand. According to the ASCI guides, a clear statement was released that misleading claims on edible products are punishable under the Food Safety and Standard Act, which mainly focuses on misleading food & health drink advertisement. This paper studies how companies use misleading ads to influence buyers and looks closely at real examples to show the gap between what is promised and what is real.

2. LITERATURE OF REVIEW:

The research paper on “A study on the impact of misleading advertisement on customer preference for soft drinks”, by **Arpit Shailesh, Dr. Taruna (2016)**, examines how advertising is an encapsulated communication about the product or service, beautifully designed, clear and concise, giving an appealing message which is intended to attract the target consumers. The research highlights how misleading advertisements play a major role in the Indian market. Misleading or false Advertisements

are the use of wrong statements in advertisements to influence customers to purchase the products, but it may negatively impact many customers. The nature of the study is descriptive. It is centered on both primary and secondary data. (Arpit Shailesh, Dr. Taruna, 2016)

The research paper on “Influence of misleading health and nutritional claims advertising on children’s health”, Mrs. P. Bremla, Dr. K. Manikkam (2025), investigates the impact of advertising with misleading health and nutritional claims on children’s health, creating a perception of healthiness even when products are high in sugar, fat, or sodium. Children, drawn to colorful packaging and familiar mascots. This paper highlights the practices of the food industry and greater awareness among parents to counteract misleading advertising. The advertisements were coded based on categories like product type, advertisement classification, marketing information, and appeal strategies. (Mrs. P. Bremla, Dr. K. Manikkam, 2025).

The research paper on “Misleading Advertising of Health-Related Products in Ecuador during the COVID-19 Pandemic”, María Belen Mena, Ivan Sisa, Enrique Teran (2022), study examines how the Media coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic increased tuning ratings during the time. This study highlights how to identify misleading advertising of health-related products on Ecuadorian television during the COVID-19 pandemic. Television channels were monitored for 111 h in the months of June and October 2020. Verbal, nonverbal and contextual content were analyzed from each advertising spot according to ethical standards for the promotion of products for human health. A total of 667 spots were analyzed. Most, 90%, involved misleading advertising of health-related products. This study identified 667 advertising spots, corresponding to 84 products, transmitted on 28 television channels distributed in the Ecuadorian cities of Quito, Cayambe, Latacunga, Ambato and Portoviejo. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize baseline characteristics. (María Belen Mena, Ivan Sisa, Enrique Teran, 2022).

The Objectives of the present study are:

- To understand companies influence of consumer purchasing decisions.
- To examine the impact of misleading advertising on consumer trust and identify common misleading or exaggerated marketing strategies used by health drink brands.
- To analyze the impact of such misleading advertisements on consumer perceptions, purchasing decisions, and health outcomes through detailed case studies of health drink brands.
- To identify patterns of misleading claims in health drink marketing and compare them with ASCI’s codes on advertisement ethics.

3. METHODOLOGY:

Research methodology means using planned steps to collect, analyses and interpret data for research. It sets out the main plan for a research study, so it is properly built, thorough and on track with the research’s main goals. This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore how health drink advertisements claim and convince consumers using potentially misleading statements. The qualitative research method is well-suited for this topic because it emphasizes strategies, meaning, and context rather than measurable data. Misleading advertising often relies more on visual representation, tone, and implied benefits; therefore, qualitative techniques provide in-depth awareness about how these persuasive strategies are framed and how ASCI guides avoid the misleading advertising practice in the market.

4. SAMPLING STRATEGY

This research uses purposive sampling to select advertisements that are most relevant to the study’s objective. Advertisements are taken based on the following methods:

- They belong to the health drink category, including energy drinks, malt-based drinks, and protein powder drinks.
- They are the most reputed health drinks brand in the Indian market

- They contain explicit or implicit health-related claims, such as “boosts immunity,” “improves height,” or “supports overall growth.”
- They are publicly accessible through mainstream media such as television.

Discourse Analysis:

Discourse analysis is used to study how advertisements use discourse tone, visual representation, and tagline are used in the advertisements to construct meanings that may mislead consumers into trusting exaggerated health drinks. The analysis follows three levels:

1. Textual Analysis:

Reviewing the text/words, slogans, taglines, on on-screen text used in advertisements.

2. Visual analysis:

Identifying the visual representation, imagery used, and outer package of design of the product.

3. Strategies analysis:

Verifying the strategies such as common style, pattern and marketing techniques used in the advertisement.

5. CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

CASE STUDY 1: Horlicks



Fig.1

Introduction: Horlicks Original was introduced as Malt Based Beverages is an iconic malted drink established in 1873 by British brothers James and William Horlick. It initially advertised in market as a nutritious and easily digestible milk supplement for overall growth and people in poor health, over time, Horlicks developed into its medicinal roots to become a widely consumed beverage for families, recognized for its convenient source of nutrition and appealing taste.

The product taste grabs the attention of all generation peoples, due to its taste and convivence, especially in countries like India, where it holds a strong market share as a household nourishment drink. They patented their dried milk formula in 1883 and marketed it as "Horlick's Infant and Invalids Food," later expanding its audience to include the elderly and travelers.

False claim: The brand has faced lot issues for making exaggerated or misleading claims regarding its health benefits. For example, Horlicks has advertised that regular consumption results in children becoming "Taller, Stronger, Sharper," referencing increased bone area, muscle mass, and attention scores.

ASCI conducted investigation on Horlicks product and released the statement that without proof or medical test approval published ads considered as illegal and also stops the advertisement false claim. especially, Horlicks would increase a child's height twofold, which lacked robust scientific backing.

Issues faced: Under the ASCI consumer complaints council upheld complaint against Horlicks ads in the food and beverages category, claims that “Horlicks ... makes a child taller, stronger, sharper” which is completely misleading advertisement published in television. Later, product advertised “one cup Complan vs two cups Horlicks” which also faced lot of scrutiny for comparison advertisements. Moreover, GSK funded a randomized, experiment involving 869 children (ages 6–16), comparing “micronutrient-fortified Horlicks mixed in 150 ml of toned milk”.

Dr. Veena Shatrugna from the National Institute of Nutrition clarified that the benefits observed, that, bone density, primarily comes from the milk, not by the added micronutrients.

Analysis:

- Promotion the products as nutritious and easily digestible milk supplement for overall growth and people in poor health, using a blend of barley malt, wheat, and dried milk.
- Using children in advertisements for better reach to targeted audience.
- Showing children are more active after consuming the drinks which helps overall growth.
- catchy taglines, visual are used as objective

Overcome: To overcome its issues faced by ASCI and consumer complaints, Horlicks focused on leveraging its brand strength through innovative ideas such as, product revamps, advertisement revamp, and more transparent communication. Horlicks fortified its drink with essential vitamins and minerals and justified its role as a supplement rather than a so-called miracle product. Also, investments in scientific studies provided measured support for nutritional claims, often with disclaimers clarifying the final outcome. (Audrey Huff, 2023)

CASE STUDY 2: Complan



Fig.2

Introduction: Complan is a malt-based nutritional drink brand that introduced around World War II, it was originally launched by Glaxo in 1954 and later, undergone ownership changes, now the brand currently owned by Zydus Wellness in India. The brand gained popularity in the 1990s with a strong focus on growth, especially on height growth, product claims that offer 23 vital nutrients, which mainly help children grow faster and stronger. Initially this product developed to provide complete nutrition to soldiers who had limited dry rations during battle period. In India, Complan was positioned as a complete nourishment drink, especially targeted at children aged 6 to 14 years as a supplementary food. (Amit Aggarwal, 2024)

False claim: Complan faced lot of issues over misleading claims about its health benefits, especially grow faster. This included claims of promoting faster growth and overall development of height and strength. It mainly focused on boys, initially the tagline was “I am a complan boy” which raised the question about gender stereotypes. Which happens in 1990’s, complan faced several marketing challenges. Later changed the tagline into “I am a complan girl/boy”.

Issues faced: Complan advertising campaigns consistently aimed on overall growth, height, and strength, which led to an oversimplified perception that the product solely contributed to physical stature. Advertisement heavily focused on its core promise of promoting children's growth through height, primarily targeting mothers who desired their children to be taller and healthier. which highlights the role of children’s Height growth and development. Where measurement scale margin also used in the visual ad. After certain period, parents of the children did not find any growth development and height development in their child. In Maharashtra many parents (mother) filled the case against the false claim of the complan advertisement.

Analysis:

- Using scale margin to show the height measurements growth
- Focusing on children between the age 6-12 years
- Representing emotional screenplay for seeking attention from elderlies.
- Advertising as better alternative for breakfast and overall growth

Overcome: Complan overcame challenges by fortifying the product with vitamins and minerals, clarifying its nutritional benefits, and focusing on transparency to regain and maintain consumer trust. innovating in flavors, improving nutritional composition, and running targeted advertising to reinforce

its image as a nourishing, supplementary food for children. Brand rebuild the consumer trust by transparency data about the product and fortified with essential nutrition's

CASE STUDY 3: RawRage



Fig.3

Introduction: RawRage is well known as Indian supplement brand popular for products such as protein powders, vitamins, and lean mass gainers, primarily focusing on targeted audience market to gym-goers, sports athletes, fitness freaks. The company was established in 2019 and functioning in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. RawRage Enhancement produces a variety of supplements, with its “Isolate Octo Protein” designed as a premium athletic protein blend featuring multiple protein sources. This brand initially operating in Noida, expanded its distribution market in e-commerce platform to reach wider audience and consumers.

False claim: A major concern in the Indian protein powder sector, including brands like RawRage, has been false or exaggerated protein content claims on packaging. Studies and investigations stated that After consuming the product, several consumers experienced a range of adverse effects, some of which led to serious health complications. Consumers faced issues such as digestive problem, headaches, acute poisoning symptoms. Which ruined the brand reputation in the market. Which is the starting point of the raid of the factory.

Issued faced: The Indian supplement company RawRage has encountered serious difficulties in the market due to fake and toxic protein powders. Police officers discovered a secret protein powder factory in Noida in December 2024 that was producing and secretly running another godown and selling toxic supplements on e-commerce sites under several brand names. Some of the main problems included heavy metal contamination, particularly high amounts of lead, cadmium, and arsenic found in the powder.

As an outcome of the investigation, police sealed the facility and shut down factory operations concern of public safety concerns and prevent further risks to consumers.

Analysis:

- Mainly focus on counterfeit and adulterated protein powders
- Used muscular body builder images in the package to seeks audience attention
- Selling the adulterated supplements under multiple brand names on e-commerce platforms.
- Brand secretly functioning godown to sell fake products in e-commerce platform.

Overcome: Authorities Stricter oversight and quality control about misleading ads and claims on health drinks were implemented throughout the market, authorities raided and exposure many companies. To ensure the safety and standard of the brand products. RawRage brand to enhance transparency, ensure that harmful ingredient is avoided, and implement improved quality control procedures. In the 2025, the government announced mandatory regulatory on edible products that resulted in lab tests, evident reports, and quality control measurements are well increased in manufacturer accountability, which helped to rebuild consumer trust in reliable brands.

CASE STUDY 4: Mulmin



Fig.4

Introduction: In Indian market Mulmin Pro is a popular health supplement brand, enriched with essential protein, vitamins, minerals, and natural milk calcium, product also designed to support overall health and well-being. The product is designed as a beneficial for pregnant and lactating women, growing children, sports athletes, and individuals suffering from bone loss. Mulmin brand had different categories of product, this product not only focused on protein product it includes syrup, pluse capsule, and drops.

False claim: Mulmin Pro brand, which is advertised as offering complete nutritional support, but brand faced serious issues regarding accuracy of nutrient labeling and quality control of product. Mulmin pro has not been publicly connected to any widespread documented scandal or counterfeit brands, but still there are general concerns about the brand supplement mislabeling labelling in the market. The product is designed for aiming pregnant and lactating women, growing children, sports athletes, and individuals experiencing bone density loss. The brand also claimed that Mulmin Pro provides a nutritious and tasty way to meet daily nutrient requirements and promote individual well-being.

Issued faced: Mulmin Pro has faced regulatory challenges, mostly notable in 2015 when the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). The verification taken place due to non-compliance with labeling regulations and unsubstantiated claims made on the product packaging, particularly the use of the term "milk calcium protein supplement," product, where the brand claims is designed for pregnant women and better lactating women's. which was deemed scientifically misleading. Consumer complaints against Mulmin Pro have generally been limited, with most feedback highlighting its nutritional benefits when used appropriately. But Some users have reported mild side effects, such as digestive discomfort or allergic reactions, but these are typically infrequent. This brand was banned in 2015 for misleading advertisements related to Mulmin Drops, which were found to contain toxic chemicals in a baby product.

Analysis:

- Mulmin pro product focus on pregnant and lactating women, growing children, sports enthusiasts, and individuals experiencing bone density loss.
- Consumer faced mild side effects gastrointestinal discomfort, allergic reactions, or unusual taste.
- This brand was banned by food safety & standard authority due to misleading claims.
- The Mulmin drop which is exclusively launched for small baby (6months) contains toxic, contain pine bark with rational dosage.

Overcome: In 2015, product is banned, due to misleading or exaggerated claims on Mulmin drop, which is designed for babies, where product contains toxic chemical, authorities like FASSAI banned the product due to concern on consumers health. Mulmin Pro has maintained its market presence by ensuring ingredient transparency, maintaining the regulatory such as quality checks, lab reports, evident certificates and accommodating to specific nutritional needs. The company advises consumers to consulting healthcare professionals before use, especially for vulnerable groups like pregnant women and individuals with pre-existing conditions. Ensuring the multiple tests in lab, product considered as testified product with evident documents and also brand focuses to add essentials nutrients to fulfill the claims.

5.1 Analysis of products:

Brand	Product description	tagline	new tagline 2025	problem	focuses
Horlicks	malt based	taller, stronger, shaper	mischief is a sign, that growth is fine	fake claim on product	children
complan	health drink	I'm a complan girl/boy	taste good does good and complete nutrition for growing kids	misleading information and not satisfied consumer	children
raw rage	protein powder	complete athlete nutrition and we make it happen	-	unrefined, unhygienic, unappealing taste and not medically sound and not satisfied the claim	gym goers
Mulmin pro	protein supplement	Power Packed Nutrition for Healthy Mother and Fetus	-	FSSAI banned the product due to safety issues	Pregnant women, lactation, growing children, sports athletes.

Table 1: analysis of products

5.2 COMPARATIVE TABLE of ASCI AND FASSI AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, GUIDELINES

Sl.no	Domain	2015(10 years back)	2025
1	Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)	The code of ASCI is already existed but less active. Food safety & standards related guidelines are less explicit.	ASCI's 2025 Guidelines ensure that health/nutritional claims in food ads must be supported by scientific evidence and comply with FSSAI food standards.
2	Food Safety & Standards (FSSAI/food law)	Food safety & standards act 2006 was framed by government as regulatory to focus on packaging, additives Comparatively labelling norms are very less Licensing/inspections did not always function certain operation to avoid risks.	Amendments in July 2025: major updated on index norms for edible oils, revised standards for sausages, food colors, etc. Labeling & Display: FSSAI has proposed new labelling rules to make per-serve % RDA of sugar, salt, saturated fat more prominent. Inspection regime: In 2025, FSSAI revised "food-grade packaging material" as an important parameter in inspection, packaging must come with a Certificate of Conformity from NABL-authorized lab.

3	Consumer Protection Act (India)	This law applicable for consumer right i.e. consumer Protection Act, 1986.	Under the law of CPA 2019 act, there's stronger alignment between self-regulatory bodies (ASCI) (FSSAI)

Table 2. COMPARATIVE TABLE of ASCI AND FASSI AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, GUIDELINES

5.3 ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT /SECONDARY DATA

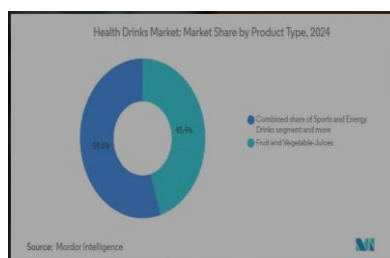


Fig.5

The charts represent the market share of the health drinks marketed by product type for the year 2024. The graphic chart represented combined share of sports and energy drinks segment and other related drinks represents 54.6% of the market. Fruit and vegetable juices account for 45.4% of the market. This data is sourced from Mordor intelligence, as indicates the health drinks market share by product type 2024

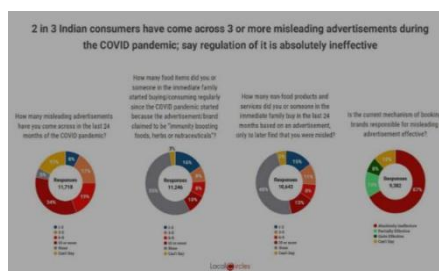


Fig.6

The chart presents data on Indian consumers experience, misleading advertisements during the covid pandemic, based on survey responses.

Misleading advertisements

- 34% of respondents encountered more than 5 misleading advertisements in the last 24 months.
- 17 encountered 3-5 misleading ads.

Immunity-boosting claims on food

- 16% bought more than 5 food items due to ads claiming immunity benefits.
- 10% bought 3-5 such items

Non- food product/service misleading ads

- 67% felt that the mechanism for booking brands responsible for misleading ads was absolutely ineffective.
- 12% considered it ineffective, only 5% felt it was effective.

6. CONCLUSION:

A research study on deceptive advertising in health drinks and the guidelines set by ASCI examines the significance of the Advertising Standards Council of India, established in 1985. This regulation was introduced to prevent false advertising and exaggerated claims about products, particularly as the FSSAI was created to stop misleading or overstated assertions regarding health drinks and food items. Initially, ASCI was formed as a "Code of Self-Regulation." This research investigates the misleading assertions related to health drink products through prominent case studies in India.

One study revealed that as much as 70% of well-known Indian protein powders contained misrepresented or exaggerated protein levels when compared to independent laboratory tests. A significant number of consumers use health drinks and protein supplements without consulting healthcare professionals, leading to adverse effects like digestive issues, allergic reactions, and conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and kidney problems. In response to ongoing complaints about health drink products, the government has enacted various regulations to eliminate misleading claims, driven by consumer feedback. ASCI has mandated that all brands must adhere to these regulations. Each product should undergo clinical testing in a laboratory, and evidence, documentation, or proof of quality assessment is required before any product is advertised in the marketplace. If any brand fails to meet these regulations, they could face penalties, including fines of up to 10 lakhs, and the FSSAI holds the authority to prohibit the sale of specific products.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

- This study primarily focuses on misleading advertisements on health drink products it does not include the other fields.
- This study primarily looks at advertisements and might not include other types of media.
- Since case studies are interpreted qualitative method, the results are based on the analysis of the researcher and the authorities' guidelines.
- This study did not conduct any survey about the public opinion.

8.FUTURE PROSPECTIVE/SCOPE:

Studies focuses popular case studies such as Complian, Horlicks, RawRage, Mulmin to learn about the issues and misleading information in marketing, can make an attempt to investigate the role of authorities as well as local communities for better data about misleading advertisement in market. Also, further researcher can be conducted with the large sample size. The further research can be conducted using advanced statistical techniques.

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Radio to Podcasts: Urban Youth Listener Preferences and Emotional Disconnect in Bangalore

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Abstract: This mixed-methods study investigates the shift from traditional FM radio to podcasts among urban youth (15–29 years) in Bengaluru, using quantitative percentage analysis ($n=100$) and qualitative thematic exploration ($n=32$). Quantitative results show that 58% of respondents prefer podcasts, driven by personalization (85%), on-demand access (82%), content diversity (84%), and emotional connection (71%).

Qualitative insights from 14 in-depth interviews and 2 focus group discussions reveal five themes explaining emotional disconnect from radio: (1) Intimate Connection Through Vulnerability, (2) Control as Emotional Empowerment, (3) Validated Identity Through Niche Content, (4) Authenticity Over Broadcast Performance, and (5) Emotional Abandonment by Radio.

A key finding is that 71% of respondents experience parasocial connection with podcast hosts, compared to 34% with radio RJs. Additionally, 66% reported decreased radio listening in the past two years, while 68% increased podcast usage, with 78% adopting podcasts within three years.

The study concludes that the radio-to-podcast shift reflects urban youths' reclamation of emotional agency through media that prioritizes autonomy, authenticity, and identity validation.

Key Words: podcasts, radio, listener preferences, parasocial relationships, emotional disconnect, urban youth, Bengaluru, mixed-methods research, media consumption.

1. INTRODUCTION

Radio broadcasting has been a pillar of mass communication in India with a history of almost 100 years. The rise of podcasts as an influential form of audio, however, is transforming listening behavior especially among the youth in Tier I/II cities, such a shift has also been rapidly increasing in Bengaluru, the Silicon City of India, and is leaving some important questions concerning the motivations behind this media shift and the emotional aspect of preferences in the audience. Past studies have examined the patterns of media in the form of quantitative data collection by measuring the number of times and hours spent or adoption of a platform. However there has also been emerging evidence that emotional and psychology factors also have an equally important impact on media choice, particularly in Generation Z and younger millennial audiences. This is an important aspect of disconnection that needs to be understood by broadcasters, media scholars and content creators to understand modern listening behavior.

- **Research Objectives**

Objective 1: To identify the changes of the distribution and percentage of the preferences towards the use of audio media among the urban youth (15-29 years), using the method of quantitative percentage analysis.

Objective 2: To investigate and examine the underlying emotional and psychological motivation behind the disconnection with traditional radio among the urban youth, by conducting a qualitative investigation.

- **Research Questions**

1. What percentage of urban youth in Bengaluru aged 15-29 prefer podcasts over FM radio and what features of podcast influence this change?
2. Which emotional and psychological factors contribute to young listeners' to shift from traditional radio to podcast and how does the parasocial relationships with podcast hosts and RJs differ?
3. What emotional and functional needs do podcasts fulfill that FM radio does not?

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The change in consumption of audio media has been discussed in both global and Indian media studies, especially in the context of the growing popularity of podcasts and the decreasing popularity of the traditional FM radio among the young generation. Although such studies provide useful information on the patterns of usage and rate of technological adoption, a smaller number of studies consider the emotional processes behind the reasons why urban youth are taking radio-off and switching to podcasts. This review summarizes the pertinent literature to contextualize the current research with these controversies and point out the gap in the body of research that the study fills. The focus of the paper is on podcasts and their rise in popularity among young people as listeners of audio content like music and radio shows in 2025.

The studies of urban youth in Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, and Shimla show that podcasts are viewed as the contemporary form of radio with more options to control the amount of time spent, the range of topics, and the interest (Solanki et al., 2024; Negi and Kapoor, 2025). These studies emphasize the fact that urban youth, especially students and young professionals, have begun to incorporate podcasts in their life like commuting, learning and leisure, and not as a form of passive consumption but as part of their lifestyle.

Results are always consistent: one of the most important factors in the use of a podcast is its personalization and the availability of niche content. New age listeners tend to go to the content that fits particular interests, career objectives, or philosophical standpoints, which the generalized content of traditional radio can scarcely fit. Although these studies have been able to map the adoption trends, they mostly concentrate on behavioral cues like frequency, duration, and the platform preference, and they do not give much information on the emotion behind such preferences.

- **Structural Restrictions of Radio and Decrease in Youth Consumption**

The research paper by Mann (2023) claims that mass-market format of radio, strict scheduling, regulatory measures and advertising-based model inhibit innovation and restrain emotional appeal among younger people. The study by Menon (2024) on radio listenership in the COVID-19 pandemic makes the stories of radio dying more complex, as it shows that instead of being declining, radio now temporarily recovered because of the emotional demands of the crisis (companionship and reassurance). This resurgence, however, seems temporary, though, and not permanent. The paper fails to consider post-pandemic media behavior, especially in urban youth who shifted back to personalized online platforms when the state of crisis ended. This difference highlights that the emotional value of radio might still be found even in exceptional situations, but the daily application of emotion to young people is still not much.

The cumulative effect of these studies points out to the fact that the waning popularity of the radio among young people is not only technological but also structural. The non-adaptable schedules, repetition, and performative models of broadcasts do not correspond to the need of young listeners.

- **Emotional and Psychological Gratifications in Podcasts Listening.**

Emergent studies place the consumption of podcasts in emotional and psychological contexts. The research that is based on Uses and Gratifications Theory shows that the Uses and Gratifications Theory can positively affect cognitive, affective, and personal integrative needs more effectively than traditional broadcasting (Askar and Mellor, 2024; Ayobolu, 2024). According to young listeners, they consume podcasts not just to receive some entertainment and information, but also to develop themselves, feel comfortable and identify themselves.

At the heart of this interaction is the perceived credibility of the podcasters. Conversational forms, long duration, permits vulnerability and self-disclosure and delicate conversation, encouraging trust and emotional bonding. The comparative analysis of Gen-Z listeners by Ayobolu (2024) reveals that podcaster attracts stronger parasocial relationships than radio because of constant presence of the host, direct addressing, and perception of intimacy. The hosts of podcasts are seen as relatable personalities and not as presenters who have rehearsed shows because radio stations have limited time and have to accomplish a set number of shows on a specific day.

The studies also indicate the role of podcast listening in the development of identity. Young listeners can be made to feel represented and intellectually validated through educational, feminist, entrepreneurial, and culturally specific podcasts, which the generalized radio programming fails to do. These results suggest that emotional bonding and identity validation are the key to podcast adoption, but most of the studies do not go further to establish the direct role of these gratifications that lead to the radio abandonment.

- **Displacement of the media and generation changes.**

The Media Displacement Theory is an effective approach to the concept of newer media slowly edging out older ones by providing better rewards. Some researchers indicate that podcasts are not only compatible with radio but also replace it with the younger generations because they are more effective at fulfilling the needs related to autonomy, control, and emotional involvement (Ayobolu, 2024; Negi and Kapoor, 2025). Notably, such a displacement is generational, as new listeners tend not to replace radio with the latter but instead increase in age without picking it up as a main source. The research of Diffusion of Innovations also proves that there has been a fast increase in the adoption of podcasts over the last years and that the increase is not limited to the early adopters but to the early and late majority.

Though the analysis of podcast development and degradation of radio has been well-investigated, there are still notable disparities. First, the lack of localized research addressing the specific urban youth of Bengaluru, which is highly digital and has a high commute time and is exposed to the global media cultures. Second, the literature focuses on technological and functional motivators of podcast adoption and an inadequate analysis of the active psychological process of emotional disengagement with the radio. Third, there is a lack of Indian literature, which uses mixed-methods methodology, which combines both quantitative consumption trends and qualitative emotional accounts, to restrict the knowledge of how statistical trends are used into lived experiences.

The current research fills these gaps by discussing the behavioral change of the radio listeners to the podcasts as well as the emotional connotation of this change on the part of the urban youth of Bengaluru. The combination of the percentage analysis with the qualitative exploration of the theme-based analysis leads to the development of the study contributing to the more nuanced perception of media displacement as an emotional, identity-based process, but not a technological process.

3.METHODOLOGY

- **Research Design**

The current study takes a convergent mixed-methods format, which incorporates quantitative and qualitative elements to study the replacement of FM radio by podcasts among youth in urban

Bengaluru. This methodological framework allows explaining both the descriptive patterns, that is, what is happening, and the affective and psychological processes that underlie such transitions, that is, why they are happening. The quantitative data provide more of a generalizable, general view which is lacking in qualitative data, but they provide depth and nuances of experience on the side of the listener.

- **Quantitative Method**
 - **Sample**

The quantitative part entailed a survey of 100 individuals aged between 15-29 years; these were sampled among the urban youth residing in Bengaluru. The age range was selected as this demographic is most actively embracing digital audio platforms, and because of whom the usage of traditional radio is dropping at the quickest rate.

- **Instrument, Data collection and analysis.**

A structured questionnaire consisting of 34 questions was used to collect the data, encompassing demographics, frequency of listening, preferences with the media, emotional attachment, and changes in listening behaviors. The responses were measured using Likert scales, frequency-based response options and multiple-choice. Google Forms was used to distribute the questionnaire online, accompanied by the distribution offline in colleges and workplaces. The data were collected and analyzed with SPSS version 19.0. The analysis was done using percentages to study the preferences distributions, preferences distribution based on the ratio of radio to podcasts and media consumption behavior.

- **Qualitative Method**
 - **Sample and Data Collection**

The qualitative aspect involved 14 in-depth interviews and two focus groups discussions (FGDs), where 32 participants were chosen through purposive sampling. The interviews were semi-structured, and were used to examine shared meanings, peer influence, and communal discourses of the radio-to-podcast transition., tape-recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim.

- **Data Analysis**

The qualitative data were processed through thematic analysis, involving six steps of processing in accordance with the six-phase model, described by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process produced five major themes that explained the disengagement of emotions with radio and preference of podcasts.

- **Integration of Methods**

Quantitative and qualitative results were combined during the interpretive phase. The quantitative patterns of preference, frequency and adoptability were contextualized with the aid of qualitative themes exploring emotional needs including autonomy, identity validation, intimacy and authenticity. The inclusion of affective and behavioral aspects increased the explanatory strength of the research on the process of media displacement.

4.RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes the results of the investigation by combining the quantification with qualitative findings. Collectively, the findings illustrate a strong shift in the use of FM radio to podcasts, which is promoted by behavioral change as well as emotional detachment with regard to traditional radio broadcasting.

- **Overall Media Preference**

The empirical evidence suggests that there is a decisive change in the preference in the audio media among the cohort of the urban youth. Most of the respondents said that they preferred podcasts to FM radio, and a significant percentage of them still supported radio. Another interesting segment also revealed no preference that is fixed, indicating that there is a transitional or hybrid listening behavior.

When participants were requested to make a forced decision of choosing one audio medium that will be used in the next 30 days, podcasts became the most popular choice. This fact proves that podcasts are no longer the supporting feature of radio but have taken the position of the main audio source of many listeners of young age.

Preference	Count	Percentage
Strongly prefer Podcasts	31	31%
Somewhat prefer Podcasts	27	27%
No preference (like both equally)	21	21%
Somewhat prefer Radio	12	12%
Strongly prefer Radio	9	9%
Total Podcast Preference	58	58%
Total Radio Preference	21	21%
No Clear Preference	21	21%

Table 1: Overall audio media preference

- **Podcast Preference Drivers.**

The three key reasons that explain why podcasts are the preferred type of content are greater levels of control and customization, on-demand availability, and the variety of content. A large percentage of the respondents agreed that podcasts give people greater flexibility in terms of what and when they hear. The other important driver was content diversity. The podcasts were viewed by the respondents as providing more niche and topic-specific information that helped them to satisfy their individual interests, whereas the radio was seen as generalized and monotonous. According to these findings, such functional benefits as control and variety are very important in driving the shift towards podcasts.

- **Emotional Affinity and Parasocial Interaction.**

Emotional attachment is one of the most glaring points of difference between podcasts and FM radio. A significantly higher percentage of the respondents indicated that they were emotionally attached to the podcast hosts than to RJs. The podcasts were generally viewed as personal, more conversational and reflective as compared to radio which was performative and more social than intimate. This gap explains the importance of parasocial relationship in podcast listening. Long-form discussions, perceived authenticity by podcast hosts result in familiarity and a sense of trust which radio formats struggle with.

- **Content Satisfaction and Listening Intensity**

The levels of satisfaction also strengthen the podcast dominance. Most of the respondents also expressed satisfaction with the content of podcasts, and the content of FM radio was also significantly lower. Radio discontent could be linked with repetition, no choice, and insignificant response to individual interests.

The frequency and time spend data on listening prove listening to podcasts at a deeper level. The majority of the respondents recognized themselves to be regular listeners of podcasts, with the majority of people listening to radio being rare or non-existent. Podcasts are not only popular but more interesting to the listeners, with active listeners dedicating much more time each day to radios compared to active listeners to podcasts.

Pattern of listening	Radio (%)	Podcasts (%)
Regular listeners (at least once per week)	33	83
Occasional listeners	20	12
Rare or non-listeners	47	5
Average listening per day	37	74

Table 2 Radio/podcasts frequency and daily hours of listening.

- **Long-term Change in Listening Habits**

A longitudinal self-report displays a clear shift in the listening behaviors in the two previous years. Most of the respondents reported that they listened to radio less, and the number of podcasts increased in a similar manner.

The adoption schedule also shows that most respondents are new to podcasts with a huge fraction of the respondents taking up podcasts in the past three years. This indicates that it has accelerated the spread of podcasts among young people in urban areas and justifies the opinion that podcasts are becoming a normalized form of audio among this group.

Listening Trends Over Time	Radio (%)	Podcast (%)
Increased listening	14	68
No significant change	20	18
Decreased listening	66	14

Table 3 Radio and podcast listening patterns across time

- **Qualitative Themes Overview**

Qualitative analysis led to the identification of five main themes of the emotional and psychological transition from FM radio to podcasts among urban youth. Participants characterized podcasts as creating intimate connection through vulnerability with hosts being seen as relatable and emotionally open. One of the respondents said, "It feels like they're talking directly to me, not performing for a crowd. That makes it easier to connect." (P9, 22M). Control emerged as emotional empowerment since listeners valued autonomy over timing and content: "I listen to Podcasts when I want. Radio decides everything, and that feels restrictive." (P8, 21 2019 F). Podcasts also allowed for identity validation through niche content, while radio was considered scripted and distant emotionally so that active emotional disengagement resulted.

- **Discussion**

The findings of the current research can be framed in the context of the changing audience demands and media fulfilments that are relevant to urban youth. The reported preference in the use of podcasts over FM radio suggests not only a shift in the medium of utilization but also a significant change in the modalities through which listeners seek emotional, psychological, and identity-related gratification through audio media.

In the perspective of the Uses and Gratifications theory, podcasts meet the needs of autonomy and personal stewardship by the listeners more effectively than radio. The ability to choose content, determine what to listen to and when and control the position of engagement makes podcast consumers agents of their media consumption. By contrast, the fixed schedules and standardization of programming are limiting such agency to radio, and thus reducing its relevance to digitally native users accustomed to custom-made media economies.

The Parasocial Relationship theory also explains the strong level of affective attachment indicated towards podcast hosts. The conversational, extended structure of podcasts creates the sense of perceived intimacy thus making hosts appear more authentic and emotional to the listeners. Regular exposure to the familiar voices and stories cement familiarity and trust. On the other hand, radio jockeys were often seen as performative and commercially motivated, thus diminishing the process of building long term emotional attachment.

The decline of radio listening fits in with Media Displacement theory according to which new forms of media gradually take the place of previous ones by performing similar roles with greater effectiveness. Not only do podcasts have the same auditory functionality as the radio, it goes beyond it, by offering niche content, and the validation of identity. The discussion therefore assumes that it is precisely the fact that podcasts strike an urban youth chord as far as they align with modern demands of authenticity, autonomy, and heart that the traditional radio is losing any capacity to support.

• Summary of Results

Overall, the findings indicate that transformation of FM radio to podcasts among urban youths of Bengaluru is both emotional and behavioral. Quantitative results determine definite trends of preference, adoption, and engagement, and qualitative themes show that podcasts can satisfy much more personal needs associated with autonomy, authenticity, emotional attachment, and identity confirmation. Together with the latter, these findings are the background to the discussion in the next chapter.

5.CONCLUSION

This research study involved a transition of FM radio to podcasts among young people in Bengaluru city with specific focus given to listening behavior and affective response. The findings reveal a strong inclination to podcasts, which is supported by a higher tendency to listen, a higher level of time commitment, and a stronger emotional attachment. The use of podcasts was favored not only because it was technologically convenient but also because this type of media is inherently flexible, authentic, and it fulfilled personal interests. On the other hand, FM radio was considered to be limiting, generalized and less emotional. In general, the replacement of radio with podcasts represents a larger change in the consumption of audio media as people are actively choosing platforms that allow independence, personalization, and meaningful interaction.

6.RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these results, FM radio stations may want to integrate podcast-style programming, on-demand, and niche programming as a way of attracting younger audiences back to the radio. Future studies may build upon this study by including rural populations, employing longitudinal research designs, or platform-specific studies.

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Mohit Suri's 'Obsession' to Music: A Comparative Analysis of Aashiqui 2 (2013) Saiyaara (2025)

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Abstract: The work of film-maker Mohit Suri represents a unique paradigm of film-story telling whereby music is not a decorative value but the major structure of the narrative. His peculiar obsession with music, as an operational attribute (dismissing any serious shooting until every song is created) is a distinctive auteurial mark, which plays operationally by reversing the conventional hierarchies of dialogue and storytelling by visual means. The paper utilizes a qualitative comparative case-study approach to examine two films, spaced by a period of twelve years, analyzing the role of music in controlling character growth, shaping with narrative themes and organizing the experience of the viewers. Analytic results demonstrate impressive persistence throughout the twelve-year period in preproduction music composition, music-as-screenplay philosophy, work with composer Mithoon, a focus on vocal authenticity, and systematic application of leitmotif strategies, and also record a strategic development in compositional scale (an increase in the number of composers, to seven), global ambition (shifting into the international market), and time (shifting to non-linear narrative). *Aashiqui 2* earned an estimated 1.09 billion Indian Rupees in the theatres, and its lead song, *Tum hi ho*, has gained over a billion YouTube views; *Saiyaara* became the first Hindi song to make the Billboard Global 200 Chart ranking in the top 10, with 98 million Spotify plays in one week, 96.8 percent of which were outside the United States. The study broadens the auteurist theory to include sonic authorship and justifies the notion of productive addiction as a method of analysis and the idea of music-as-screenplay as an authoritative story writing language. Placing the Suri-based music-based autoorism in a larger theoretical approach to film theory provides a sense of establishing critical gaps where the Western-centric film theoretical paradigm has historically faltered to absorb the music-driven cinematic traditions of the world, and provides an approach that can be applied to K-cinema and Nollywood as well as other international music-driven methodologies of filmmaking.

Key Words: Mohit Suri, auteur theory, sonic authorship, Bollywood cinema, film music analysis, leitmotif, emotional architecture, music-driven narrative, character development, comparative film studies, *Aashiqui 2*, *Saiyaara*

1. INTRODUCTION

There are not many directors in modern Hindi cinema who have so developed and maintained a relationship with music as Mohit Suri. Whereas most film songs are generally placed as commercial interludes or promotional aides, Suri always considers music as the storytelling mechanism of his movies. Instead of being a decorative backup, the songs in his movies are an emotional progression of the screenplay, an expression of character psychology, and the creation of a rhythm in the narrative.

Suri is not obsessed with music in a metaphorical sense, but is opera. He has publicly indicated that he does not start recording films until all the songs are completely written which is the opposite of usual production hierarchy in Hindi films in which music may be created after principal photography. This pre-production requirement draws a line between Suri and the current industry tendencies and creates a movie making approach where sound comes first, followed by image, and emotion comes first, followed by dialogue. In this way, music is the central expressive medium where inner, relations, and thematic conflicts are expressed.

This paper will compare two films spaced a decade apart such as *Aashiqui 2* (2013) and *Saiyaara* (2025) in the process of assessing the similarities and differences in how Suri enforces the music-first-auteur practice. *Aashiqui 2* was a cultural phenomenon where soundtrack allowed playing a major part in the film reception and legacy it created. Creating a Hindi film music in a radically different industrial and technological environment, *Saiyaara*, was able to gain the greatest worldwide exposure of its art form. Although both films vary in terms of the theme of the narration, time, and the markets they target, some similarities are present in how they play with leitmotifs, the use of voice as a tool of narration, and the use of music as a means of repetition.

This study frames Mohit Suri cinema within the broader conceptualizations of auteur theory that transcend the strongly visualist focus. According to the study, the authorship of Suri can be best described using sonic strategies of pre-composed soundtracks, pacing the film using music, and vocal performance as an indicator of character psychology rather than visual style alone.

Research Objectives

The current paper aims to discuss the music-first approach of the filmmaking by comparing *Aashiqui 2* (2013) with *Saiyaara* (2025). Using music as the primary narrative language, and not as a subsidiary means to tell a story, the research will be of interest to scholarship of film music as well as to the larger discussions in the aesthetics of auteur in music-driven cinematic cultures.

The objectives of the study in particular are as follows:

1. To examine the role of music as a means of character development, as an internal monologue and a psychological marker.
2. To analyze how musical strategies and central narrative themes, in particular, addiction in *Aashiqui 2* and cognitive decline in *Saiyaara* interact.
3. To examine the relationships between placement of songs and the recurrence structure in terms of its influence in emotion pacing and viewer experience in both films.

2.REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Even academic study of Hindi cinema has tended to anticipate visual aesthetics, narrative structure, and socio-cultural signification, with film music playing a marginal, commercially cannibalizing role or ornamental excess. However, an ever-growing body of musicology is increasingly challenging this marginalisation by arguing that songs are central narrative processes that define character psychodynamics, emotional processes and resonant content. The chapter under consideration captures the major academic works related to the subject of film music, its role in the narrative, and the auteur theory, thus placing the current investigation in the framework of the existing academic discourse and outlining the research gaps presented by the analysis of the film music-focused approach of one of the directors, Mohit Suri.

Psychological studies of Hindi cinema emphasise the in-explainable necessity of music as a means of expression. In their study, *Analysis of the Psychological Conflicts in Aashiqui 2*, Arifin and Taufan Hidayat (2017) prove that the depreciation of the main character is something that cannot be discussed outside the context of his musical identity. They show that the inner conflict of Rahul is brought to life not necessarily by means of dialogue or even visuality, but through modulation during the musical performance and vocal projection. This observation provides a certain amount of background to the

present study and confirms that music can be used as a direct means of psychological narrative, such that instead of emotionally separating, it is now explicitly done, not through the sense of sight alone. Raju Vijayakar in *The Role of a Song in Hindi Film* (2013) has theorised extensively the narrative role of songs in Hindi cinema. Vijayakar rethinks the idea of cinematic songs as a part of the story instead of being their interruptions as well, highlighting the ability of this form to express emotion, build relationships, and condense narrative time. He identifies Hindi film music as being part of indigenous storytelling practices that existed long before cinema, and contends that songs form a culturally recognizable narrative lexicon. This theoretical framework prepares the study of cinema by Mohit Suri, whereby songs are more and more engaged in the narrative work of the dialogue or visual figuration which has traditionally been presented in dialogue or visual montage.

To expand on this practical perception, the concept of *The Architecture of Songs and Music: Soundmarks of Bollywood* by Madhuja Mukherjee (2014) presents the idea that songs are structural elements of film architecture. Mukherjee has suggested a concept of soundmark, repetitive musical marks that structure narrative rhythm, emotional continuity and cultural identity. Her argument that music actually forms the film viewing experience, as opposed to following it, is rather consistent with Suri and his insistence on soundtracks that are already composed. The architecture point of view supports the statement that the films by Suri are built on music, but not on top of them.

This fluidity of songs across genre only serves to confirm the centrality of narratives in songs. The article by Virginia Kashyap (2019): *Analysing Roles of Songs in Bollywood Horror Films* shows that songs continue to play a vital narrative role even in the genre that is considered hard to implement a musical performance. Kashyap claims that songs help in emotional modulation, character expression of subjectivity and continuity of a narrative situation where dialogue would be insufficient. This observation is relevant to the current research, which substantiates the wider claim that musical narrative can be used to tell more complicated psychological and thematic stories than romantic melodrama.

Another tool of analysis at the disposal of explaining the approach by Suri in the creation of the film is the auteur theory. The article by Aneek Chaudhuri (2014) titled *Auteur Theory and Its Implications* re-evaluates the classical doctrine of auteurism and reaffirms its relevance in the case of directors that display a solid stylistic and thematic consistency throughout their filmography. Although Chaudhuri does recognize the collaborative nature of cinema, he claims that even when auteurism is understood to operate around the notion of authorship as a recurrent creative logic instead of personal genius, it is still analytically productive. This is crucial to establish Mohit Suri as an auteur whose signature also manifests largely through sonic means, including: recurrent collaboration with composers, use of leitmotifs, and constant time-pacing of the narrative through music, rather than visual stylisation.

The fact that music is a part of Indian narrative traditions makes the approach of Suri even more contextualised. From *Dargahs to Cinemas: Sufi Music: Journey into Hindi Film* by Anindita Niyogi (2025) narrates how pre-cinematic music genres found their way into Hindi cinema arguing that film music is not a western importer. By placing the cinematic music in a genealogical context of Indian performative traditions, Niyogi criticizes theories that devalue the songs as a commercial waste. The cultural approach to music and its status as a narrative base strengthens the validity of such an approach and places the methodology of Suri in an indigenous aesthetic rationality.

Parallelogical research on cinema, which focuses on music, also confirms the current investigation. An *Analysis of Cinematic Moments in the Film Rockstar* by Indrajit (2024) shows how music can play the role of a main narrative engine of a film, organizing the characters and plot development and emotional arc. The paper has shown that, when music is incorporated deep in the design of narratives, it is inseparable in terms of the thematic meaning. Such a precedent helps to support the analytical validity of the discussion of Suri in terms of the music-first approach to the study of the cinema, and make it clear that director-specific research that goes beyond generalization based on genres is needed.

In spite of these contributions, there is a gap in existing literature. Although the role of narrative value of songs and music in individual movies have been discussed by the scholars, the studies on the long-term musical approach of a director as auteur mark in Hindi films are scarce. There is little evidence of comparative analysis that challenges the nature of consistent practices in pre-production, leitmotif strategies, and vocal performance decisions, with references to films created in different industrial and time-related settings. This gap is filled in the present research by examining the music first filmmaking

tradition of Mohit Suri by comparing two films Aashiqui 2 and Saiyaara and locating music not as the ornament of the narrative but as its framework.

3.METHODOLOGY

This paper embraces a qualitative comparative case study approach to analyze the music-first filmmaking approach of Mohit Suri by using two films shot in a different industrial and time setting: Aashiqui 2 (2013) and Saiyaara (2025). The comparative approach allows identifying the common elements of the creative strategies used and considering narrative, musical, and thematic development over the years.

Primary data included multiple watching of both movies, soundtrack, official music videos, and advertising. The scope of analysis was on repetitive songs, leitmotifs, and vocal performances as narrative devices in the movies. Minimal application of streaming performance indicators and chart were used to put the cultural and commercial visibility of the music into perspective without considering such metrics as empirical determinants.

Secondary sources such as published interviews with the director and composers, critical film and musical reviews, box-office analysis and peer-reviewed scholarly materials on film music, narrative theory, and auteur studies were used. These materials were used to give contextual and theoretical background as opposed to creating primary evidence.

There were four qualitative strategies used in the analysis. The study of musical texts entailed critical examination of melody, instrumentation, vocal expression, and repetition, and specially the leitmotif transformation. The narrative integration analysis was used to plot the placement of the songs in the film structure to determine the contribution of the music to the plot development, the pacing of the emotions, and to the character development. Comparative analysis has revealed some similarities and differences in the musical approach, articulation of theme and function of narrative between the two movies. Lastly, thematic analysis was used to analyze the ways in which central psychological conditions, addiction in the film Aashiqui 2 and cognitive decline in the film Saiyaara, are expressed sonically, not verbally.

Together, these strategies place music as the main unit of analysis, and, in this way, allow investigating the role of sound as narrative architecture in the cinema of Mohit Suri.

4.ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

MUSICAL TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The filmography of Mohit Suri is always put in a way that puts music as a key narrative tool instead of an adjunct one. In both Aashiqui 2 (2013) and Saiyaara (2025), songs serve as musical texts that convey psychological conditions, control emotional development and organize sense making in narratives. Using leitmotifs, vocal performance and musical repetition, sound takes the place of dialogue and visual exposition held.

- **Leitmotif as Figure of Narration.**

The constant utilization of the song in the film, Aashiqui 2, of the song, Tum Hi Ho, serves as a sounding point to the mental and emotional journey the main character, Rahul, is experiencing. The melody is first introduced as a bold manifestation of romantic love, and throughout the movie it is repeated in the altered forms. The vocal presence that is linked to the song becomes much strained as Rahul gets more drunk and loses more emotional stability, or instrumental or orchestral versions begin to replace it. This is a slow process of losing the ability to sing clearly which is similar to Rahul losing the ability to control his artistic identity as well as relationships in his life. The leitmotif therefore makes the process of the psychological degradation sound based hence enabling the emotion degradation to be felt by the ears instead of being explained by the dialogue.

However, unlike the titular song of the piece, which provides a romantic refrain in the piece, Saiyaara uses it as a cognitive and emotional reference point. The song is initially given as a social performance initially creating artistic identity and super-ego bond. The melody is repeated in broken and simplified forms as the female protagonist gets increasingly cognitively impaired, as the story develops. Lyrics fade slowly away and eventually the song exists as a form of articulation that is not highlighted by

words. This abridgement turns music into an emotion-remnant that is not linguistic in that it is proposed that music is a neurological process that is beyond the conscious memory. As opposed to the buildup of emotional gravity on tragic transcendence created by music in Aashiqui 2, musical simplification in Saiyaara is employed to show how memories dissolve and retain emotional continuity.

- **Voice and Character Psychology**

Voice acting is an essential indicator of character psychology in both movies. In Aashiqui 2, the voice strength, control, and texture alterations follow the loss of emotions and body of Rahul. Audible strain and instability are also used as narrative signs of addiction and hopelessness and they turn the quality of the performance into psychological data. The voice is inseparable with character identity and it goes to support the notion that the sense of self is tied to his musical prowess.

Voice performance in Saiyaara has a different purpose in the story. The decline in cognitive ability is reflected in the change in full lyrical singing to fragmented or missing vocalisation. With the extinction of structured singing, melody remains without language, supporting the key message of the movie, which is the loss of memory and emotion, and the survival after thought.

- **The Narrative Structure of Music**

In both movies, the rhythmic arrangement of songs, their placement and repetition create the alternative rhythm of the narration that tends to override the traditional plot-based narrative rhythm. Musical moments are narrative points of the story, which reflect emotional and psychological changes. Instead of intensifying mainly by dialogue or action, the narrative development is structured on a sound basis. By means of such structure of the first music Suri builds cinema where music does the job of narration, and it functions not as an ornament but as a sort of narrative building.

5.COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

This comparative analysis of Aashiqui 2 (2013) and Saiyaara (2025) shows that Mohit Suri has focused on a music-focused approach to the filmmaking process, as well as substantial narrative and stylistic evolution. Despite the gap of ten years between the production of the films and the themes that they tackle, which are different in terms of psychology, both films demonstrate how music is the main tool to develop characters, emotional growth, and the flow of the storyline.

One of the main aspects of intersection of the two films is the usage of leitmotifs as anchors of narratives. The emotional value of repetition and modification is achieved in Aashiqui 2 by the constant repetition of the song Tum Hi Ho. In every new version, the readers are further imbued with the feeling of emotional reliance of the main character and psychological trapping. The leitmotif turns out to be a confident romantic statement into the relation of vulnerability, loss, and emotional exhaustion. In contrast, Saiyaara employs the use of its titular song in a mechanism of gradual reduction. Instead of the emotional density being built up, the melody continues to play on as the lyrics and the organized performance slowly fade. Although these lines manifestly run in opposite directions, the use of musical repetition in the two movies serves to maintain the storyline and to preserve the sentiment as well.

The singing also reflects the comparison strategy that Suri uses. In Aashiqui 2, the decline of a vocal quality is associated with the addiction of the main character, which makes a psychiatric breakdown sound literally. Instead of dialogue, vocal strain and instability represent emotional breakdown better, which supports the idea that character identity cannot be separated by music performance. The degrading role of structured singing in Saiyaara is an indication of cognitive loss as the focus of lyrical meaning is replaced with the insistence of the melodies. In both movies, the voice is a narration tool which portrays internal feelings into sound.

The use of music to activate narrative pacing is also equally applied in both films as opposed to plot escalation. Songs serve more as emotive gateways that mark the changes in the relationships, mental attitudes and the topics of interest. Instead of following a three-act format, both stories are presented in the form of recurring musical elements that control viewer attention and feelings of the emotional appeal. This pacing is enabled by music and this is why Suri says that music acts as screenplay, and this gets the rhythm of the narrative arranged by sound and not the dialogue or action.

Meanwhile, the comparison shows a considerable development of scale and ambition. Saiyaara has a more expanded stylistic palette and globalism due to the addition of various musical texts and production situations influenced by the transformations of the film and music industries. However, the expansions do not interfere with the main methodology of Suri. Instead, they show how an unchanging auteur logic adapts to new technological and cultural circumstances without its characteristic principles having been lost.

Generally, the comparative analysis proves the fact that sonic continuity of Mohit Suri is more coherent in terms of expression than visual repetition. In both movies, music is the structuring meaning of narrative, allowing the director to focus on different psychological issues and yet have a consistent creative identity.

6.DISCUSSION

The films made by Mohit Suri can be characterized as being typified by a long-standing music-first paradigm, where auditory elements are the main communicator of narrative value. In both *Aashiqui 2* (2013) and *Saiyaara* (2025), the music is not underlining but rather the structure of narration, taking the psychological conditions and thematic issues and translating them into sound. This approach to methodology makes Suri an auteur whose authorship can be best deployed using sonic, as opposed to visual, strategies.

The key theme of addiction in *Aashiqui 2* is sonically interpreted by the progressive loss in the quality of the voice and the musical inconsistency. Rahul is not only depicted as an alcoholic in terms of behavior but it is incorporated into the soundtrack. As his mental condition is shattering, strain in the voice and loss of control are audible and allow the audiences to see the consequences of addiction without the inclusion of dialogue or expository shots. As a result, there is no way that one can conceive of music not being a part of character identity, which contributes to the fact that the sense of self that Rahul experiences is inherently connected to his ability to listen to music.

In comparison, with the use of musical reduction, there is expression of cognitive decay in the composition of *Saiyaara*. With the diminishing memory and language, the structured songs are slowly replaced by fragmented melodies and wordless expression by musical means. The fact that melodic structure resists the loss of linguistic meaning can be interpreted as an indication that music is in the deeper parts of the neurological system that cannot be remembered consciously. Even when narrative memory is dissolved, emotional connectivity perseveres, which makes sound a remnant of identity.

This difference in musical accumulation in the film, *Aashiqui 2* and musical erosion in the film, *Saiyaara* depicts the adaptive but consistent auteur logic of Suri. Although the content differs, the very approach to it is the same: music acts as a narrative framework and organizes emotional development and thematic meaning. The paper thus extends the auteur theory beyond its visualist orientation, and shows that sonic authorship can be the dominant expressive resource of music based cinematic traditions.

By so doing, it will redefine creative obsession not as exuberance but as a regulated approach that can generate artistic consistency as well as cultural appeal.

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A Comparative Study on Newspaper Coverage of RCB'S IPL 2025 Victory in Bengaluru

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Abstract: The paper is comparative analysis of the coverage of the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) winning IPL 2025 in Bengaluru newspapers. The aim to find out how various large newspapers, such as Times of India, The Hindu and Deccan Herald, reported this historic victory, what they found on and what they focused on, and what differences arose in terms of covering the news, presentation, structure of the news and readership. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of news headlines, sub headlines, headlines, analytical news articles, and editorial commentaries are included in the study. As the findings show, the fact that each newspaper reported on the victory of RCB with varying priorities and perspectives was appropriate by the editorial policy of the newspaper, and the news writing style adopted by the readers. The study is significant in terms of the contribution to the role of media framing, news selection, and regional sentiments in sports journalism.

Key words: RCB, IPL 2025, Cricket, Crisis Communication, PBKS lost against RCB

1. INTRODUCTION

IPL gave a new direction to the Indian sporting tradition-it is not just a cricket league, but it is a complete entertainment-business-sports hybrid system that captures the emotions of millions of people in the country every year. The specialty of IPL is that the game does not just take place on the field, but is also constantly shaped through media coverage, team branding, player image, and audience participation. That is why IPL has a special place in the context of Indian media and mass communication. The identity of the city of Bengaluru has long been associated with technology, innovation, and cultural diversity. But with all this, cricket has been an important part of the sentiment of this city. Over these years, the team has been equipped with brilliant players, charismatic captains, and exciting matches; yet, there was an unfulfilled desire, hope, and a little disappointment in the minds of fans as the trophy had not come home for such a long time. 2025 turned this emotional story into a fascinating twist. RCB finally did it, for which the entire city and even the country had been waiting for years. The IPL 2025 win was much more than just a trophy; it was the end of this long struggle for the city of Bengaluru, the fruition of hopes of fans, and a powerful symbol of pride in the community. After this victory, the atmosphere of the city changed; celebrations on the roads, enthusiasm among the youth, feeling of pride in the families, and flood of statements on social media made the whole of Bengaluru like a festival. It was not just a sporting moment but a cultural experience that left its mark in the people's memory for long.

During such historical moments, the role of media becomes even more critical. Digital media might have changed the way information is disseminated, but newspapers still retain their place as a reliable, serious, and analytical medium. Newspapers not only provide news but also interpret and analyse events before presenting them. They create a historical record for society, acting as important evidence for future researchers, readers, and media analysts. Hence, their coverage of this historic victory by RCB

becomes a research topic, especially when it is seen that each newspaper presents news according to its different philosophy, priorities, and readership.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies associated with sports journalism and print media coverage have helped a lot in comprehending the way in which newspapers cover sporting events, athletes, and sport related occurrences. Hussain, (2014). Analysis of sports coverage in mainstream print media of India, especially a study of the effects of commercial factors and popularity in cricket journalism.

Gosselin, (2008). Gender disparity* in media coverage of women's sports in South Africa, which highlights how social structures influence the presentation of sports journalism.

Solanki, (2022). Analysis of media presentation of players highlighting common journalistic patterns such as hero-building, nationalistic sentiments and emotional framing.

Ahmed, (2022). A study of photographic images of female athletes in Indian print media, which concluded that visual content plays an extremely important role in news framing.

Roy, Mandal and Chakraborty, (2019). A comparative study of the popularity and media attention of football and cricket among young readers showed that newspapers prioritize sports based on the interests of their readership.

Fu, L., Danisco-Niculescu-Mizil, C., and Li, L. (2016). An analysis of linguistic bias in sports journalism, which states that word choice, tone and language play a significant role in the framing of sports news.

Mukarram, M., Parveen, S., and Gojri, I.A. S. (2024). A study of patterns of sports reporting in Indian dailies, highlighting the influence of selective framing, popularity-based news selection, and commercial interests.

Objective of the present study are:

- To assess the coverage of IPL 2025 victory of RCB by various newspapers in Bengaluru.
- To examine the impact of newspaper report on the community sentiment and perception of the people on the IPL 2025 victory of RCB coverage.
- To measure the approaches used by newspapers in conveying the efforts of crisis management and mass reaction to the RCBs IPL 2025-win celebrations coverage.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-methods research methodology. Qualitative Content Analysis

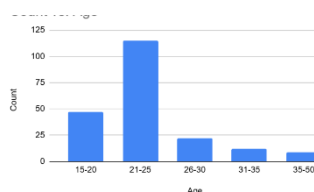
Selection of Sources The study involves a comparative content analysis of newspapers: Times of India, The Hindu, and Deccan Herald, focusing on their content IPL 2025 finals to aftermath reports involving fan celebrations and the stampede.

Articles published between (2/06/2025 – 15/06/2025) were selected for the research. Quantitative – Survey was conducted to study public perception of newspaper reports etc.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE:

1.Age

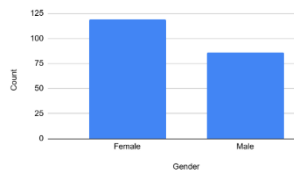


This data represents the demographic age group of 21-25 years category people. This chart indicates the response gathered from audience, comprising **56.10% (n=115)** of the sample. This is followed by the **15–20 age group**, which accounts for **22.93% (n=47)**. **10.73% (n=22)** indicates the age group of **26–30**, while smaller proportions are seen in the **31–35** age group at **5.85% (n=12)** and the **4.39%**

(n=9) representing 35–50 age group. This data strongly highlights a primacy of younger respondents, particularly those between 21 and 25 years old, with participation decreasing steadily across the older age ranges.

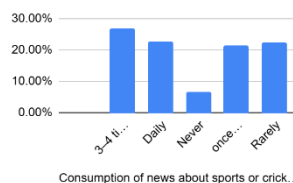
2. Gender

The present data shows that **Female respondents make up the majority**, accounting for **58.05%**



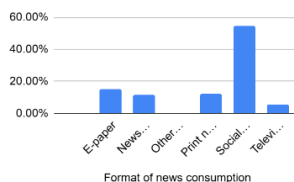
(n=119) of the total sample, while **Male respondents represent 41.95% (n=86)**. This indicates a notable predominance of female participants in the dataset, with males comprising a smaller share of the overall respondent population.

3. News about sports or cricket



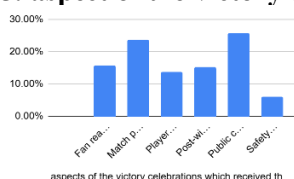
The present data shows that audience consume sports news or any other news **3- 4 times in a week**. the most common rate of consumption sports or cricket news, reported by **27.09% (n=55)** of respondents. This is genuinely gathered by those who consume a news **daily**, accounting for **23.15% (n=47)**. Respondents who watch or read sports news **rarely** make up **22.17% (n=45)**, and those who do once **a week** represent **21.18% (n=43)**. Only **6.40% (n=13)** report **never** appealing with sports or cricket news. This data indicates that most respondents follow sports-related updates with moderate to high frequency, while complete non-consumption remains relatively uncommon.

4. Preferred format of news consumption



The present data indicates that **social media** is the most preferred format for consuming news, chosen by **54.50% (n=115)** of respondents, making it the dominant medium by a significant margin. **15.17% (n=32)** indicated **e-paper** emerges as the **second most preferred choice**, followed by **print newspapers** at **12.32% (n=26)** and **11.85% (n=25)**, indicates news websites analysis all of which show moderate levels of usage. **5.69% (n=12)** are **television encounter data** of preferences, **0.47% (n=1)** are **other selected formats**. This kind of data represents the news consumption in different mode.

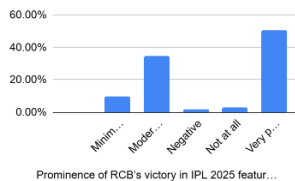
5. aspect of the victory celebrations which received the most attention in newspapers



The present data represents that **public celebrations in Bengaluru** are the most followed aspect of cricket-related news, chosen by **25.59% (n=54)** of respondents. This graphic chart represents **match performance**, selected by **23.70% (n=50)**, indicating strong interest in on-field outcomes. **Fan reactions** and **post-win controversies or issues** receive similar levels of attention, accounting for **15.64% (n=33)** and **15.17% (n=32)** respectively. **13.74% (n=29)** indicates player achievements',

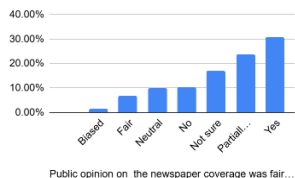
reflecting moderate engagement. Meanwhile, the category at 6.16% (n=13) are shows least followed **the safety and crowd management**. Overall, the data highlights a strong inclination toward celebratory and performance-related cricket news, with operational and safety aspects drawing comparatively limited interest.

6. Prominence of RCB's victory in IPL 2025 featured in the front page



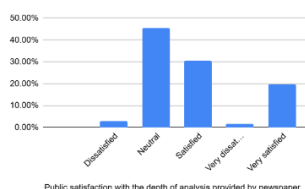
The present data shows that “**Very genuinely**” is the most selected response among participants, accounting for **50.71%** of the sample. **34.60%**, indicates the moderately respondents, indicating that a large majority perceive the subject with some level of prominence. Smaller proportions selected “**Minimally**” at **9.95%**, “**Not at all**” at **2.84%**, and “**Negative**” at **1.90%**, while **0.00%** indicates that no respondents chose the corresponding category. This highlights a strong predominance of prominent perceptions overall, with minimal negative or non-perceiving responses.

7. Public opinion on the newspaper coverage



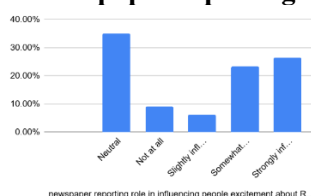
The present data shows that “**Yes**” is the most selected response, chosen by **30.81%** of participants, followed closely by “**Partially biased**” at **23.70%**. “**Not sure**” accounts for **17.06%**, while “**No**” and “**Neutral**” represent **10.43%** and **9.95%**, respectively. Smaller proportions selected “**Fair**” at **6.64%** and “**Biased**” at **1.42%**, while **0.00%** indicates no respondents chose the corresponding category. This distribution highlights a tendency toward public opinion on the newspaper coverage indicates as fully or partially biased, with fewer respondents viewing it as fair, neutral, or unbiased.

8. Public satisfaction with the depth of analysis provided by newspapers on RCB's victory in IPL 2025



The present data shows that “**Neutral**” is the most selected response, chosen by **45.50%** of participants, followed by “**Satisfied**” at **30.33%**, represent “**Satisfied**” and “**Very satisfied**” at **19.91%**. Smaller proportions reported dissatisfaction, **2.84%** indicates dissatisfied and **1.42%**, indicates “**Very dissatisfied**” while **0.00%** indicates that no respondents selected the corresponding category. This data highlights a general tendency toward neutral to positive satisfaction, with very few participants expressing dissatisfaction.

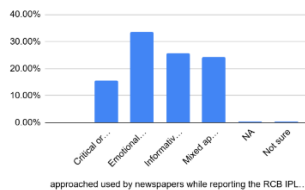
9. Newspaper reporting influenced people excitement about RCB's victory in IPL 2025



The present data shows that “**Neutral**” is the most selected response by audience, chosen by **35.07%** of participants, followed closely by “**Strongly influenced**” at **26.54%** and “**Somewhat influenced**” at **26.54%**.

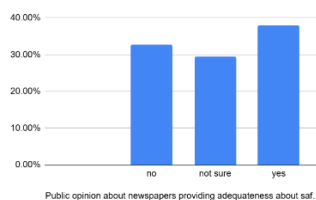
23.22%. Smaller proportions of “Not at all” at 9.00% selected “Not at all” and 6.16%, shows the “Slightly influenced” while 0.00% indicates no respondents chose the corresponding category. This distribution highlights that most participants fall between being neutral or influenced to varying degrees, with relatively few reporting no influence at all.

10. Approached used by newspapers while reporting the RCB IPL 2025 victory celebrations



The present data shows that “Emotional/celebratory” is the most selected response, chosen by 33.65% of participants, followed by “Informative and factual” at 25.59% and “Mixed approach” at 24.17%. A small portion of 15.64%, selected “Critical or cautionary” while each account for 0.47% while “NA” and “Not sure” The 0.00% indicates that no respondents chose the corresponding category. This distribution highlights a tendency toward emotional or informative content, with relatively few uncertain or non-applicable responses.

11. Public opinion about newspapers providing adequateness about safety guidelines during celebrations



The present data shows that “yes” is the most selected response, chosen by 37.91% of participants, followed 32.70% indicates “no” and “29.38% indicates not sure.” The 0.00% indicates that no respondents selected the corresponding category. This distribution highlights a slight predominance of affirmative responses, with “no” and “not sure” also representing substantial portions of the participants.

12. Overall, rating of the newspapers’ portrayal of crisis management and public reaction to RCB’s IPL 2025 win



The present data shows, most selected response is “3”, chosen by 34.63% of participants. This is followed closely by “5” at 26.99% and “4” at 26.39%. Smaller proportions selected “2” at 9.00% and “1” at 3.00%, while 0.00% indicates that no respondents chose the corresponding category. This distribution highlights a strong concentration on the overall rating of the newspapers’ portrayal of crisis management.

Qualitative data analysis: Selection of Sources

The study involves a comparative content analysis of newspapers: Times of India, The Hindu, and Deccan Herald, focusing on their content IPL 2025 finals to aftermath reports involving fan celebrations and the stampede.

Articles published between (2/06/2025 – 15/06/2025) were selected for the research.

	Times Of India	The Hindu	Deccan Herald
Total no of pages	32 pages	35 pages	36 pages
Total no of headlines/subhead line	56 Headlines/subhead lines	51 headlines/ subhead lines	47 headlines/ subhead lines

Total no of area dimension	23215.75 sq. cm approx.	18,324.25 sq. cm approx.	21023.75 sq. cm approx.
Total no of photos	130 photos	79 photos	91 photos
Total no of bylines	34 bylines + 3 PTI + 19 teams = 56	15 bylines + 36 team = 51	byline 21+ team 25 = 46

Table 1. Structural Analysis of Sports Coverage in Selected Dailies

Total Coverage Area: TOI had the largest print-space (cm²) - that is, it was second behind in terms of visuals/large page spreads/headline-authenticity.

Headlines/Sub-headlines (number): TOI (56) > DH (51) > TH (47) Meaning: TOI was the most varied news/sub-news on the subject.

Photos (Visual emphasis: TOI put the highest importance on - celebration/ fan visuals/roadshow pictures etc. are visible.

TH (based on your information) seems to have relatively more bylines and analysis articles/editorials (TH: many bylines, letters, editorials listed).

DH possessed numerous large-spreads (large areas such as 1632 cm²), particularly pages especially tragedy/crisis centered pages.

TOI has more heavy-visual and sports-page highlights. 3) Qualitative (concentration on language / tones / content) -According to your provided headlines and subhead lines. Following the same headlines and subhead lines (here, the subheads/headlines you sent are used as citations).

DH and TH were more comprehensive in the descriptions of safety-management, responsibility, and administrative accountability. TOI too did this coverage but previously its focus was more on sports/visuals; Later TOI also assigned much space on administrative follow ups. Influence on the opinion of the people.

The more graphic and festive coverage by TOI was likely to contribute to the original community excitement. Nevertheless, investigative framing and editorials of DH/TH made better the administrative criticism and security issues in the opinion of the masses. This is an inference that is based on headlines and editorial-count.

Most effective in width and social interaction (visual storytelling): The Times of India (TOI). Rationale: Most total area, most photos, most headlines, that is, TOI was most useful in catching the interest of the people and match-storytelling. Most suitable to crisis reporting and accountability: Deccan Herald (DH). Rationale: massive spreads and regular investigative/administrative headlines; DH put the causes of the tragedy and administrative responsibility in big format. Best if deep, analytical, and responsible editorial presentation: The Hindu (TH). Rationalization: editorial, letters, legal follow-ups, systematic treatment of the HC orders - demonstrates that TH reported more seriously and fairly on the institutional side of the incident. TOI- breadth/visuals; DH-- crisis accountability; TH- analytical depth. As the overall coverage, I would suggest The Hindu (since the aim of the research can be seen to incorporate responsibility of language, statement/framing, and crisis representation but not volume and TH demonstrated greater profundity in these areas). However, in case the decisive factor is the number of viewers/browsing influence, TOI will lead the list. 6) Integrated interpretation (combined analysis). First week (02-04 June): The three newspapers had the same reports in the first week of festivals/match-news: sports pages and celebratory headlines. (TOI includes additional emphasis on graphics) Post-event (05-06 June): With the tragedy, the character of the coverage changed, it began to include mortality/injury news (top-headlines), family reaction, immediate administration response (suspensions, resignation). Big spreads on accountability-angle at this stage were offered by DH and

TH. Follow-up (07-13 June): legal orders, FIRs, HC intervention, compensations announcement TH performed systemic critique with editorial/letters; DH concentrated on detailed local coverage and quitting; TOI provided ground-and-entertaining follow-ups also. Summary: Effect of media-framing: Both framing and agenda-setting are observable - TOI continued to hold the attention of people on the celebration first; DH/TH then shifted the discussion among the people to safety/administrative responsibility.

4.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws on key media theories Agenda Setting Theory, Framing Theory, and Representation Theory to understand media coverage, presentation style, and the formation of public perception in sports journalism. Agenda-setting theory explains what issues newspapers prioritize and how they make an event the focus of public discussion. In this context, what topics gained prominence in reports related to RCB's IPL 2025 win such as match performance, player reactions, city celebrations, or crowd-management is understood through this theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Framing theory helps the study to analyse how newspapers present the victory story in a particular perspective through language, headlines, visuals, quotes, and presentation style. Frames like “historic win,” “emotional moment,” “fan madness,” “city celebration” or “security challenges” in different newspapers influence the reader's emotions and perception (Goffman, 1974).

Additionally, Representation Theory helps to understand how the media represents the players, fans, the city of Bengaluru, and its community experience. This theory is particularly important in understanding how newspapers presented RCB's victory as a symbol of the city's identity, pride, and collective excitement rather than merely a sporting event. (Stuart Hall's representation theory, 1997). Overall, these theoretical underpinnings help to understand how the three newspapers prioritized, framed, what symbolic images the RCB victory was associated with, and how it influenced public sentiment, the image of the city, and social reaction through its reporting.

5. CONCLUSION

The comparative research indicates the difference in the kind of reports by the three newspapers highlighting the media coverage of RCB's IPL 2025 win and the calamity for the crowd that followed. These differences were mainly due to the editorial priorities and the approach of reporting of the respective newspapers. Times of India gave the most colourful and detailed coverage with a greater focus on the celebrations, the crowd, star players, and the live nature of the events. Its people-oriented and engagement-based reporting kept the emotions and enthusiasm of readers at the center. On the other hand, Deccan Herald covered the event from the point of view of a journalistically responsible one with a more significant focus on the failure of the administration, security management, government decisions, F.I.R., and the reaction of the people. While The Hindu adopted the most balanced and analytical approach and concentrated on policy shortcomings, institutional accountability, court intervention, and long-term security arrangements. The research proves also that the three newspapers framed the event differently the TOI focused on the emotional and celebratory side of the event, DH highlighted crisis management and ground-level impact, and The Hindu took a rational, evidence-based, and policy-analysis approach.

6. SUGGESTIONS:

- Based on the findings of this study, there is a deep relationship between media coverage, public sentiments, and administrative decisions. Therefore, many corrective steps can be taken in the future. First, newspapers are expected to practice balanced reporting in sensitive moments such as celebrations and tragedies-with a focus on factuality, sensitivity to human suffering, and avoidance of sensationalism. For this, media organizations should develop clear guidelines regarding ethics, criteria for photo selection, and ethical standards for writing headlines so that reporting on
- Sensitive topics can become more responsible and dignified. Under this framework, media organizations need to organize training programs, especially for crisis reporting and sensitive topic coverage.

- In future events-be it sports, political gatherings, or public festivals-media coverage should be regarded as responsible mass communication rather than mere reporting. Under this, newspapers should ensure that they do not rely solely on visual-oriented coverage but provide content based on in-depth analysis, policy suggestions, and truthfulness of facts. Similarly, the government should adopt transparent investigation, clear security protocols, and honest process of fixing responsibility. Through all these recommendations, a more sensitive, responsible, and trustworthy communication system can be developed between the media, the public, and the government.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has some significant limitations that deserve to be mentioned. Firstly, the research considers only the short time from June 2 to June 15, 2025, thus it is neither possible to adequately cover the time before or after the event nor to holistically assess the media impact over the long term. Secondly, the study considered only three English dailies - The Times of India, Deccan Herald, and The Hindu, hence not reflecting the viewpoints and socio-demographic perspectives of the regional language newspapers. Thirdly, the research was based only on print or e-paper material, whereas the leading role of the digital media, social media, and electronic media in shaping public perception and the dissemination of information about the incident was left out.

8. FUTURE SCOPE/PROSPECTIVE

Future studies could include newspapers in Kannada and other regional languages and not be limited merely to English newspapers since local language media often provide a more authentic reflection of public sentiment. This will also enable us to know whether both types of media-English and regional-present events with equal sensitivity, priority, and framing or if any significant differences exist between them. The expansion of this research to digital media, social media platforms, FM radio, television news channels, and YouTube-based citizen journalism may make the research more contemporary and comprehensive. This shall be necessary because in the present times, public opinion is not based solely on newspapers but on multi-platform media consumption. Future studies may delve into what kind of language, visuals, emotions, and arguments each of these different media present, and how these affect the attitude of the public and government policies.

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A Study on the Influence of Developing Mindful Eating Habits Through Instagram Among Various Age Groups

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of Instagram on adults' mindful eating habits. Instagram is a visually prominent medium that spreads a variety of eating habits content, ranging from wellness influencer narratives to intuitive eating and portion-control suggestions. This content can either promote awareness and deliberate food interactions or cause shame, comparison, and false information. Based on the inspiration vs. pressure dilemma, the study examines how much Instagram encourages mindful eating, how eating habits content affects adult users emotionally and behaviourally, and what eating habits adults adopt after exposure. The study uses a mixed-methods approach that includes surveys, interviews, and content analysis to identify the sociodemographic modifiers, engagement patterns, and content elements that promote long-lasting behaviour change.

Key words: Mindful eating, Digital nutrients, Instagram, intuitive eating, Social Media Influence.

1.INTRODUCTION

Social media, which is closely linked to everyday life for almost all individuals, can shape how people communicate, which forms of self-expression they will use, and which health and wellness choices they will make. Of all the social media platforms, Instagram has the greatest impact on various behavioural patterns and, at the same time, remains the most visual and interactive one among adults. Initially, it was intended for sharing photos only, but it has evolved into an area that not only informs but also inspires and educates users about a wide range of topics, including fitness and wellness, nutrition, and lifestyle. Instagram's world has positioned itself as one of the important areas in the spread of the concept of mindful eating, which signifies the cultivation of awareness, intention, and appreciation in the relationship with food. Mindful eating is the act of being completely aware of the whole eating experience and eating with all five senses, tasting, smelling, and feeling the food's texture. Finally, emotions and distractions should not determine one's eating. Since Instagram is both an educational and aspirational space, it. For the same reason, the various manners of reception and comprehension of messages by adults need to be discussed. To some people, Instagram is surely the top inspiration source that prompts them to practice an enlightened lifestyle and be eco-friendly, while for others, it is only a cause of anxiety, shame, or an obsession with eating. As a result, a conversation in the web world may promote the acceptance of body image, balance, and mindful eating discussions, thus transforming Instagram from merely an area of passive consumption to a place of contemplation and connection. The users will not be isolated in their journey to improve food relationships, and these communities can be a support for the positive behaviour change through the support.

2. Objectives

1. To determine whether Instagram helps promote mindful eating practices
2. To understand the impact of eating habits content among adult Instagram users
3. To identify the different types of eating habits that adults are inspired by after viewing a variety of content on Instagram

3. Literature Review

The 2025 study by Chen examines the relationships among cooking behaviour, engagement with healthy cooking videos on Instagram, and healthy eating behaviours among Taiwanese adults aged 30 to 45 (established adulthood). The study's objective was to investigate how this digital content, which increasingly influences dietary habits, affects this specific age group. A structural equation model (SEM) was employed to test the proposed relationships among variables. Cooking behaviours were found to be positively related to using healthy cooking “multimedia”. Also of importance is the finding that engagement was a mediator of the relationship between cooking behaviours and dietary outcomes, which indicates that cooking behaviours were not directly related to healthy eating behaviours. The results of this study indicate that engagement with healthy cooking videos may promote healthy eating behaviour among adults during established adulthood and that Instagram may act as a digital tool for promoting health. (Chen, 2025).

In 2025, Wu performed a content analysis of appearance and eating-related content featured in eating videos posted on social media to compare how these two types of content differ from video types and platform (YouTube, TikTok, and the Chinese site Bilibili). Wu's study involved a sample of 180 eating videos and found that most of the videos featured Asian (70%) or Caucasian (30%) young adult hosts who overstuff themselves and displayed a high level of interaction with their viewers both visually and verbally. The study also found that nearly half of the videos featured the hosts as appearing thin-bodied. Specifically, YouTube showed the highest rate of overeating compared to both TikTok and Bilibili. Researchers also found that based on the varying types of videos that were posted on the sites, the videos may send an unhealthy message to a certain group of demographics and expose them to unhealthy stimuli over a long period of time, causing a long-term negative impact on their eating behaviours and body image. (Wu, 2025).

The 2025 systematic review by Roorda assessed the relationship between food-related social media and outcomes related to body image and disordered eating. A recent systematic review of the scientific literature was conducted because of a large amount of prior research supporting the influence of media on developing poor self-esteem based on one's physical appearance, with a lack of research specifically related to the media's effect on an individual's appetite. Specifically, the authors of this review identified 16 studies from 796 articles using PsycNet and PubMed (Medline) and ultimately concluded that these studies showed varying relationships between how content related to food/social media had negative outcomes for individuals. In addition, the authors indicated that there is a need for further experimental studies to investigate the possible direction of cause-and-effect relationships between food/social media content and to delineate the specific outcomes of different types of food/social media content. (Roorda, 2025).

Theoretical Framework

The Magic Bullet or Hypodermic Needle Theory, often referred to as the Hypodermic Needle Model, is a communication theory that contends that media messages are like gunshots that enter an audience's consciousness and are passively received and accepted without question. The hypothesis first appeared in the early to mid-1900s, and it became more popular as radio and Television became a major form of mass communication.

The Social Comparison Theory (SCT) describes how people compare themselves to others to assess their worth, skills, and rank within society. Social media, such as Instagram, which features many

photos that make you feel like you are missing out, provides the perfect environment for social comparison.

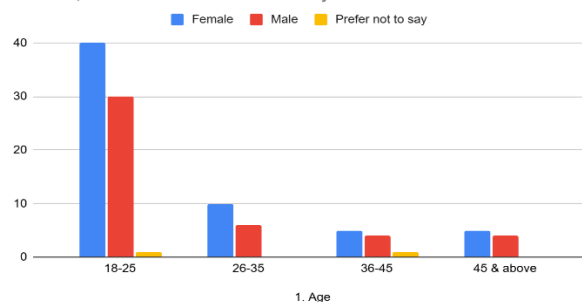
Research supports the premise that social comparison is one of the components through which social media leads to body image issues and disordered eating. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the mediating effect of comparison on the relationship between Instagram exposure and decreased Mindful Eating use.

4. Methodology

This study uses a cross-sectional, non-experimental design with quantitative methods to examine how consumption of eating-related content on Instagram influences self-reported mindful eating behaviours among adults. Data is collected at a single time point to assess prevalence and correlations between variables. The target sample includes Instagram users aged 18–25, 26–35, 36–45, and 46+, with a minimum of 110 participants recruited via convenience and snowball sampling through WhatsApp and academic networks. A structured online questionnaire measures: Mindful eating (dependent variable): awareness, intention, and non-judgmental acceptance of eating. Instagram exposure (independent variable): daily usage time, frequency of viewing food/wellness content, following influencers, and engagement levels. Sociodemographic and psychological modifiers: age, gender, and social comparison tendencies.

5. Data Analysis: The data collected through the questionnaire will be analysed statistically. Descriptive statistics will be generated to display how participants engaged in behaviours; correlational and regression analyses will be conducted to establish the strength and direction of the relationship between Instagram exposure and mindful eating scores.

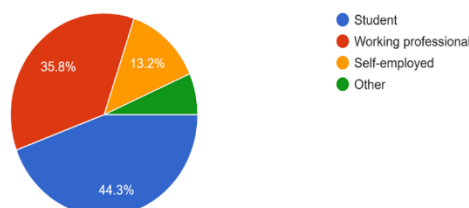
Female, Male and Prefer not to say



The analysis of the data reveals that overall, 106 adults in the study used Instagram regularly. The largest proportion of participants were aged between 18 and 25 years old (67%), 15.1% aged between 26-35 years old, and 9.4% for those aged between 36-45 years old. Approximately 8.5% of the participants were 45 and older. The sample of the survey consists of 56.6% Female respondents and 41.5% Male respondents. With a little dominance over female respondents. The Non-binary/Prefer not to say

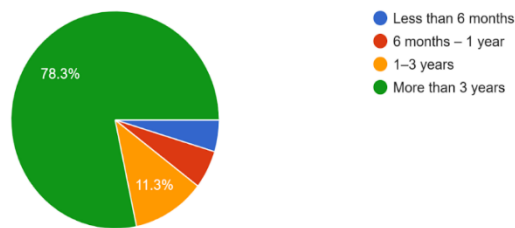
group was a very small portion of 1.9% of total responses.

3. Occupation
106 responses



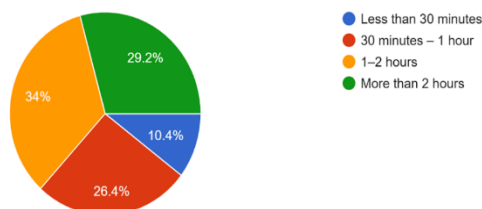
Students represent the biggest demographic group (44.3%) in the sample's distribution of occupation types. Working professionals are the second largest group, representing 35.8% of respondents. The self-employed comprise 13.2% of respondents, while those who identify as "Other" make up the smallest group (6.6%).

4. How long have you been using Instagram?
106 responses



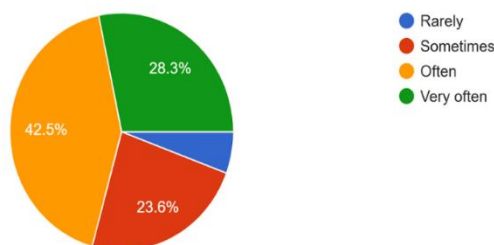
than six months.

5. On average, how much time do you spend on Instagram per day?
106 responses



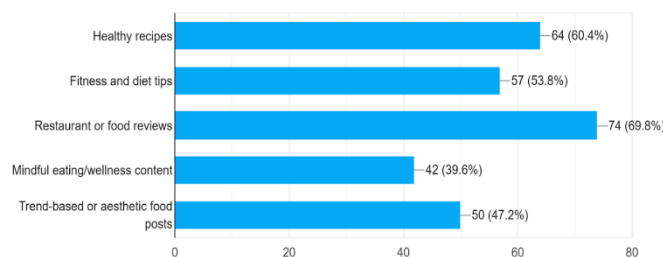
application. The other adult participants were split between using the Instagram app for 30 minutes to 1 hour (28.4%) and Less Than 30 Minutes (10.4%).

6. How often do you see food or eating-related content on Instagram?
106 responses



Instagram. Only 23.6% of participants reported sometimes seeing food/eating content, and only 5.7% reported rarely seeing it.

7. What kind of food content do you engage with most? (Select all that apply)
106 responses



popular but ranks behind Healthy Recipes and Food Reviews. The final category of Food Content was Trend/Aesthetic (47.2%).

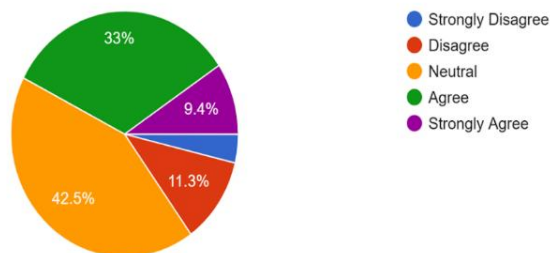
Most users in our sample have been on the Instagram site as regular users for extended periods; more than three-quarters (78%) of respondents indicated that they have been on the Instagram site for over three years. The rest of the sample had much shorter usage periods: 11% reported having used Instagram for between one and three years; 6% reported having used it for six to 12 months; and almost 5% had used it for less

Analysis of the daily time users spend using Instagram shows that adults are using it at a very high engagement rate. Almost one-third of adult participants (29.2%) indicated that they spend more than 2 hours a day using Instagram to engage with it. A large portion of participants (34%) spend between 1 and 2 hours on Instagram each day. This means that over 63% of adult users spend 1 hour or longer per day using the Instagram

Participants are regularly exposed to content relating to food and eating. Approximately 42.5% of participants see food/eating content very often, and an additional 28.3% of participants see this type of content regularly. This indicates that nearly all of the participants in this study are exposed to food/wellness messaging often through Instagram, which supports the researchers' interest in how Instagram may impact the mindful eating behaviour of people who use

Our sample strongly favoured Healthy recipes (60.4% participation), followed closely by Restaurant Reviews/Food Reviews (69.8%), indicating that respondents are highly engaged with both cooking at home and finding ideas for eating out. Participants engaged with the next two largest ways to obtain diet and fitness tips (53.8%), through the two largest categories of Food Content – Mindful Eating/Wellness (39.6%), which is still

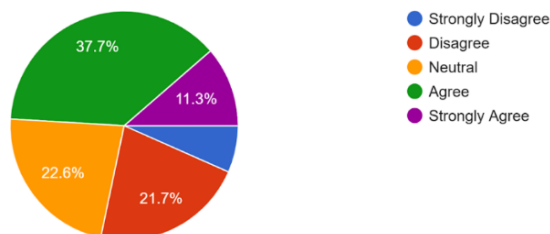
8. Does Instagram content make you more aware of what and how you eat?
106 responses



evaluating the overall responses, more than half (57.6%) of participants either Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed with the statement, while approximately 42.4% either Agreed or Strongly Agreed.

The largest single group of respondents (42.5%) disagreed with the idea that Instagram increases consumers' Consciousness regarding their food consumption. Yet, almost one-third (33%) of respondents believe Instagram helps them to become more Aware of their Consumption Habits as a result of using the platform. Including Neutral (11.3%), Strongly Disagree (3.8%), and Strongly Agree (9.4%). When

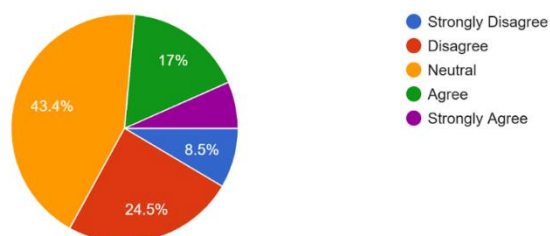
9. Have you tried new healthy recipes after seeing them on Instagram?
106 responses



not lean towards one end of the scale (i.e., neutral). Adding these together shows that about half (49%) of all adult participants feel as if Instagram has helped them use its visual element to create new healthy cooking approaches.

Most participants indicated that Instagram could be used for inspiration when it comes to trying new dishes in their diet. 37.7% said they had attempted new recipes after viewing them on Instagram, with an additional 11.3% saying they would definitely try them; however, only 21.7% of respondents did not think this to be true (and 6.6% disagreed strongly). The remaining 22.6% did

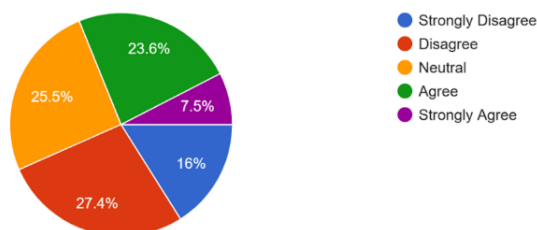
10. Do Instagram posts influence the way you plan or prepare your meals?
106 responses



systematic Meal Plan creation process, while another 8.5% strongly disagreed. Only 17% have agreed with the statement, and 6.6% strongly agreed that Instagram affects how they plan meals. As a result, two-thirds (51.9%) of respondents are either neutral or disagree with the idea that Instagram plays a foundational role in daily Meal Planning.

The majority (43.4%) of respondents ranked the statement "Instagram has a direct impact on how I plan my meals systematised" as Neutral. Approximately 1 out of every 2 respondents feels neutral about whether or not their Instagram use dictates their overall meal preparation. Another significant finding is that 24.5% of respondents disagreed that Instagram plays a role in their

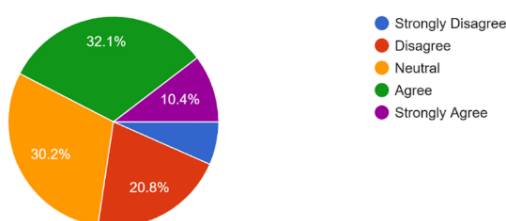
11. Do you compare your eating habits to others after viewing their posts on Instagram?
106 responses



study also revealed that a significant percentage, 49%, stated they do compare their food/meal choices to those of other users on Instagram, with nearly one-half (23.6%) agreeing to the comparison statement and 16% strongly agreeing. The remaining (25.5%) are neutral on the comparison issues. This finding supports prior research suggesting Instagram promotes social pressure and comparison. Which may create potential for psychological distress/self-criticism for up to one-half of Instagram users exposed to "highly stylised," aspirational food-related content.

Based on the response, a significant number of negative social/peer comparisons were made by adults. 51% of the sample collectively have indicated in their answers to the question that they do not compare their food/meal choices to others; as such, they would probably not be significantly affected by posts from other users. However, the

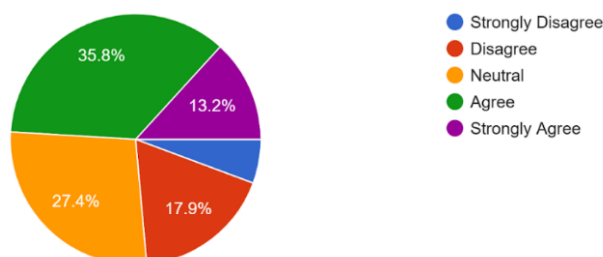
12. Has Instagram helped you understand the importance of mindful eating, such as paying attention to hunger, fullness, and food quality?
106 responses



While that may be true for the majority of respondents, 30.2% selected Neutral/Not Sure, and 20.08% selected Not Agree. Thus, only a small percentage of respondents disagreed with the statements made in this section (6.6% of survey respondents indicated they Strongly Disagree).

This information shows that most people agree with this statement, and the responses indicate that more than half of the survey participants (32.01% agreed and 10.4% strongly agreed) believe they learned how to eat mindfully while using Instagram. Therefore, over 42.5% of those surveyed believe Instagram will help them learn to be mindful when they eat.

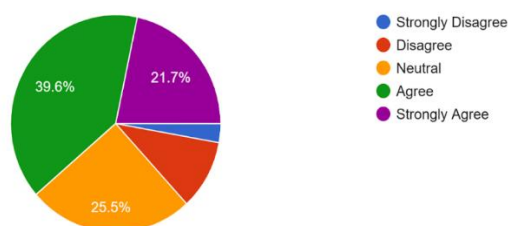
13. Do you try to eat slowly and focus on your food instead of being distracted?
106 responses



Disagree. 23.6% of respondents who disagreed suggest that a major obstacle to the behavioural application of mindful eating principles is distraction, possibly from the same social media platform under study.

The majority of responses (35.8%) agreed with this statement, while 13.2% strongly agree. The combination of these two responses shows that almost half (49%) of those surveyed have been actively trying to focus on what they are eating, while the remaining responses were: 27.4% Neutral, 17.9% Disagree, and 5.7% Strongly

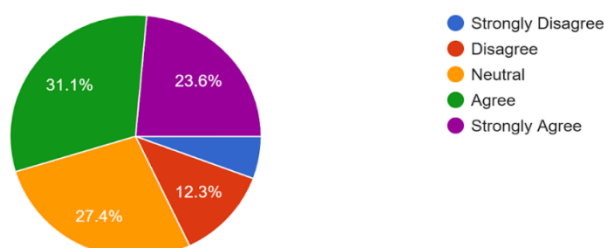
14. Do you pay attention to how different foods make you feel physically and mentally?
106 responses



can incorporate this important aspect of mindful eating into their everyday lives. The balance of the responses is split between Neutral at 25.5% and Disagree/Strongly Disagree respectively at 10.4% and 2.8%, indicating that the overwhelming majority of the respondents place a higher priority on the quality of foods they choose to eat, and their effects on their physical and mental health, when there are potential distractions associated with the consumption of food digitally.

Analysing responses to this statement reveals a very high level of self-awareness among respondents about how food affects them. A large majority of respondents indicated that they pay this level of attention to what foods do to them, which is indicated by 39.6% agreeing and 21.7% Strongly Agreeing. Therefore, a total of 61.3% of the respondents

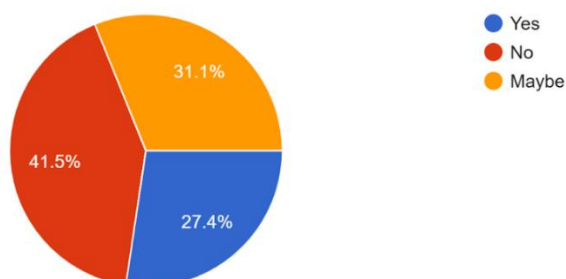
15. Do you often eat while scrolling through your phone or watching TV?
106 responses



individuals within the sample Disagreed with the statement, with only 4.7% of individuals within the sample Strongly Disagreeing with the statement (as calculated from the chart), meaning that less than 1 in 5 individuals in the sample reported that they avoid eating with distractions every time they have a meal. The balance of individuals within the sample reported being Neutral regarding the question (27.4%).

The majority of people who completed the questionnaire reported eating while looking at a screen; 31.1% Agreed with the statement, and an additional 23.6% Strongly Agreed. When both groups are combined, 54.7% of the individuals within the sample regularly eat in the presence of a screen. By contrast, only 12.3% of

16. Have you adopted any new eating habits because of Instagram?
106 responses

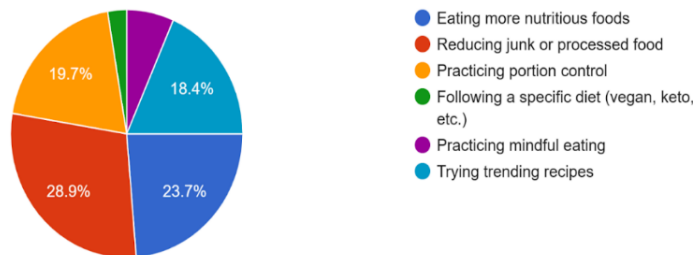


whether or not Instagram is a factor in making dietary changes. Overall, while the majority of respondents did not report making new dietary habits due to influences from Instagram, the combined 58.5% of respondents who responded "Yes" and "Maybe" provides evidence of a significant, but often difficult to quantify, effect from Instagram on the dietary habits of adults.

The results of the survey show that many people's eating habits and decisions are directly influenced by Instagram. Just over 41.5% of respondents said "No," whereas 27.4% of users said Instagram has helped them develop new eating habits. Another 31.1% responded "Maybe, indicating that they see the benefits of an increased exposure to food photos on Instagram, but aren't yet sure

17. If yes, What kind of habits have you adopted?

76 responses

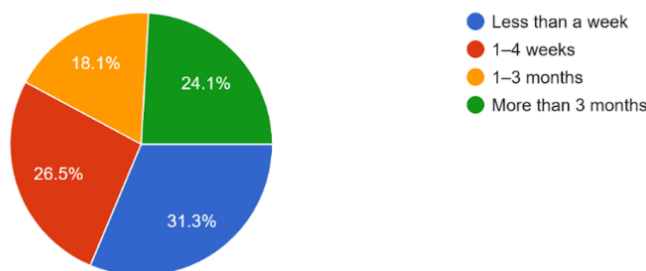


respondents), an increase in consumption of nutrients and/or healthful foods (23.7% of respondents), and Practice portion control (19.6% of respondents). Evidence supports that only 6.6% of individuals adopt mindful eating, while 2.6% adopt an overall dietary plan due to the influence of Instagram.

Among 76 respondents who acknowledged developing new habits, the impetus for these changes primarily came from actions initiated through Instagram and general health-related goals. The top three reported habits were a Decrease in junk food or processed food (28.9% of

18. How long did you maintain these new habits?

83 responses

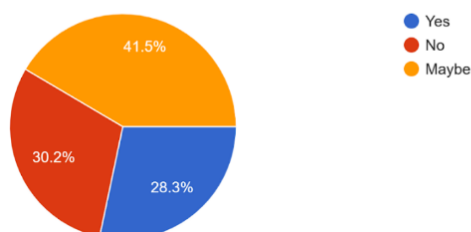


weeks. Combined, 57.8% did not maintain the habit for more than one month. Only 24.1% maintained the habit for more than three months, and 18.1% maintained it for one to three months.

The majority of the changes were not maintained over time, as indicated by the results of the 83 individuals who reported a change in their habits. Of the respondents, the largest percentage (31.3%) maintained the changed behaviour for less than one week, and 26.5%

19. Do you feel that Instagram's food-related content has positively influenced your eating behaviour overall?

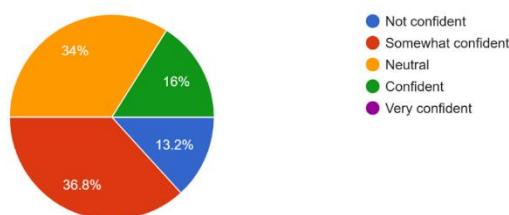
106 responses



negative category. The majority of respondents reported that they saw a definite positive (yes) effect, which accounted for 28.3% of the overall sample size of respondents. On the other hand, the other group of respondents who did not see a positive effect (no) accounted for 30.2% of the overall respondent population. There are many respondents who perceive the overall effect to be neutral or negative.

Most responses to the survey were scattered and showed a great deal of uncertainty. The largest group responding was comprised of those who answered "Maybe" (41.5%). This indicates that they see a possible effect but cannot place that effect in a positive or

20. How confident are you that the information you see on Instagram about food or diets is reliable?
106 responses



Most participants felt uncertain regarding the validity of diet-related material they viewed on Instagram. The overwhelming majority (70.8%) of people expressed low levels of assurance about their Internet-based nutrition knowledge. Almost all respondents (70.8%) said that their internet-based

nutrition material or Instagram diet plan is not trustworthy enough to generate a positive action response. Only 16% claimed that they completely trust the information they are receiving, and approximately 13% specified that they don't feel confident about the information/guidance being provided to them. No one selected "very confident."

The open-ended responses also corroborated that the influence of Instagram on adult eating was complex and highly individualised, dispelling any notion of a single "Magic Bullet" effect. Many simply recognised the value of the medium as positive and instructive, noting that it "made me more alert and aware about how food affects my body," "helped me try new recipes," and improved overall "healthy eating." Yet, this positive influence was matched by considerable resistance and scepticism from many: "Ultimately it's a personal choice," and "Instagram has not affected me"-oftentimes occasioning an active filtering process, as represented by "I only take positive things." The data also stressed the platform's negative impacts, manifesting chiefly as distraction, notably "While eating I may watch reels on Instagram," and temptation toward "fancy-looking food" and "crave junk." Conclusively, qualitative data affirms the central dilemma of the study: Instagram promotes both cognitive awareness and practical recipe adoption for some while encouraging distracted eating and temptation in others, all too often reinforcing that its net effect depends upon active choice by the user to filter and implement this content.

6.Findings: Instagram has a multifaceted and user-dependent influence on people's food choices, as established by this study's results. Since the sample primarily consisted of young adults (approximately 67% of participants) aged 18 to 25, this group is most vulnerable to changes caused by Instagram, since they are very active users of this application. While the majority of respondents (55%) indicated their diets had improved by eating more nutritious items and decreasing the consumption of processed food, some respondents (30%) had mixed feelings about healthy lifestyles and an increase in their desire to consume sugary snacks. People with confidence in their ability to analyse online information were 60% more likely to develop permanent, positive changes to their diets through credible sources and by avoiding false information. While Instagram can encourage new behaviours, it is very unlikely to encourage the formation of lasting healthy habits because, according to research, approximately 20% of Instagram users maintain their changes for more than three months. Therefore, Instagram is an inspiration for trial-type behaviours but not necessarily the source of long-term successful habits.

7.Limitations: The results from this study should be viewed in light of the limitations of the research study design. The primary limitation of this study is cross-sectional, meaning that it only provides information on associations between variables instead of being able to show a causal relationship between Instagram exposure and mindful eating therefore, we are unable to determine whether or not exposure to Instagram affects people's behaviour, or if people who are already thinking mindfully are simply looking for Instagram accounts that promote mindful eating. This limitation is further compounded by the fact that this study was conducted with a non-random convenient sample of adults (n=106), which is heavily populated with young adult college students between the ages of 18-25, making the results of this study extremely limited in their ability to apply to individuals in the older age group or to those who do not have access to social media or have limited use of it. In addition, the use of self-reported questionnaires creates the inevitable possibility of social desirability bias, resulting in

respondents overestimating their positive mindful eating behaviours and underestimating their engagement in distracting consumption. In conclusion, the high level of ambiguity in the data, as evidenced by participants' frequent use of "neutral" or "maybe" responses, indicates that we are currently unable to determine the actual effect of Instagram content on developing or maintaining mindful eating habits over time.

8.Recommendation: Evidence regarding the short-term adoption, distraction potential and uncertain consequences of using Instagram indicates that recommendations can be developed for both future research directions as well as potential tactical interventions. Specifically, by transitioning from short-term to longitudinal studies, researchers will have the opportunity to observe the ways individuals develop their behavioural habits through ongoing usage of Instagram for extended periods of time, along with understanding the causal relationships between Instagram and the formation of lifelong progenerate dietary behaviours, and how long after ceasing use of the app those habits may persist. Researchers should also incorporate objective methods of measurement into their studies. Additionally, content creators and health professionals should contribute to the development of content that focuses on educational narratives and the promotion of science-based principles instead of aesthetic appeal in order to support the development of long-term behaviour changes versus short-term fads. Finally, digital wellness campaigns should directly address the current behavioural conflict identified in these data by providing resources and promoting tech-free mealtimes and teaching users how to filter their social environments.

9.Conclusion: This research indicates that Instagram's relationship to adult eating habits is twofold. Instagram is not only a positive influence but also a negative one. Instagram is used in both an affirmative and a conflicting way. However, the positive effects of Instagram are effectively obsolete due to two significant factors: the high prevalence of social comparison (49%) and the presence of behavioural conflict (54.7%). Most individuals utilise Instagram to engage in distracted eating. Despite creating new, healthy habits, most of the participants maintained these habits for less than a month, as demonstrated by the inability of people to maintain lasting commitment to mindfulness through the application of superficial and peripheral cues from Instagram alone. The results indicate that Instagram has an effect on users' food choices and eating habits, but that this effect is dependent on the user's feelings of self-confidence, attitude, and the way they interact with the app (i.e., how much they engage). Instagram may positively influence users to develop and maintain healthier food choices and eating habits, while at the same time providing the user with the opportunity to create unhealthy food choices, or have confusion about what is the healthier food choice and make both healthy and unhealthy food choices. The evidence suggests that Instagram is a social media platform that drives users to make diet changes, but whether they benefit from these changes depends on their perceptions and engagement with the content posted on Instagram.

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Constructing Comic Horror: A Critical Analysis of selected Hindi movies

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Abstract: *The primary goal of this research is to investigate the development of Bollywood horror-comedy from 2015 to 2025, which has changed from a minor trial to a huge blockbuster and an intriguing type of film. The audience's changing taste is clearly seen in this development and the filmmakers' imaginative ways of mixing the comic and the horrific, and at the same time, telling sensible stories. The milestone was 2018 when the movie Stree hit the screens, this movie mixed laughter with a message on the subject of patriarchy and gender empowerment. This enormous success opened the door for further projects such as Roohi (2021), Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2(2022) and Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3(2024) which took the comedy and supernatural route to address social issues and entertain the audiences at the same time. These films indicate that horror and comedy can coexist and furthermore, they can lead the audience to reflect on issues such as gender disparity, superstition, social customs, and culture. One of the aspects of the study is the exploration of the various sources of the filmmakers' ability to produce the right mix of fear and laughter through storytelling, character, visual effects, and production design. By the year 2025, horror-comedy had become a Bollywood genre that not only sought to entertain but also aimed at conveying social messages and representing Indian culture. The aforementioned research makes one realize that Bollywood is constantly redefining the genres and producing films that are both entertaining and thought-provoking while reflecting the changing values and concerns of the contemporary Indian society.*

Keywords: *Bollywood movies, Horror comedy films, Indian cinema, Film trends, Comedy and horror, Popular films, Entertainment value*

1.INTRODUCTION:

The film industry in Bollywood has surely experienced a transition where the horror-comedy genre stands out as one of its greatest successes and attractions. It all started as a small-scale production and then expanded to a cinematic genre. The modern film enthusiast and makers have finally realized that to experience something cinematic, one does not necessarily need to have scares alone; instead, laughter, social insights, and storytelling together contribute to a lasting experience of entertainment. Horror-comedy as a genre combines elements of horror, supernatural, and situational and witty humour to engage and retain viewers. The horror-comedy genre as a part of Hindi cinema acts as a power instrument for social statements as well as entertainment. The same is addressed through wit and irony and relates to issues related to superstition, patriarchy, and gender and societal apprehensions. The coming together of horror elements with comedies increases the viewers' involvement in the film since it helps alleviate their fear while also enhancing fear levels. Many movies like **Stree** (2018), **Roohi**

(2021), **Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2** (2022), and upcoming **Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3** (2024) stand out in their own rights in the development of Bollywood horror comedies.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The development of film genres in Indian cinema, especially horror and horror-comedy, is a reflection of larger shifts in ideology, technology, and culture. Scholars generally concur that in order to meet evolving audience expectations, modern Bollywood increasingly embraces hybrid forms rather than strictly adhering to traditional genre boundaries. According to **Dauids** (2023), Hollywood and Bollywood have both changed as a result of viewers' desire for novelty, which has led to experimentation outside of established genre norms. This change has been made possible by technological advancements like CGI, VFX, and digital cinematography, which let filmmakers examine socially conscious subjects without sacrificing entertainment value. In this context, horror-comedy becomes a prominent hybrid genre in Bollywood, combining humor and terror to critique gender hierarchies, superstition, and patriarchy.

The evolution away from "masala" cinema to lesser-known genres is analyzed in the book *Beyond 'Masala'*. The impact of the globalization of film on Bollywood is discussed in this text and how it has led to a 'Bollywoodisation' of cinema. Indian cinema has adapted elements of international films to fit into the culture of India. One of the key areas that represent this trend is horror comedies where elements of ghosts, spirits, magic, etc., are mixed with folklore, myths and local issues, allowing the anticipated audience reaction in India to differ from that of other countries.

Valentina Vitali's *The Hindi Horror Film: Notes on the Realism of a Marginal Genre* positions genre hybridity within Indian cinema with more contextualization. **Vitali** demonstrates how Hindi films frequently utilize a "spice box" effect, where different genres (horror, comedy, romance, and action) are mixed together to keep the audience's attention. It allows filmmakers to communicate social and cultural norms (like family dynamics and gender expectations) while being entertaining. Therefore, horror is no longer simply about being frightening; it is also about establishing familiarity while introducing new ideas, mixing real and imaginary elements.

The study of Hindi horror focuses on the political and cultural aspects of Hindi horror film; thus, it argues that spirits represent the fear that society has towards religion, modernization, and gender-based restrictions in society. While this type of horror film may represent the cultural anxiety of entire societies through the use of ghostly/witchy figures; unlike traditional films with large influences from Western traditions, today's Hindi horror films have been influenced primarily through India's religious and cultural contexts. Therefore, Hindi horror films now use standard cinematic genres to deal with issues of identity and cultural heritage and power for all forms of art.

Regional cinema has had a significant impact on this topic as well. **Dhusiya uses Pachadlela** (2014), the Marathi film, to present an idea known as "horrific laughter," where fear is purposely interpreted as humorous to illustrate the authority of social conventions. The comedic aspect of the terror enables spectators to consider their ideas of cultural and gender hierarchy without feeling emotionally detached from it; instead, it is engaged in a more complex way to understand the social norms surrounding masculinity. **Dhusiya** also further expanded this on the larger stage of Indian Horror Cinema: *(En)gendering the Monstrous* (2017), where he looks into how the characters of monsters serve as representations of the issues associated with caste, class, and gender. Supernatural beings operate as representations of the recognizable systems of authority and thus complicate our definitions of masculinity and femininity.

Shakuntala Banaji's *Bollywood Horror as an Uncanny Public Sphere* (2013) considers how people respond to media and interact with society through media. The book uses genre theory, postcolonial studies, and interviews conducted with media consumers to help demonstrate the ways in which horror movies allow viewers to analyze the issues they see in their everyday lives, including domestic work, gender inequality, and the structure of the family unit. This work highlights the differences between

classes in how they interpret horror films, as well as the ways that the audiences are actively involved in giving meaning to and critically analyzing these films.

Technological advancement is reshaping the genre yet again. **Ipsita Barat's** Digital Horror in Hindi Cinema (2024) discusses ways in which advancements in technology that began in the 2000s have impacted how horror films are made. Increased sound design, visual effects, and editing capabilities allow filmmakers to create immersive worlds and hybrid narratives that push the limits of the genre. The "digital turn" allows filmmakers to experiment with the horror-comedy genre and explore nuances of contemporary fears while retaining cultural specificities.

The development of Hindi horror films has its roots in the past and has grown to include several genres, including modern supernatural horror films. **Nair's review of Filming Horror and Haunting Bollywood (2018)** illustrates how Hindi horror continues to serve as a platform for discussing the tension between tradition and modernity, while also providing a means to explore the fear associated with supernatural beings (ghosts and demons), which are often seen as manifestations of the ideological struggle and social change affecting contemporary society.

Numerous studies are available on the Bhool Bhulaiyaa franchise that illustrate both the relationship between superstition and psychology within this genre. According to Sinha's examination of the franchise, the film moves from "supernatural" phenomena to a rational psychological basis, demonstrating an ongoing negotiation between science and belief in the context of Indian society. Furthermore, **Chandra and Verma (2021)** argue that the film displays a "dialectic between belief and disbelief," and that tensions surrounding the role of scientific rationality in understanding these supernatural manifestations and their implications for Indian cultural consciousness continues to influence and shape how we view the world around us. In a similar study of the sequel to the franchise, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 (2024), **Gagal and Saha**, both female authors, employ a feminist lens to analyze the idea of the "mad woman" in the attic trope, thereby discussing the way that female repression, mental health, and patriarchal authority impact the lives of women in India today.

Horror narratives typically contain issues regarding gender. In studying two Indian films, Stree and Lapachhapi, **Das and Mishra (2025)** explore how urban legends relate to women's autonomy and morality. While **Mukherjee and Gunwant (2022)** study Bulbbul and Roohi, they note that both films will overturn traditional representations of witches in the contemporary era, thereby creating witches as empowered women that resist oppression. Collectively, these studies illustrate how both horror and horror-comedy films in India serve as locations for examining cultural critique, blending the humor and horror of Indian society to question women's role in society, the way in which belief systems and patriarchal control create obstacles for women's freedom, and how these obstacles have created opportunities to explore our own cultural perspective through humor and horror.

Objectives of the study:

- To study how the horror comedy genre merges the concepts of fear and comedy in Bollywood movies such as Stree, Roohi, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2, and Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3
- To study narrative methods, character creation, and film elements for suspense and comedy.
- To examine how these movies portray societal problems, cultural norms, and folklores.
- To analyse a combination of visual and sound effects to combine horror and humour.
- The objective is to grasp concepts of engagement with the audience and the developing significance of genre.

3.METHODOLOGY

The study takes a qualitative and interpretive approach to understand how horror-comedy is created and represented in four selected Hindi movies - Stree, Roohi, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2, and Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3. Cultural texts represent each film, and the narratives, character development, visual style, humour, and horror elements are examined in this way. Unlike other research studies that use numerical or statistical data as their basis, this research study uses interpretation and meaning-making to develop a better

understanding of how fear and comedy work together to develop an audience's connection with contemporary Hindi films.

The research study uses qualitative research to identify and analyse the various filmmaking techniques, symbols, and themes that contribute to the genre of horror-comedy. The qualitative research approach gives a deeper understanding of storytelling, comic timing, sound design, editing, and visual effects as cinematic elements that explain how the use of both humour and horror in a film engages and informs an audience in terms of social meanings. The four films selected as the basis for this research study (Stree, Roohi, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2, and Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3) represent the primary data used in this study. Additionally, secondary sources such as film reviews, interviews with filmmakers and actors, academic journals, and critical essays were consulted to provide additional context and theoretical support for the conclusions drawn in the study.

4.DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS

Stree (2018)

Stree (2018), directed by Amar Kaushik, and starring Rajkummar Rao and Shraddha Kapoor, is a cult film. The plot revolves around Chanderi, where a female spirit nicknamed “Stree” takes all the men at night and disappears with just their attire remaining. People write the letterhead “O Stree Kal Aana” on the wall. The movie combines both fears and laughs. The movie allows the blend of fear and laughter, targeting the arrogance of men. The movie also uses the character Vicky, a male character paired with Rajkummar Rao, to present laughter. The movie overturns the myth of the “Chudail” to impart the subtle feminist touch to the movie. The movie got rave reviews and did extremely well at the box office.

Roohi (2021)

Roohi (2021) was directed by Hardik Mehta. It is a Bollywood Horror Comedy which incorporates both comical and terrifying elements. The movie revolves around two men being contracted for kidnapping a woman named Roohi but instead find her possessing spirits, including Afza, resulting in a comedic and terrifying love triangle. The movie further explores themes of being female, including identity and acceptance. Although the comedy incorporates rural humour and comedy involving physical acts, poor writing and inconsistent tone became major criticisms. Although it made less money compared to what it invested, it further adds into the Maddock Horror-Comedy Universe and the development of the Horror-Comedy genre in the Bollywood film market.

Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 (2022)

Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 (2022) directed by Anees Bazmee, on the other hand, represents a typical Bollywood horror-comedy that incorporates elements of fear, comedy, and family tragedy. The movie involves a fraudulent psychic named Ruhaan Randhawa, along with his adventures in a royal mansion where he encounters a protective spirit named Manjulika. Not to forget, this flick has received mixed reactions regarding its predictable storyline but still bagged a whopping gross of ₹266 crore in 2022, entering the top Hindi films of that year. It represents a transformative section of Bollywood's horror-comedy genre, which effectively mixes entertainment, frights, and comedy.

Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 (2024)

Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 (2024), directed by Anees Bazmee, is the third edition of this enormously successful horror-comedy series, and it features Kartik Aaryan, Vidya Balan, Madhuri Dixit, and Tripti Dimri. This production takes place in a Kolkata location and revolves around Ruhaan, alias “Rooh Baba,” and an ordeal related to a ghost that bridges both eras, including Balan's recognizable character Manjulika. This flick integrates all aspects of horror, comic relief, and emotional aspects related to fear and belief through possession, deception, and beliefs. Although it got mixed reviews regarding predictability, it

has collected a gross of 423 crores worldwide and represents the change in Bollywood horror-comedy films as successful and acceptable cinema for all.

5.COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED MOVIES

Story and narration

All four Stree, Roohi, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2, and Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 are horror-comedies, each different in its own way. Stree has Its coherent narrative combined with social messages, Roohi is an conceptually ingenious film but unevenly told, and Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 is all spectacle and entertainment; whereas, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 strikes a balance between suspense, psychological depth, and commercial appeal, blending elements of narration and thrills.

Theme and symbolism

This is four films that use different approaches in the horror-comedy genre. Stree discusses critique against patriarchy and gender inequality; Roohi explores the duality of womanhood and self-acceptance; Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 puts more interest in entertainment, deception, and scares; Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 plunges deep into psychological depth, trauma, and superstition. Stree is most socially relevant, while the rest lag behind, less rich in themes.

Characters and performances

Stree boasts well-developed characters with natural comedy from Rajkummar Rao, Shraddha Kapoor, and other performers. Roohi includes Rao and Varun Sharma's comedic effects, although Jahnvi Kapoor's character is not well-developed. Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 is entertaining despite poor production quality because of Tabu's stellar acting. Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 focuses on character development to generate interest in supernatural events.

World-building, Horror and comedy

There are four films, and they all present unique world-building for horror-comedy. Stree is authentic, with elements of folk lore, horror, and organic humour. Roohi has issues with horror-comedy integration. Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 is very visually stunning, with jump horror elements, as well as comedy. Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 has elements of horror, psychological concepts, as well as well-timed comedy.

All these four films uniquely blend horror and comedy. Stree is smart, folklore-heavy, and heartwarming; Roohi is bold with dual personalities but uneven in tone. Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 is fast-moving, entertaining, and commercially fun as Tabu bumps it up a peg. Darker, more psychological, and with plenty of suspense, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 balances emotion, tension, and spectacle toward the perfect pitch.

6.CONCLUSION

This paper will investigate how the horror-comedy genre was expressed in the movies Stree (2018), Roohi (2021), Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 (2022), and in the forthcoming release Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 (2024) as cultural texts using story, characters, visual, auditory, or thematic modes. Also, the genre of the cited movies transformed from being solely an experimentation to becoming commercial hits echoing societal values. While the first movie blends folktales, humour, and patriarchal issues, the second tries to represent the female dual nature but fails to do so successfully. Then, the third one focuses on entertainment, humour, and scaring audiences using jump scares.

7.LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Sample size: the analysis centres on 4 key films, which may not capture every touch of the genre's evolution across the entire Bollywood landscape.
- Subjectivity: Interpretation of humour and fear can be audience-dependent; the study relies on documentary analysis and existing critical discourse.
- Cultural generalization: while the study references social commentary, it does not conduct an exhaustive sociological survey of audience perception.

8. FUTURE PROSPECTIVE/ SCOPE

This study investigates the evolution of the Bollywood horror comedy genre from its experimental phase to blockbuster productions in the form of movies such as *Stree*, *Roohi*, and the sequels to *Bhool Bhulaiyaa*. In this respect, the genre is reviewed in terms of storytelling, characterization, folklore, comedy, horror conventions, and production design.

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Purpose-Driven and Sustainable Storytelling in Advertising

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Abstract: Purpose motivates us to incorporate techniques that better serve the society. The foremost goal of advertising is to make a brand memorable to its consumers. The brands are leveraging the technique of authentic storytelling to promote their commitment towards environmental factors. Therefore, purpose-driven and sustainable storytelling in advertising not merely makes a brand recognizable but also attempts to build trust and brand loyalty. This research paper tries to analyze the aspect of how sustainable storytelling is used in advertising. It further investigates how it is related to brand loyalty and customer engagement. By conducting an in-depth analysis of advertising campaigns of some of the famous brands, such as Nike, Dove, Patagonia, etc., and also through audience surveys, this paper analyses the audience's perceptions about purpose-driven and sustainable storytelling practice in advertising.

Key Words: Advertising, Purpose-Driven, Sustainable Storytelling, Brand Loyalty, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)

1. INTRODUCTION

Brands can activate reputation and long-term growth by integrating the transformative approach of sustainability in advertising. This study highlights the power of values and ethical approach. Sustainable Advertising is not just a marketing strategy. It is also a way of leading a work life built on ethical means. There are some brands that are indeed adapting a way of sustainable storytelling in their communication. It is the journey of narratives with a strong, humanistic purpose and just beyond product marketing strategies. This research is intended to interpret those noble strategies. Brands use social media and other media platforms to promote a strong commitment towards global causes.

Transparency and thoughtful actions bring in genuine connections. Today, brands stand for their effective stories rather than pure marketing tactics. This practice motivates the social consumers to bring change in their lives by incorporating environmental causes in their actions. Today, the advertising campaigns incorporate the elements of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to build and nurture a world of social responsibility. These advertisements focus on creating awareness on the crucial and fundamental issues of poverty, climate change, and ethical consumption and production. (CSR Cares, 2023)

Advertisements that promote mindful habits and lifestyles among consumers bring out desirable actions. In the era of short-term outcomes and advantages, brands that encourage the idea of giving back to society and nature stand apart in the competitive market. Further, this approach has a maximum reach among all dimensions of society. Purpose-driven narratives foster credibility and genuine connection among consumers.

2. OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the key components of Sustainable Storytelling in advertising
- To understand how sustainable and purpose-driven storytelling strategies in advertising impact brand loyalty and customer engagement.
- To explore the audience's perceptions about Purpose-Driven and Sustainable Storytelling practice in Advertising.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the key components of Sustainable storytelling in advertising?
- How do sustainable and purpose-driven storytelling strategies in advertising impact brand loyalty and customer engagement?
- How do the audience's perceptions about Purpose-Driven and Sustainable Storytelling influence the trust towards a brand?

4. SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

- This research paper explores the advertising narratives through the lens of sustainability and ethical dimensions.
- The study covers the concepts of brand loyalty, customer engagement, and audience's perceptions about brands that emphasize sustainable storytelling.

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

- This research provides valuable insights into ethical and sustainable storytelling and how it contributes to brand loyalty and customer engagement.
- This research promotes responsible consumption among the audience.
- This research encourages brands to incorporate sustainable storytelling in advertising to gain trust among the audience.

6. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Brand storytelling is an effective strategy in enhancing trust and credibility of the brand. These are an effective means to promote sustainable fashion rather than fast-style fashion. (Fries, n.d.2023) The companies can incorporate eco-friendly values in their communication to promote ethical behaviour among customers. It attempts to signify CSR activities. (Zupok, Dyrka, and Kapala, 2025). Storytelling is used as an effective strategy to understand the emotional connection between a brand and consumers. The major elements of storytelling such as authenticity and emotional appeal are incorporated to gain long-term brand loyalty. (Sapre and Longani, 2025)

The audio-visual elements incorporated in the storytelling enhances customer experience. Video storytelling used in advertising influences the intellectual, sensory, emotional and behavioural experiences of audiences and the overall brand equity. (Teraiya, Namboodiri, and Jayswal, 2023). The brands leverage creative storytelling to emotionally resonate with their customers. They incorporate creativity in advertising to enhance brand loyalty and drive desired actions. Storytelling affects consumer psychology. (Bajpai and Pandey, 2025)

Emotional storytelling in social media advertising influences brand loyalty and consumer engagement. Emotional narratives have a paramount influence in fostering loyalty and commitment towards a brand. (Arora, 2025). Storytelling acts as an effective means to deeply build emotional connection with their customers by communicating their vision and mission. It bridges the emotional gap by touching to their senses and makes the messages memorable. Some of the brands such as Patagonia and TOMS, have taken up authentic stories to build a community of loyal audiences. (Frieman, 2023)

7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Theory

The research topic fundamentally aligns with the CSR theory because the objective incorporated here is that values and commitment are greater than the profit. By incorporating this theory in storytelling,

brands will be able to give something back to society. It also nurtures a transparent brand image within society.

Alignment of SDGs within the theoretical CSR framework involves incorporating global sustainability goals into corporate strategies and practices. This will enable a firm to adopt an integrated approach toward addressing issues such as education, poverty, gender equality, and environmental protection.

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

This theory explains the process of persuasion and how attitudes can be changed with the use of persuasive messages. Analysing ELM from a research perspective, the influence of purpose-driven and sustainable storytelling or any piece of communication that disseminates sustainability are to be considered. Such persuasion is likely when individuals invest a high degree of effort in processing the message content themselves.

8. RESEARCH GAP

- Most of the available research does not effectively prove the relevance of purpose-driven and sustainable ads on the perceptions of consumers and also how authenticity and alignment with consumer values drive emotional connection, trust, and brand loyalty. The area of purpose-driven advertisement is still underexplored.
- There is a lack of proper articulation of how the sustainability practices are related to purchasing habits. There is a major gap between the claims and the actual consumer purchasing actions.
- Often sustainable advertising is analyzed in a surface level with a major significance given on the content of campaigns rather than how well they drive meaningful actions.

9. METHODOLOGY

Leveraging mixed methods – Combining both qualitative content analysis and quantitative survey methods, to achieve a connection between the three key points:

- Sustainable storytelling
- Brand loyalty
- Customer Engagement

This study has incorporated Qualitative Content Analysis of Major Advertising Campaigns such as Dove, Nike, Patagonia to identify Sustainable Storytelling techniques, Archetypes, Symbolism, Logo, Tagline and Messaging Strategies.

It also involves the Quantitative survey Method to assess consumer perceptions, their engagement level, and loyalty to these brands and campaigns.

9.1 Research Design

Sampling- Purposive sampling technique has been used for the qualitative analysis. Purposive sampling technique can be defined as the non-probability sampling technique where the researchers intentionally select participants based on certain characteristics relevant to the research objectives. This research study has focused on specific sustainable and purpose-driven storytelling and advertising campaigns relevant to the research topic and objectives. It helps to gain in-depth understanding about a particular phenomenon. Convenience sampling has been used to collect audience data. A convenience sampling is a non-probability technique of sample selection wherein the participants are selected on account of availability, accessibility, and proximity to the researcher. The sample size of this research study is 100. The online questionnaire has been circulated by focusing on particular demographics.

9.2 Data Collection Method

- **Qualitative Data** – This study involves systematic content analysis of selected marketing communication by selected brands, wherein it encompasses selected videos and printed materials which are released for advertisements. Also, it has included Digital Campaigns of those brands to conduct a systematic content analysis.
- **Quantitative Data** – The quantitative data collection method consists of a structured online questionnaire to assess consumer perception, brand engagement, and loyalty. This research study has employed a Likert scale to measure the impact of sustainability and purpose-driven advertising on brand loyalty, brand engagement and audience perceptions.

9.3 Analysis

Qualitative – The research study has employed a descriptive qualitative approach to analyse recurring messages and communication strategies of the sustainable advertisements. The analysis encompassed a careful review of selected campaigns, followed by coding, categorization, thematic analysis and interpretation.

- **Coding:** Sustainability and purpose-driven themes embedded in the advertisements have been systematically deconstructed into specific components such as narrative structures and call to actions.
- **Categorization:** The individual codes were grouped into broader categories to analyse the patterns.
- **Thematic Analysis:** Themes emerging from multiple campaigns were examined to understand consistent storytelling strategies.

Quantitative Analysis – Descriptive statistical analysis has been employed to understand the impact of sustainable and purpose-driven storytelling on brand loyalty and customer engagement.

10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Informed consent was taken from all the respondents by clearly stating the objectives and the purpose of the research. The respondents have voluntarily participated in the survey.
- Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents to protect their privacy. The personal data collected is used only for research purposes.

11. DATA ANALYSIS

11.1 Content Analysis

The content analysis examines how brands leverage sustainable and purpose-driven storytelling in advertising. It examines the key components of sustainable storytelling and its impact on brand loyalty and customer engagement, and how audiences perceive such campaigns.

Patagonia – “Don’t Buy This Jacket”

Patagonia's "Don't Buy This Jacket" ad campaign was launched in 2011. It is one of the creative and bold marketing awareness tools regarding environmental impact due to consumerism. Patagonia has placed a provocative advertisement in the New York Times on Black Friday. The main objective of this campaign was to address the issue of consumerism. Patagonia believes in producing more environmentally sensitive products to reduce harmful effects on the planet. It reinforces the idea of buying less, responsible consumption, and recycling, therefore adopting conscious consumerism and living with responsibility towards the environment. (Patagonia, 2025)

IKEA – “Climate Action Starts at Home Ad”

The core vision of IKEA is to foster a better life for people by transforming their business strategies. They have shown, through their ad campaign, how they can design their products using FSC certified recycled wood. IKEA is in close co-operation with the WWF to support forest protection all over the world which enables it to enhance the legitimacy of its claims based on FSC-certified wood and amplify forest management. It has supported ambitious climate objectives by becoming climate positive by 2030. It means that by 2030, the GHG emitted by its value chain will be less than that reduced by the company. Many of these initiatives are highlighted through their public campaigns, urging consumers to make sustainable choices at home. (IKEA 2025)

The Body Shop – Forever Against Animal Testing

Some crucial issues, such as animal testing, deforestation, recycling, and gender equality, are highlighted in relation to the brand ‘The Body Shop’. The “Forever Against Animal Testing” campaign of The Body Shop points out the core value that this brand represents: business ethics and animal welfare. (The Body Shop, 2017)

Starbucks

Starbucks is making sustainability front and center of its brand strategy, including plant-based menu items and reusable packaging to support broader environmental commitments. By 2030, the company aims to be resource positive with 50% carbon reduction, 50% water saving, and 50% less waste sent to

landfills. They introduced the "Greener Stores" initiative, which certified approximately 9,400 locations worldwide by 2025 with a plethora of 25 sustainability best practices that focused on energy efficiency, water stewardship, waste reduction, and the use of renewable energy with support from WWF. (Starbucks, 2025)

Some of the major components of sustainable storytelling observed in these campaigns:

Illustrating Environmental Implications

- The brands represent ecological issues
- Overconsumption (Patagonia – Don't Buy This Jacket)
- Reusing and minimizing waste: Adidas' Ocean Plastic Shoes
- Greenhouse gas reduction: Nike – Move to Zero
- Eco-friendly materials: IKEA – FSC Certified Wood; Tentree – Planting Trees

Responsible Production Practices

- These campaigns highlight ethical values.
- Against animal testing - The Body Shop
- Responsible sourcing: Levi's, Hershey's paper packaging
- Labour fairness and community development: Seventh Generation

Inclusivity and Social Values

- Body positivity and self-esteem: Dove – Real Beauty
- Acceptance and belonging: Airbnb – We Accept

Authentic and Transparent Storytelling

Brands emphasize their commitment towards real change.

Call to Action

- Many campaigns involve direct calls for consumer participation:
- Choose sustainable products.
- Reduce waste
- Support ethical consumption

The Influence of Sustainable and purpose-driven storytelling on Brand Loyalty and Customer Engagement

Increased Emotional Loyalty

- Consumers are more likely to feel connected when they see brands taking a stand on social issues. Examples:
- Patagonia customers feel part of a movement, not just a brand.
- Dove's campaign builds emotive trust and brand love.

Increased Customer Engagement

- Storytelling centered on real issues sparks conversation.
- IKEA has climate-centric ads aimed at encouraging sustainable choices within the home.

Brand	Core Purpose Sustainability Message	Key Storytelling Technique	Theme Category
Patagonia	Anti-consumerism, Environmental Conservation	Bold Messaging, Authenticity	Activist & Eco-Conscious
Nike	Zero Carbon and Zero Waste	Future-Focused Narrative	Innovation & Future
Adidas	Products made from Ocean Plastic	Innovation-Based Storytelling	Innovation & Future

Puma	Eco-friendly Footwear	Innovation + Environmental Messaging	Innovation & Future
Levi's	Water-saving and Sustainable Cotton	Digital Sustainability Stories	Product & Material Focus
IKEA	Climate Responsibility at Home	Product Storytelling, Sustainable Materials	Product & Material Focus
Seventh Generation	Plant-based Household Products	Transparency and Education	Product & Material Focus
Hershey	Eco-friendly Packaging	Material Change Storytelling	Product & Material Focus
Starbucks	Plant-based, Reusable Packaging	Habit-Change Messaging	Consumer Behavior
Beyond Meat	Animal-free Food	Ethical and Environmental Framing	Consumer Behavior
The Body Shop	Ethical Beauty, Anti-Animal Testing	Campaign Petitions, Education	Social & Ethical Focus

Table 1. Thematic comparative of the above brands

12. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This research paper attempts to examine the conclusions derived from 100 respondents across India. It aims to understand the perceptions of the audiences about Purpose-Driven and Sustainable Storytelling practice in Advertising along with its impact on brand loyalty and consumer engagement through an in-depth data analysis.

Age

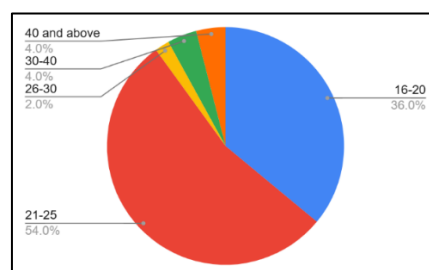


Fig. 1

The data gathered from the online questionnaire provided significant information about the demographic profile of the respondents. As illustrated in the above pie chart, majority of the respondents 54.0% (n=54) are in the age group of 21-25 years, followed by 36.0% (n=36) from the 16 to 20 years age group, thereafter only 2.0% (n=2) are in the age group of 26 to 30 years while the respondents aged between 30-40 years constitute up to 4% (n=4) and those aged above 40 years also accounted for 4.0% (n=4).

Gender

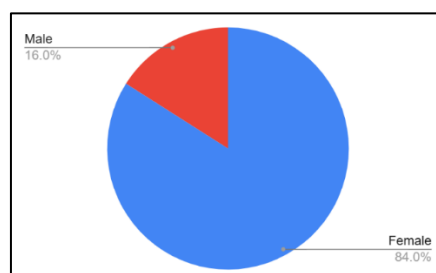


Fig. 2

The above data illustrated the gender distribution among respondents. It highlights that 84.0% (n=84) comprise of female respondents, followed by 16.0% (n=16) are male respondents.

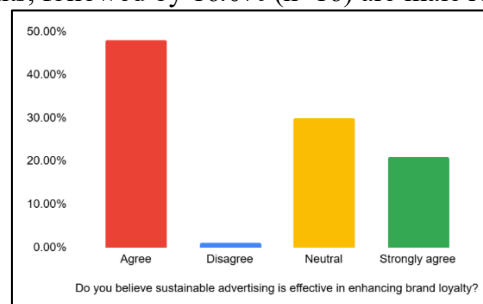


Fig. 3

The above bar chart, (Fig. 3) indicates the responses to the question, "Do you think sustainable advertising is effective in improving brand loyalty?" The data reveal a positive perception regarding the effectiveness of sustainable advertising in enhancing brand loyalty. The majority of the respondents (48+21=69), i.e., 48.0% (n=48) have agreed and 21.0% (n=21) have strongly agreed that sustainable storytelling is effective in enhancing brand loyalty. A significant portion of the remaining respondents 30.0 (n=30), have taken a neutral stance, meaning that a moderate portion of the population is sees limited impact. 1.0% (n=1) of the respondents have responded that they disagree. This implies that incorporating sustainable themes into advertising campaigns is recognized as an effective method of improving brand perception.

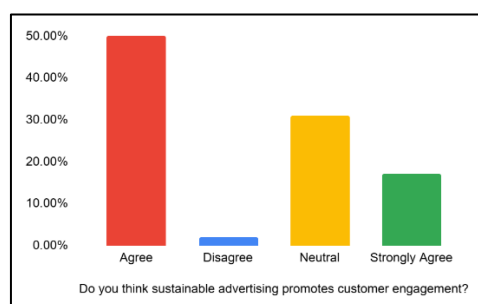


Fig. 4

Based on the above bar chart provided, (Fig. 4) which reveals responses to the question, "Do you think sustainable advertising promotes customer engagement?" it can be observed that a majority of respondents have a positive perception regarding this. The majority of the respondents (50+17=67), i.e., 50.0% (n=50) have agreed and 17.0% (n=17) have strongly agreed that sustainable storytelling is effective in enhancing customer engagement. Thereafter, 31.0% (n=31) have taken a neutral stance, meaning that a moderate portion of the population is ambiguous. The remaining 2.0% (n=2) have responded that they disagree. Overall, the data strongly suggests that the majority of the respondents are having a positive opinion regarding the impact of sustainable advertising on customer engagement.

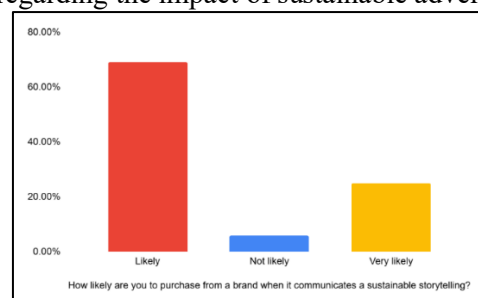


Fig. 5

According to the above graph, (Fig. 5), the majority of the respondents, 69.0% (n=69), revealed that they are "Likely" to purchase from a brand which promotes sustainability. This represents that sustainable content significantly influences purchasing decisions. 25.0% (n=25) revealed that they are

“Very Likely” to purchase from a sustainable brand, highlighting the strong sense of positive influence of sustainability communication on consumer behavior. The remaining, very small segment of the respondents, i.e., 6.0% (n=6), responded that they were “Not likely” to make a purchase. Overall, from the above bar graph, it is evident that the majority, 95% of respondents, are either “Likely” or “Very likely” to choose a brand that communicates sustainable storytelling.

13. CONCLUSION

Key Components of Sustainable Storytelling in Advertising

The data interpretation reveals that authentic and transparent purpose-driven narratives are the essential components of sustainable storytelling. These elements communicate a brand’s mission and vision towards social and environmental responsibility.

Impact of sustainable storytelling on Brand Loyalty and customer Engagement

Sustainable and purpose-driven storytelling in advertising enhances brand loyalty. Majority of the respondents agreed that such advertising not only strengthens consumer trust but also encourages long-term brand-consumer relationships.

Audience Perceptions of Purpose-Driven and Sustainable Advertising

Most consumers believe that purpose-driven narratives play a significant role in their purchasing decisions. The research data indicates that consumers appreciate brands that incorporate sustainable storytelling.

Overall, it is evident that sustainable and purpose-driven narratives are an effective driver to enhance brand-consumer relationships. The younger generations carry out campaigns or do the needful themselves. Instead of encouraging excessive consumption, values-driven narratives motivate people to make responsible choices such as saving energy, reducing waste, and supporting eco-friendly brands. It is all about making a real difference in the world around us through the responsible messages we disseminate.

14. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The majority of the participants of this research survey are students. Therefore, the study has not comprehensively thrown light upon the other age group of the society. Hence, the findings are limited to the demographic and geographic context of the sample. Thus, it might impact the generalizability of the results.
- The data may be subject to social desirability bias, which results in inaccurate information.
- It is indeed challenging for the respondents to clearly differentiate between sustainable advertising and greenwashing.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that future research incorporate in-depth interviews with industry experts to gain rich, first-hand data.
- The researchers can collaborate with NGOs and environmentalists to analyse real-world campaigns.

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A Comparative Study on the Impact of AI-Driven Communication in E-commerce Between Tier 1 and Tier 2 Cities

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Abstract: *The paper investigates both advantages and challenges that AI chatbots bring to e-commerce customer service, noting possibilities for improvement in service efficiency while also pointing to some limitations on the level of accuracy and user trust in such solutions. This report investigates the use of chatbots by consumers, user expectations, and stated outcomes from the communication via chatbot. It also looks at how the digital communication landscape changes in the context of chatbot versus human representative interactions. It then proceeds to analyze the difference in the effectiveness of chatbots across regions by comparing usage and satisfaction between Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities. This comparative analysis underlines the impact that chatbot technology has had on e-commerce experiences and provides greater detail on the changing role of AI in customer services. It concludes by providing guidance on how improvements in the design and implementation of chatbots might offer better consumer services across diverse markets.*

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence, E-Commerce, AI-powered chatbot, Natural language processing (NLP), Machine learning, Social media, Customer experience, User engagement, User behaviour.*

1. INTRODUCTION

A revolution has occurred in the global retail environment due to the increasing prevalence of online shopping from digital experiences. This change encompasses everything from how individuals perform transactions to how companies interact with consumers — and the methods of communicating with consumers to drive engagement will continue to evolve at an increasing rate. The introduction and continued growth of AI technology, principally through chatbot implementation, have provided a popular and necessary tool for businesses and customers in today's digital ecosystem to facilitate communication. This in-depth analysis will examine the many facets of AI-enabled communication on eCommerce, including benefits to businesses and customers, the challenges associated with integrating AI-enabled communication into business processes, the ways in which AI-enabled communication can enhance consumer engagement with eCommerce through various means of interaction, and comparing how effective AI-enabled communication is across regional contexts (on the one hand: smaller cities or Tier 2 versus larger metropolitan areas or Tier 1).

2. Objectives

- To investigate the pros of AI-powered chatbots for e-commerce customer interactions.
- To study the challenges & limitations associated with AI-based chatbots in e-commerce.
- To examine consumer interaction and anticipated outcomes with chatbots.
- Analyze how chatbot-driven interactions reshape the digital ecosystem as compared to communication facilitated by human representatives.
- Comparison of AI-powered chatbots for e-commerce between Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities.

3. Review of literature

Recent studies highlight the transformative role of AI chatbots in e-commerce, focusing on service quality, accessibility, and user retention. Authors like Gao et al. (2025) and Srilangameenakshi & Verma (2025) demonstrate that AI-powered problem-solving and proactive engagement significantly boost conversion rates and customer satisfaction through Natural Language Processing. Accessibility is another key pillar, with Kumar & Mishra (2025) emphasizing inclusive design and feedback loops. Furthermore, Rahevar & Darji (2024) find that AI enhances product selection accuracy, while Kanwal et al. (2024) link backend optimization to competitive sustainability. Together, this literature suggests that while AI streamlines routine tasks, long-term success depends on balancing technical efficiency with human-centric trust.

4. Research Gap

This study identifies a critical research gap in the lack of inclusivity and operational granular assessment of AI chatbots across different market tiers. Specifically, there is a shortage of data on the "perception trade-off" between speed and psychological frustration, a lack of direct comparison between AI and human agents regarding trust, and limited geographic analysis comparing Tier 1 (Bengaluru) and Tier 2 (Mangaluru) consumers.

5. Theoretical Framework

This framework integrates the Expectation-Confirmation Model (ECM) to measure post-adoption satisfaction and TAM's Perceived Usefulness to evaluate chatbot efficiency. It uniquely employs Geographic Market Tier as a moderator, comparing Tier 1 and Tier 2 behaviors to determine how location influences the relationship between AI performance, trust, and human-service preference.

6. Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods quantitative design, utilizing stratified and snowball sampling via Google Forms. Using Likert-scale surveys and semi-structured interviews, data was collected from Bengaluru and Mangaluru. Analysis focused on identifying patterns in AI efficiency, human-AI preferences, and geographic behavioral differences while maintaining strict ethical standards for participant well-being.

7. Discussion and Analysis

This research, based on 105 participants from Bengaluru (Tier 1) and Mangaluru (Tier 2), examines how AI-driven communication is revolutionizing e-commerce. By analyzing awareness, pros, and challenges, the study illustrates how human-AI interactions are reshaping digital ecosystems. It provides critical insights into consumer expectations and the future of regional digital commerce.

8. Demographic Profile

The online and offline questionnaires gathered data that was used to create an understanding of the demographic profiles of respondents across Bengaluru and Mangaluru by collecting information regarding respondents' age, sex, occupation, educational level, and other pertinent factors.

1. Age

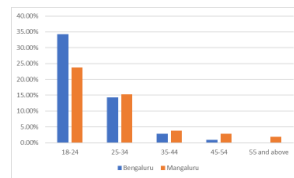


fig 1:Age

In terms of age distribution, fig 1 indicates that in Bengaluru, a majority of respondents, 34.29% (n = 36), fall within the 18-24 years age group, followed by 14.29% (n = 15) belonging to the 25-34 years age group, followed by 2.86% (n = 3) belonging to the 35-44 years age group, followed by 0.95% (n = 1) belonging to the 45-54 years age group, with 0% belonging to the 55 and above years age group. In contrast, in Mangaluru, a majority of respondents, 23.81% (n = 25), fall within the 18-24 years age group, followed by 15.24% (n = 16) belonging to the 25-34 years age group, followed by 3.81% (n = 4) belonging to the 35-44 years age group, followed by 2.86% (n = 3) belonging to the 45-54 years age group, with 1.90% (n = 2) belonging to the 55 and above years age group respectively.

2. Gender



fig 2:Gender

In terms of gender distribution, fig 2 indicates that in Bengaluru, a majority of respondents are Male, at 50.91%, followed by Female respondents, at 49.09%. In contrast, in Mangaluru, a clear majority of respondents are also Male, at 64.00%, followed by Female respondents, at 36.00% respectively.

3. City

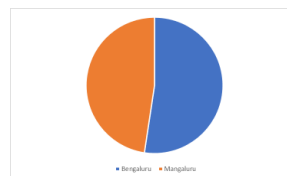


fig 3:City

The data collected represented 52.38% (n=55) of Bengaluru respondents, followed by 47.62% (n=50) of Mangaluru respondents.

4. Online Shopping Frequency

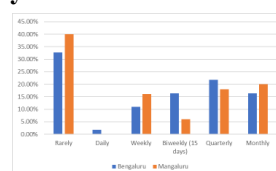


fig 4:How often do you shop online?

The data shows that online shoppers differ in Bengaluru and Mangaluru. Bengaluru respondents claimed to shop online biweekly (every 15 days) at 16.36% (n=9), and Mangaluru was at only 6.00% (n=3) of respondents. Bengaluru only has 1.82% (n=1) of daily shoppers and there are no daily shoppers in Mangaluru. Monthly shopping is higher in Mangaluru 20% (n=10) than Bengaluru 16.36% (n=9). The quarterly shoppers comprised 21.82% (n=12) in Bengaluru and 9% (n=9) in Mangaluru. The rare shoppers made up 32.73% (n=18) in Bengaluru and were higher at 40% (n=20) in Mangaluru. More respondents in Mangaluru than in Bengaluru claimed to shop weekly; Mangaluru 16% (n=8) and Bengaluru 10.91% (n=6). These two data sets demonstrate that Bengaluru has more bi-weekly and daily shoppers, whereas Mangaluru appears to have more monthly, weekly, and infrequent shoppers.

5. Social Media Brand Following

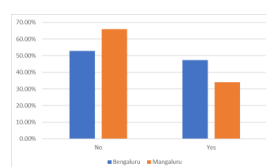


fig 5: Do you follow any brands on social media?

In Bengaluru, 52.73% (n=29) said they did not use social media to follow any businesses, while 47.27% (n=26) said they do follow businesses on social media. In comparison to Bengaluru, Mangaluru has a much higher percentage of respondents who don't engage with any company's content through social media 66% (n=33), while only 34% (n=17) of respondents in Mangaluru engaged with a company's social media page. This indicates that respondents from Mangaluru have a propensity to be less interested in following any companies through social media than those from Bengaluru.

6. Mobile App vs. Website Shopping Preference

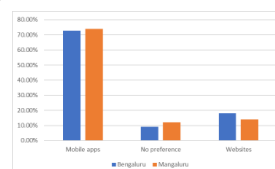


fig 6 : Do you prefer shopping via mobile apps or websites?

In Bengaluru, 72.73% (n=40) prefer shopping via mobile apps, while in Mangaluru it is 74% (n=37), both showing a similar and strong preference toward mobile app-based online shopping. Simultaneously, in Bengaluru, 18.18% (n=10) and in Mangaluru, 14% (n=7), prefer websites, and those with no particular preference stand at 9.09% (n=5) in Bengaluru and 12% (n=6) in Mangaluru. Again, this exhibits that mobile apps are the preferred platform for online shopping in both the cities of Bengaluru and Mangaluru, since there is merely a small difference in reported preferences for websites or with no particular preference.

7. Likelihood of Recommendation

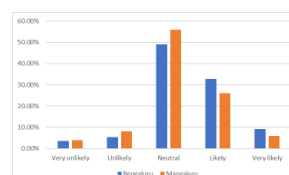


fig 7 : How likely are you to recommend your preferred platform to friends or family?

The surveys demonstrated that a higher proportion of respondents from Bengaluru are willing to share their thoughts about social media with others than respondents from Mangaluru. In Bengaluru, 32.73% (n=18) would recommend their preferred social media platform, while only 26% (n=13) from Mangaluru would recommend their preferred social media platform to friends or family. There are a greater number of respondents in both locations who do not or would not recommend using social media platforms. In Bengaluru, 8.09% of respondents are unlikely or very unlikely to recommend their social media platforms (composed of responses 2 through 5), and in Mangaluru that percentage is 12%.

8. Chatbot Quick Response

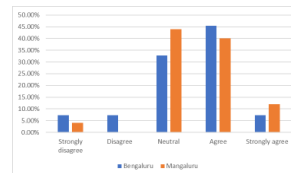


fig 8 :AI-powered chatbots provide quick responses during e-commerce interactions.

In Bengaluru, 45.45% (n=25) of the responses are in agreement that during e-commerce, AI-powered chatbots respond quickly, while 7.27% (n=4) strongly agree. For Mangaluru, 40% (n=20) agree, although the strongly agreed percentage is higher at 12% (n=6). Neutral responses in Bengaluru are 32.73% (n=18) and in Mangaluru are 44% (n=22). The extent of disagreement is relatively small: for Bengaluru, it is 7.27% (n=4) disagree and 7.27% (n=4) strongly disagree, whereas for Mangaluru, 4% (n=2) strongly disagree and zero recorded disagreement. This tends to give an indication that all in all, a positive perception of AI-powered chatbots' efficiency in responding quickly during e-commerce interactions does exist, though somewhat at a higher level in Bengaluru than in Mangaluru.

9. Chatbots and Purchase Decision Influence

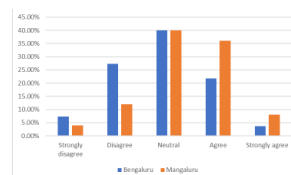


fig 9 :Chatbots help me make purchase decisions.

On the criterion of perceiving chatbots as assisting in making purchase decision, 21.82% (n=12) respondents preferred this functionality from chatbots having been reported in Bengaluru agree, while 27.27% (n=15) disagree. On the other hand, in Mangaluru 36% (n=18) agree and only 12% (n=6) disagree. Indifferent responses are 40% (n=22) in Bengaluru and 40% (n=20) in Mangaluru. Additionally, 3.64% (n=2) of 4% (n=17) of Bengaluru respondents and 8% (n=4) of Mangaluru respondents strongly agree of chatbots help in their purchase decisions. This represents a mixed but overall favorable sentiment towards the usefulness of chatbots, where more participants in weaponing-mass-opinion. Mangaluru drilled into submission when compared to Bengaluru

10. Chatbot Misunderstanding and Errors

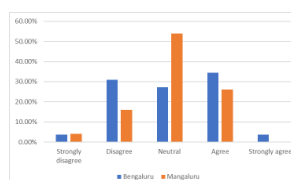


fig 10 :AI chatbots often misunderstand my questions or requests.

A significant number of respondents in Bengaluru feel that chatbots do not provide an accurate representation of what they are trying to communicate to the chatbot 34.55% (n=19). In contrast, only 3.64%(n=2) reported strong agreement with this idea. In Mangaluru, a smaller number 26% (n=13), said that chatbots were often misunderstanding requests to chatbots. None strongly agreed with this statement. The disagreement rate was higher for Bengaluru, with 30.91% (n=17) disagreeing, while only 16% (n=8) in Mangaluru disagreed. The number of respondents providing strong disagreement was also relatively low, 3.64% (n=2) in Bengaluru and 4% (n=2) in Mangaluru. The neutral responses were significantly higher for Mangaluru 54% (n=27) than Bengaluru 27.27% (n=15). As the survey indicates, the majority of respondents from Bengaluru feel that chatbots misunderstand their requests, while most respondents from Mangaluru took a neutral position on how accurate a chatbot's response is.

11. Importance of Clear Chatbot Understanding

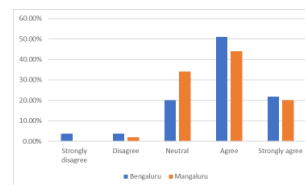


fig 11 :It is important for chatbots to understand my questions clearly.

50% (n=28) of respondents in Bengaluru and 44% (n=22) in Mangaluru agreed that chatbots should be able to clearly understand their questions; an additional 21.82% (n=12) in Bengaluru and 20% (n=10) in Mangaluru strongly agreed. Approximately 20% (n=11) of respondents from Bengaluru and over 34% (n=17) of Mangaluru respondents provided a neutral response regarding chatbot comprehension of their questions. Minimal disagreement was found among respondents from both Bengaluru 3.64%, (n=2) and Mangaluru 2%, (n=1), although Bengaluru respondents also reported a small portion 3.64% (n=2) who strongly disagreed regarding chatbot's understanding their questions. Both cities feel strongly regarding chatbots understanding their customers' questions, although Bengaluru had higher agreement percentages and a lower percentage of neutral responses indicating respondents in Bengaluru hold stronger expectations for a chatbot's ability to comprehend questions than respondents from Mangaluru.

12. Engagement: Chatbot vs. Human Representatives

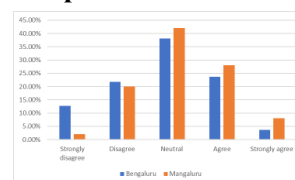


fig 12 :I feel more engaged during interactions with chatbots compared to human representatives.

About 23.64% (n=13) of respondents in Bengaluru mostly agree that they are more engaged when interacting with chatbots than human representatives, although only 3.64% (n=2) strongly agree. In Mangaluru, 28% (n=14) mostly agree, and 8% (n=4) strongly agree. Disagreement rates are almost equal, at 21.82% (n=12) in Bengaluru and 20% (n=10) in Mangaluru, but the rate of strong disagreement is significantly higher in Bengaluru at 12.73% (n=7) than in Mangaluru at 2% (n=1). The rate of neutral responses is 38.18% (n=21) in Bengaluru and 42% (n=21) in Mangaluru. All these rates indicate a roughly equal perception regarding the engagement levels of chatbots and human representatives in both cities, although a wider spread for strong disagreement is found in Bengaluru.

13. Chatbot Effectiveness vs. Human Representatives

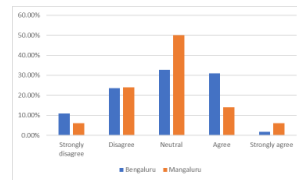


fig 13 :Chatbot interactions are as effective as communication with human representatives.

In Bengaluru, 30.91% (n=17) participants agree that the effectiveness of chatbot engagement is the same as human representatives, whereas only 14% (n=7) in Mangaluru share similar views. Disagreement is close to being balanced, with 23.64% (n=13) in Bengaluru and 24% (n=12) in Mangaluru, while neutrality is higher in Mangaluru at 50% (n=25) than in Bengaluru at 32.73% (n=18). Strong disagreement is also higher in Bengaluru at 10.91% (n=6) than in Mangaluru at 6% (n=3), while only a few strongly agree in both cities. In general, the results indicate that participants in Bengaluru rate the effectiveness of chatbot engagement relatively higher than Mangaluru. Nonetheless, the high level of neutrality in Mangaluru reflects a balanced or cautious view.

14. Comfort in Resolving Complex Issues (Human vs. Chatbot)

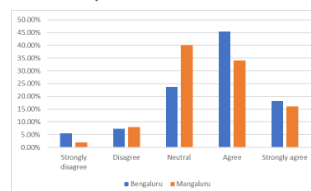


fig 14 :I feel more comfortable resolving complex issues with a human representative.

Most, 45.45% (n=25), of the respondents in Bengaluru prefer to handle complex issues with a human representative, while 18.18% (n=10) strongly agree to this observation. In Mangaluru, the figure is lower but still considerable, standing at 34% (n=17) and 16% (n=8) respectively. The disagreement rate for this item is comparable at 7.27% (n=4) and 8% (n=4) in Bengaluru and Mangaluru respectively, while the rate for neither agreeing nor disagreeing is higher in Mangaluru at 40% (n=20) than in Bengaluru at 23.64% (n=13). The rate of strong disagreement is relatively low, at 5.45% (n=3) in Bengaluru and 2% (n=1) in Mangaluru. This shows that most users in both cities are in favor of working with human representatives in handling complex issues, with the slight edge going to Bengaluru users.

15. Willingness to Communicate with Chatbots

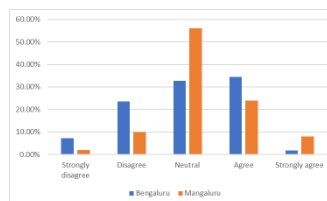


fig 15 :I am willing to communicate with chatbots for e-commerce customer support.

A considerable number of respondents in Bengaluru, 34.55% (n=19), agree that they are willing to communicate with chatbots for e-commerce customer support purposes, in addition to 1.82% (n=1) who strongly agree. Conversely, Mangaluru reveals relatively lower agreement at 24% (n=12), with 2% (n=1) who strongly agree. Disagreement is relatively higher in Bengaluru, standing at 23.64% (n=13) in contrast to 10% (n=5) in Mangaluru, although the percentage of neutral individuals is considerably

higher in Mangaluru at 56% (n=28) compared to 32.73% (n=18) in Bengaluru. Strong disagreement is slightly higher in Bengaluru, standing at 7.27% (n=4) in contrast to 2% (n=1) in Mangaluru. These findings collectively reveal that the willingness to communicate with chatbots for e-commerce customer support services is relatively higher in Bengaluru, while Mangaluru reveals higher levels of neutrality or ambivalence towards such communication.

16. Overall Preference

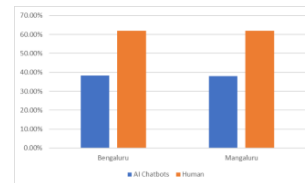


fig 16 :Overall preference

Notably, both Bengaluru and Mangaluru have a similar preference for human representatives in customer service. Here, 61.82% (n=34) of the Bengaluru group and 62% (n=31) of the Mangaluru group prefer human interaction over AI chatbots. However, AI chatbots are preferred by 38.18% (n=21) in Bengaluru and 38% (n=19) in Mangaluru. This reveals that there is a similar pattern in both cities where, despite the increasing use of AI chatbots, most people still prefer human representatives more for their customer service requirements.

9. Research Findings

Research indicates a clear divergence in consumer behavior between Bengaluru and Mangaluru. While both cities prioritize mobile apps, Bengaluru users engage in high-frequency social commerce, whereas Mangaluru consumers rely heavily on social proof. Regarding AI adoption, both cities value speed, but functional perceptions differ: Bengaluru prioritizes problem-solving, while Mangaluru utilizes bots for purchase decisions. Despite Bengaluru's higher readiness (36%) and belief in AI efficiency (31%), persistent issues with bot misunderstandings (38%) maintain a "hopeful caution." Ultimately, a significant 62% majority across both regions still prefers human agents for complex problem-solving.

10. Conclusion

In conclusion, AI chatbots significantly enhance e-commerce efficiency by managing high-volume, routine queries with speed. However, an "automation gap" persists, as technical misunderstandings and a lack of nuanced empathy hinder trust. While Bengaluru's fast-paced market and Mangaluru's deliberate shopping style utilize AI differently, consumers in both tiers remain anchored to human support for complex issues. The study confirms that AI serves as a powerful supplement rather than a replacement. Success lies in a hybrid model: leveraging AI for rapid processing while ensuring seamless transitions to human experts for tasks requiring emotional intelligence and sophisticated problem-solving.

11. Limitations of the study

This study's limitations primarily stem from its narrow geographical focus on Bengaluru and Mangaluru, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to diverse global or cultural contexts. Methodologically, the research relies on subjective self-reporting, which is susceptible to emotional bias and memory inaccuracies, rather than objective metrics like real-time response logs or resolution rates. Furthermore, by focusing solely on user experience, the study overlooks organizational hurdles, such as high implementation costs, technical integration with legacy systems, and the complexities of training staff for a hybrid human-AI workforce. These factors suggest a need for broader, data-driven research.

12. Scope for future studies

Future research should expand geographical and cultural horizons by comparing diverse markets, such as Western and Asian economies, to understand how local traditions and language nuances influence AI trust. Investigations should also transition from text-based models to multimodal AI, exploring how voice assistants and visual aids bridge the "automation gap" for complex queries. Methodologically, pairing subjective user feedback with objective data—like resolution rates and long-term customer value—will provide a more robust view of business impact. Finally, critical focus must be placed on ethical considerations, specifically data privacy and algorithmic transparency, as chatbots increasingly handle sensitive consumer information.

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From Motorsport to Spectacle: The Impact of Strategic Advertising on Formula 1's Global Entertainment Evolution

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Abstract: Formula 1 has accomplished the reinvention of a major turning point very well by transforming itself from a niche motorsport contest into a global entertainment spectacle. The paper aims to discuss this strategic shift and argues that F1 has repositioned itself as a top example of "branded entertainment" where commercial partnerships are completely integrated into the fans' experience.

The research applies a qualitative multi-case study method and scrutinises three main factors of this evolution. Firstly, it examines the role of new media, particularly the Netflix series 'Drive to Survive' and 'F1: The Movie', as a pivotal moment that opened up a varied audience of digitally native viewers by emphasising the story over technical details. Secondly, it demonstrates how technology (Google), fashion (Tommy Hilfiger), and consumer goods (Lego) brands, among others, have not only continued their traditional sponsorship but have also expanded into the sphere of integrated experiential campaigns that contribute to the brand's identity being embedded in the sports ecosystem. Lastly, the research investigates F1's marketing strategy of "purpose-led" growth or expansion, and in this way demonstrates how social projects, such as the F1 Academy, align the brand with today's youth to retain its relevance in the future.

The results indicate that F1's upsurge wasn't due to chance but happened because the sport purposely employed media storytelling and brand integration at their best. Rather than only catering to the cognitive needs of traditional fans, Formula 1 has rewritten the sports marketing playbook by meeting the emotional and social needs of a new generation.

Key Words: Branded Entertainment, Media Convergence, Sponsorship Activation, Globalization.

1. INTRODUCTION

For many years, Formula 1 had the features of a closed circuit, high technology, and an elderly and dwindling fan base. But Liberty Media's 2017 acquisition acted as a trigger to a complete reversal of strategy, changing the series from a niche motorsport to a global "branded entertainment" ecosystem (Liberty Media, 2025). This paper examines the underlying reasons for this transformation, claiming that F1's comeback is not a miracle of sports but a success of narrative strategy.

A "media-first" approach, illustrated by Drive to Survive, was the main factor in the change, which put the human drama before the engineering in order to get access to a diverse, digitally native audience (Shah & Williams, 2024). As a result of this demographic change, the commercial model of the sport got completely transformed, from passive sponsorship to active cultural integration with megabrands in lifestyle and technology. By way of a qualitative multi-case study, this research explores how

strategic storytelling and ecosystem integration have effectively repositioned Formula 1 as the foremost cultural hangout.

2. RESEARCH CONTEXT

This research will look into the "Netflix effect" that led to the transformation of F1 from the post-2017 niche motorsport to the global entertainment spectacle. It will connect Media Studies with Sport Management by taking F1, the more or less conjoined, as a case study for "media convergence" and "sponsorship activation." The interaction between digital media, marketing strategies, and fan perception is the primary focus of the research, with qualitative branding analysis being the preferred method, even over technical racing data or financial metrics.

While existing literature explores sports commercialisation (Giulianotti, 2002) and sponsorship ROI, a critical gap remains in analysing this shift through a holistic "media-first" lens. Current studies often treat fan engagement and sponsorship as separate silos. Few researchers have connected narrative strategies directly to structural changes in a commercial ecosystem (Shah & Williams, 2024). This study bridges that gap, offering a unified model of F1 as a "branded entertainment" ecosystem.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the paper titled **"From accelerated advertising to Fanboost: mediatized motorsport,"** Mark Finn discusses "mediatization," stating that nowadays media logic is not only influencing the marketing of the sport but shaping its operations and even rules. He cites Formula E's "Fanboost" to prove his point that the media has become an integral part of the sport's power structure (Finn, 2019).

A paper authored by Jensen, Cobbs, Mazer, and Tyler (2024), called **"Analyzing Brand Strategy on an International Scale: The Sponsorship Performance Cycle in Formula One Racing,"** moves 53 years back in time and highlights that brands reap the greatest rewards from the technical support that the sponsor provides rather than the financial capital. This "Sponsorship Performance Cycle" indicates that the partnerships made through sharing performance are the most profitable (Jensen et al., 2024).

The research titled **"Hitting the barriers - Women in Formula 1 and W series racing"** looks into the organisational hurdles that stop women from getting driving roles in F1. The researcher regards the W Series as a vital feeder system to break down the institutional barriers and slowly get rid of the culture of gender discrimination in motorsports (Howe, 2022).

The article **"Customer engagement in Formula 1: From an old man's club to social media behemoth"** studies the 2017 rebranding of F1's marketing strategy under Liberty Media. The writers reach the conclusion that the sharing of behind-the-scenes, interactive content on platforms like Instagram has effectively strengthened the ties among fans, drivers, and teams, thus reviving the brand's image (Axelsson & Reinholdsson, 2022).

In the chapter titled **"The Shifting Landscape of Sponsorship Within Formula 1,"** Dewhirst and Lee (2022) provide a historical account from tobacco spoiling to household technology and lifestyle brands. They reveal the moral dilemmas that the sport's commercial system carries, the most significant of which is that of the controversial sponsors against social responsibility (Dewhirst & Lee, 2022).

The research **"'Drive to Survive' Drives New Fans to Formula 1? Studying Viewer Experiences of a Sports Documentary and Its Influence on the Sport's Fandom"** finds three engagement factors: learning, social connection, and dramatisation. The authors claim the show has improved the demand for the sport tremendously because it has made the sport socially relevant and accessible (Shah & Williams, 2024).

In his thesis **"Speed and Spectacle: A Qualitative Case Study on Fan Engagement Within a Formula One Fan Community Through Netflix's Drive to Survive,"** Böckerman (2024) sees the

series as a tool that reshapes fan identity and hierarchy. His research points to the fact that F1 has to master the art of striking a perfect equilibrium between revitalising its fan base through the commercialisation of the spectacle and, at the same time, not losing the older generation of fans (Böckerman, 2024).

A thesis by Haselier (2023), titled "**Social and Educational Outcomes at Mercedes F1 Team: An Explanatory Study of Team Identification in the Context of Formula 1,**" has pinpointed team performance and driver appeal as vital drivers of fan loyalty. The study aspires to draw out organisational sustainability practices that go beyond sporting success (Haselier, 2023).

The objectives of the present study are:

- To **examine** the new media, especially Drive to Survive and the F1 movie, which are believed to be the factors that opened up a diverse global audience for Formula 1.
- To **analyse** the non-endemic brands that have embedded themselves in the F1 experience through their integrated marketing campaigns.
- To **investigate** how F1 as a sport extended its influence beyond the racetracks and into the larger world of culture, through social and entertainment ventures.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

The main foundation of the study is the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which is based on the premise that media consumption is an active-process choice by the audience for the purpose of satisfying their needs (Katz et al., 1973). The change in Formula 1 has been a switch in the gratifications that have been offered. Initially, the broadcast mainly catered to the **Cognitive Needs** of the audience for technical data, thus raising the entry barrier very high (Tan, 1985). On the other hand, the present narrative strategy, which is legibly depicted through the series Drive to Survive, is appealing to **Affective Needs** in that it is putting human drama and emotional engagement first (Bartsch & Viehoff, 2010).

Moreover, the narrative strategy not only covers the Affective but also the **Social Integrative Needs** by projecting the sport as a shared cultural event. The emotional transition thus facilitates a commercial ecosystem that operates on **Parasocial Interaction (PSI)**, whereby the fans develop one-sided relationships with the drivers (Sanderson, 2021). This relationship allows the lifestyle brands to promote identity and emotion instead of just utility, thus effectively opening the door to a large and diverse global audience.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

This research conducts a qualitative case study across different cases. The consideration of this design offered a deep and well-informed contextual view of the strategic changes in the company, thus giving more weight to qualitative metrics than to quantitative ones. The research is organised around five mutually illustrative cases:

1. **Media Catalysts:** *Drive to Survive* and the F1 Movie.
2. **Tech-Brand Integration:** Google x McLaren.
3. **Lifestyle Ecosystem:** Fashion partnerships (e.g., Tommy Hilfiger).

4. **Consumer Ecosystem:** Mass-market brands (e.g., Lego).
5. **Purpose-Driven Paddock:** F1 Academy and UNICEF.

5.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Collecting data was done entirely through **qualitative desk research**, which involved only public sources. Among such sources are media products (Drive to Survive), official team communications, and visual branding assets like car liveries.

The research applies **Thematic Content Analysis**, which helps in coding the data into categories such as "character-driven storytelling" and "ecosystem integration." A **Comparative Analysis** is then conducted whereby the former sponsorship practices (passive visibility) are contrasted with the current strategies (active integration), which in effect maps out the sport's shift to a global "branded entertainment" ecosystem.

6. CASE STUDIES

6.1 The Media Catalysts: From Netflix Docuseries to Hollywood Blockbuster

Background and Strategy

Before 2017, Formula 1 was seen as a domain and a sport that was full of technical complexities and had an older audience that was constantly getting smaller. As part of the next step, F1, by means of the media strategy, planned to view the sport in terms of content brand and to be done in two phases, got the first phase of unexploited entertainment value opened up. The first phase, Netflix docuseries Drive to Survive (DTS), was the main driver of content marketing. It was the human drama of the stakes that got the narrative away from the battles of the machines and their tech regulations being the main focus, and so the drivers and the team leaders were turned into characters in a "sports soap opera" that was easy to relate to by the audience. This also helped in making the sport accessible to a wider audience, as well as to casual ones. The second phase is about the expansion of the franchise, and it is through the F1 movie by Apple. This venture was another "total immersion", filming fictional teams along with real drivers during Grand Prix weekend to ramp up the authenticity, thus turning the sport from a seasonal competition to a timeless cinema.

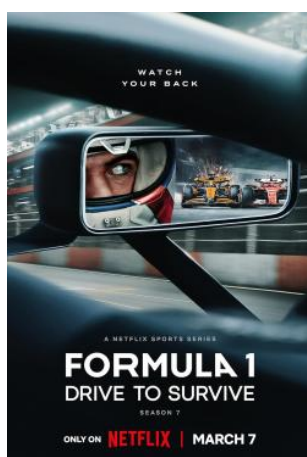


Figure 1: Drive to Survive poster (Season 7), which amply shows the character-driven narrative focus of the series.

Source: IMDb.

Impact and Conclusion

The "Netflix Effect" was revolutionary, and its benefits were seen directly in the U.S. market, which grew dramatically. The number of fans at the U.S. Grand Prix increased by 136,000 from 2018 to 2021, encroaching on the 400,000 mark. Even more significantly, the age and gender profile was changing; the DTS (Drive to Survive) audience is reported to be around 46% female, which is quite a leap from the traditional baseline. This case is the pillar of the study upon which the others are built, as it shows that altering the narrative from "motorsport" to "entertainment" has created the worldwide audience that is needed for the commercial integrations that are the subject of the later cases.

6.2 Google x McLaren: Embedding the Digital Brand into the Physical Spectacle

Background and Strategy

Through the F1's younger and more tech-savvy audience, Google wanted to associate its software ecosystem with the physical traits of speed and innovation. At the beginning of 2022, the company made a strategic move to partner with McLaren, which is a team of "digital-first" driver lineup, and dove deep into the ecosystem embedding project. The first step in the partnership was the fascinating use of "Dynamic Visual Integration." The branding of Google Chrome is not carried out through static decals but rather is applied to wheel covers, where the wheels' rotation is used to create a visual link between the browser's speed and the car's performance. On top of that, the partnership also incorporates the whole Google product suite, Android on the engine cover and Google Cloud aiding team operations, narrating a dual story of consumer speed and enterprise engineering.



Figure 2: McLaren Formula 1 car featuring Google Chrome branding on its wheel covers, showcasing dynamic visual branding.

Source: *The Times of India*.

Impact and Conclusion

This collaboration is a clear transition from passive advertising to "performance partnerships." For Google, it is a case of making intangible digital products physically real; for McLaren, it has the effect of reinforcing a modern and high-tech image. The integration controls the viewer experience in such a way that the sponsor becomes a central part of the car's visual identity. It emphasises the point that the current F1 sponsorship model is not about selling ad space, but rather about co-creating a narrative of innovation that stands out to a digitally native global audience.

6.3 The Paddock as a Platform: F1's New Lifestyle & Fashion Ecosystem

Background & Strategy

New media was the main factor that brought about the demographic shift, and the fans saw the paddock as a cultural 'runway' that led to an influx of viewers. Lifestyle brands mostly catered to the sport,

considering that 58% of Gen Z fans appreciate the contribution of fashion to F1, and thus, they made use of a multi-pronged approach:

- **Racetrack as Runway:** Not only do **Tommy Hilfiger** (with Mercedes) and **Hugo Boss** (with Aston Martin) bring together high fashion and high performance, but also the former breeds the latter. These collaborations not only transform team merchandise into fashion collections but also utilise immersive technology (for example, Apple Vision Pro experiences) to convey luxury and a premium lifestyle.
- **Driver as Ambassador:** Brands use drivers as media properties to be marketed and communicate directly with consumers. **Lando Norris** (Tumi) and **Carlos Sainz** (L'Oréal) are global ambassadors and are well-positioned; they can be seen as non-teams of operation, and the consumer is ready to connect through the lifestyle activities of grooming/travel with the sport.
- **Values-Driven Partnership:** The makeup brand **Charlotte Tilbury**, sponsoring the F1 Academy ("Makeup Your Destiny"), has been a great move to align beauty with female empowerment; consequently, this area of the sport, which is aimed at the female audience, is aimed at.



Figure 3: The livery of Charlotte Tilbury x F1 Academy ("Makeup Your Destiny"), appealing to the female target.

Source: Financial Times.

Impact and Conclusion

This ecosystem has “re-skinned” F1 from a niche engineering competition to a global cultural event. The presence of diverse lifestyle brands affirms the sport as a high-value, culture-driven platform. By executing deep and integrated campaigns, these brands have not only changed the fan perception but also highlighted the fact that F1 is now a venue for style and culture as much as racing.

6.4 The Paddock as a Platform: F1's Transformation into a Global Branded Entertainment Ecosystem

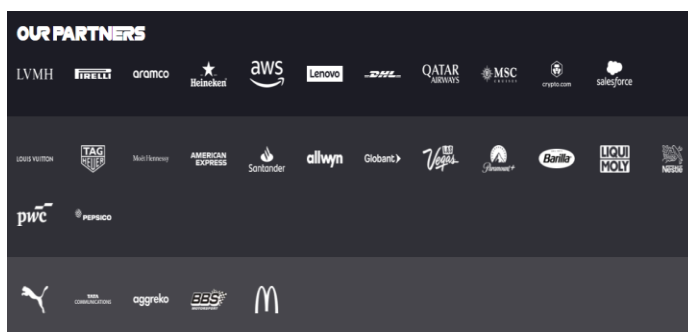


Figure 4: The 2025 Formula 1 Partner ecosystem, which illustrates the diversification into non-endemic sectors.

Source: Formula 1.

Background and Strategy

The different types of viewers that F1 had attracted made the sport open to "non-endemic" brands in FMCG, luxury, and toys, among others. F1 is now providing a wide range of activation models for different consumer sectors:

- **Premium Luxury:** The global partnership of LVMH has an important role in integrating such brands as TAG Heuer and Louis Vuitton into the sport's ceremonial moments and thus, is closely working with the world of elite craftsmanship.
- **Mass-Market Engagement:** The brands, **Lego** and **Hot Wheels** (Mattel), facilitate the building of relationships between different generations based on the toys, with their collectables and large-scale participations, letting the fans "play" with the sport off-track. Meanwhile, **Barilla** (Official Pasta Partner) conducts activations through "Pasta Bars" in the paddock, mixing F1's Italian background with a feeling of communal, family-oriented hospitality.
- **Experiential Flywheels:** **McDonald's** and **Heineken 0.0** have a mutual use of digital applications and campaigns guided by the purpose ("When You Drive, Never Drink") to promote real-world purchasing as well as responsible consumption.

Impact and Conclusion

Barilla's presence and every other brand's, up to LVMH's, prove that F1 has entered the phase of a 360-degree commercial ecosystem. The sport is already associated with things that the fans eat, wear, and play, which gives each and every demographic an authentic point of contact. This variety of offerings not only confirms F1's wide-reaching influence over the culture but also opens the door for all types of consumer brands to engage the valuable and passionate audience.

6.5 The Purpose-Driven Paddock: F1's Strategy for Social Impact

Background and Strategy

The current F1 demographic, which is composed mostly of younger people, is very much values-driven and sees brands through the lens of their social impact. To maintain its relevance in the long run, F1 moved to a 'purpose-driven' branding strategy, thus taking up initiatives that are in line with current values.

- **League-led Initiatives:** The **F1 Academy** is one of the initiatives that the league has taken, which works against gender inequality in the industry. Also, the initiative is receiving support from partners like Charlotte Tilbury that work towards the empowerment of women. In addition, the partnership with **UNICEF** is helping children in hard-hit areas get educational and emergency aid by utilising F1's global platform to raise funds.
- **Team-led Initiatives:** The teams are also in the game with their own initiatives, e.g., Mission 44 (which was founded by Lewis Hamilton), and McLaren Racing NEXT, which is dedicated to STEM education and access for all, thus creating a flow of underrepresented talent into the sport.

Impact and Conclusion

This approach not only diminishes the historical complaints about the sport's elitist nature but also reframes F1 as a responsible leader in the field. It creates a "brand-safe" universe where corporate partners with strict CSR policies can be attracted. By connecting the sport with diversity and innovation, F1 is also going about it smartly, as it is sure to gain the loyalty of fans who are not only interested in racing but also support the sport's principles. Thus, the brand is effectively future-proofed.

7. CONTENT ANALYSIS

For exploring the change of Formula 1, the present research employs a mixed method approach comprising Qualitative Thematic Analysis and Quantitative Visual Analysis.

The qualitative aspect interprets strategic tales, especially scrutinising Netflix's Drive to Survive for narrative techniques like "Antagonist/Protagonist Framing" and "Personalisation of Conflict," disclosing the transition from a technical sport to a character-driven drama. Moreover, netnographic analysis of fan conversation on sites like Reddit follows sentiment towards commercialisation, and divides reactions into "Authentic/Enhancing," "Intrusive/Commercial," or "Meme/Cultural."

From the quantitative side, the study observes the literal transformation of sponsorship from 2018 to 2025 through visual scrutiny of car paintings.

Sponsorship thickness is measured through metrics like Logo Frequency, and innovations like digital wheel covers and helmet cameras are also monitored.

Social media Interaction Rates serve as a complementary metric to compare and validate the engagement value of lifestyle content versus traditional sporting content. The results reveal a generational gap: the younger audience views such high-end partnerships as "prestige," whereas the older audience regards them as "commercial clutter."

8. DISCUSSION & FINDINGS

The integration of the five case studies has brought about a strategic "playbook" which is illustrated by three major changes that are the F1 global branded entertainment ecosystem. First, the media policy changed from merely broadcasting to "always-on" storytelling. By giving priority to human drama rather than technical details, narratives like Drive to Survive decreased the barriers to entry and lured in the varied audience that fuels the contemporary ecosystem.

Secondly, the commercial partnerships moved from just having a presence to becoming fully involved. This happens in the "Technical Embedding" way, whereby stakeholders like Google increase the interaction of fans and in the "Cultural Embedding" way, where the lifestyle brands convert the paddock into a cultural venue. Finally, the brand purpose was not just limited to the commercial aspect but expanded to the cultural one. The F1 Academy has been one of the initiatives that were put in place to align the sport with the modern corporate values, thus making it a "brand-safe" partner and securing long-term growth.

8.1 Comparative Analysis of Formula 1's Transformation

This table summarises the fundamental shifts in Formula 1's strategic model, comparing the traditional "Past" approach (pre-2017) with the "Present" branded entertainment ecosystem.

Metric	Past Model: "Niche Motorsport" (Pre-2017)	Present Model: "Global Entertainment Ecosystem" (2017-Present)
Primary Media Strategy	Passive Broadcast Product: Value was limited to the 2-hour live race broadcast.	"Always-On" Branded Storytelling: Value is created 24/7 through narrative content (Drive to Survive, social media, F1: The Movie).
Core "Product"	The Race (Technical, complex, inaccessible to non-fans).	The Narrative (Human drama, driver personalities, accessible to all).
Target Audience	Legacy Fans: Niche, dedicated, technical, and traditionally male-dominated.	New Global Audience: Broad, diverse, younger, 50/50 gender split, and digitally native.
Sponsorship Model	"Passive Visibility": Transactional. Brands paid for static ad space.	"Deep Integration": Partnership-based. Brands are embedded in the F1 experience.
Example Activation	A logo on the side of the car or a trackside banner.	Technical: Google's dynamic wheel covers.
Dominant Sponsor Types	Traditional/Industrial: Tobacco (e.g., Marlboro), Oil & Gas, Automotive.	Diverse/Consumer-Facing: - Tech: (Google, AWS, Oracle) - Lifestyle: (LVMH, Hugo Boss, Charlotte Tilbury) - FMCG: (Lego, McDonald's, Heineken, Barilla)
Brand Purpose & Identity	Pinnacle of Motorsport: Focused exclusively on engineering, speed, and competition.	Cultural & Social Relevance: Expands to include diversity (F1 Academy), STEM (Mission 44), and humanitarianism (UNICEF).

9. CONCLUSION & FUTURE SCOPE

The findings of this investigation uphold F1's gradual shift in the past from a secluded motorsport engagement to a global 'branded entertainment' ecosystem. By employing narrative-driven media like Drive to Survive, forming various lifestyle collaborations, and taking up purpose-based initiatives, F1 has moved from passive sponsorship to active integration, thus meeting the needs of the modern audience. The different aspects of the "F1 Model" show off the fact that the narratives beyond the track are now as important as the performances on the track. Nevertheless, the study drew upon qualitative desk research as its main source of data and was limited to secondary data; thus, it may have missed some internal strategic nuances. To overcome this limitation, future research should use primary data such as fan surveys and industry interviews, and apply longitudinal comparative analyses with other major sports leagues to provide empirical evidence for the long-term cultural and commercial impacts of this transformation.

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A Study on Social Media Influence on Impulsive Buying Among Genz

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Abstract: The rapid expansion of SM platforms in recent years has created an unprecedented impact on Consumer Behavior, particularly among the GEN. Z cohort that uses SM extensively due to their digital aptitude. The purpose of this study is to research the influence of SM on influencing Gen.Z's purchasing behavior and how specific elements of SM affect impulse purchase decisions. A large aspect of this research is how SM Advertising, Influencer Marketing, Peer Recommendations, and Interactive Content all combine to create an opportunity for the consumer to make unplanned purchasing decisions. The researcher used a quantitative study design and the method of collecting data using structured questionnaires was administered to respondents from GEN. Z. In addition, the researcher identifies situational features available on certain platforms such as targeted ads, short-time frame promotions, and personalized recommendations play a role in increasing the impulse to make purchases on SM. This research illustrates the broader understanding of Digital Consumer Psychology and, in turn, could provide marketers with the tools to create ethical and impactful strategies to place themselves in front of GEN. Z.

Key Words: Social media (SM), Impulsive Buying, Generation z (GEN Z), Influencer Marketing, Consumer Behavior, FOMO (Fear of missing out), Direct Marketing (DM)

1. INTRODUCTION

As the digital world keeps getting more advanced, SM has shifted consumers' perspectives, tastes and buying habits tremendously. The relationship that users have with Instagram, Tiktok, Youtube, Snapchat and Facebook, etc. has changed over the past decade. Today these platforms no longer function simply for communication. They have evolved into sophisticated ecosystems, providing their users with the ability to interact and communicate with each other as well as with brands and businesses, in more complex ways than ever before. SM has created a platform in which there's an intersection between entertainment and commerce, therefore creating an interactive, dynamic marketplace for Marketing. Therefore the type of content that is being marketed by Internet users through their daily interactions with the SM platforms are integrated into their everyday lives. This Interactive approach allows consumers to interact with marketers and to build a personal relationship with their favourite Products as a result of using Influencers, Marketing, Sponsorships, Brand Partnerships and Recommendation systems powered by Algorithms. Despite the increasing no. of papers discussing SM marketing and consumer behavior, there is still a lack of clarity on how these mechanisms particularly relate to Indian Gen Z's impulsive buying tendencies. Differences in culture, economy, and social life create different consumer behaviors. Most of the studies have been conducted in western countries. It is very vital to fill these gaps since Gen Z is one of the biggest current and future consumers whose characteristics will determine the course of online retail demand.

2. OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the relationship between SM exposure and impulsive buying behavior.
2. To identify the specific SM platform and content types that influence impulsive purchases [ads, influencer posts, peer recommendations]
3. To investigate the psychological and behavioral factors in impulsive buying

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

This research is crucial for understanding the evolving nature of consumer behavior in the digital era. As social media increasingly dominates marketing and engagement, it is essential to examine its impact on consumers' psychological responses and purchasing decisions. Focusing on Gen Z, a digitally connected and highly influenceable demographic poised to shape the future consumer market, the study provides valuable insights for marketers to design effective and ethical social media strategies that account for emotional and psychological drivers of impulse buying. Additionally, the findings can guide educators and policymakers in promoting digital literacy and financial awareness among young consumers.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The research paper titled "Measuring the Impulse Buying Behavior of Consumers: Special Reference to Food and Beverages" written by Nidhi Sheoran focuses on the food and beverage sector, where consumers' buying behavior is studied through the lens of psychology, environment, and marketing. The study examines the psychological triggers, environmental cues, and marketing factors that influence these so-called "sudden" and "unplanned" purchases. Among other things, the research discusses how emotion, promotions, store layout, and social influence may indeed play a significant role in the consumer decision-making process. Besides that, it also elaborates on the aspect that businesses should focus on marketing strategies to develop their products in accordance with the consumer's needs, thus revealing the continuously changing consumer behavior in modern retail environments. **(Nidhi,2024)** The research paper under the title of "The Role of SM On Impulse Buying Behavior of Customers in Kottarakara Taluk Kerala" co-authored by Bincy A. Varghese and S. Chitra, investigates the effect of SM on the impulse buying of the Kottarakara Taluk consumers. Targeted advertisements, influencer promotions, visually appealing product posts, and the ease of online shopping are among the factors contributing to unplanned purchases. The authors illustrate that people who use SM platforms very often are the ones who come in contact with the most persuasive content, and this content causes spontaneous buying decisions to be made. Finally, they claim SM has been a crucial factor for impulse buying and this is especially true for the young, active, and tech-savvy consumers. **[Varghese & Chitra 2022]** The title of the research paper is 'Online Marketing Stimuli Strategy and Impulsive Buying Tendency' and the authors are Pavan K. A. & S. Vidhya. This research provides a full bibliometric analysis of related to impulsive buying on SM platforms. It reviews several years of published studies in order to spot the key trends, the most productive researchers, the main topics and the development of research in the area. The paper not only concentrates on the evidence but also shows how digital marketing, social interaction and platform design play a role in consumers' impulse buying behavior. It, furthermore, identifies gaps in the research and suggests future research topics, demonstrating that SM is already an important factor in unplanned consumer purchases. **[Pavan & Vidhya 2022]**

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this research draws on established consumer behavior, psychology, and marketing theories to examine the impact of social media on Gen Z purchasing decisions. It primarily relies on the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which posits that individuals actively select media to satisfy specific needs, such as entertainment, social interaction, information, self-expression, and relaxation. For Gen Z, social media serves as a multi-purpose platform to discover trends, find deals, and engage with peers. Their desire for visually appealing, interactive, and personalized content

increases time spent on these platforms, exposing them to persuasive marketing and convenient shopping options. This need-driven engagement lowers cognitive resistance, creating opportunities for impulsive purchases. Thus, UGT explains how purposeful social media use by Gen Z often leads to impulsive buying behavior. McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

6. RESEARCH GAP

Despite growing research on social media and consumer behavior, few studies have focused on Gen Z's impulsive buying, particularly in India. Most prior research overlooks platform-specific influences and psychological factors such as FOMO and influencer impact. By analyzing the Indian Gen Z market, this study addresses these gaps and examines the combined effect of various social media factors on their impulsive purchasing behavior.

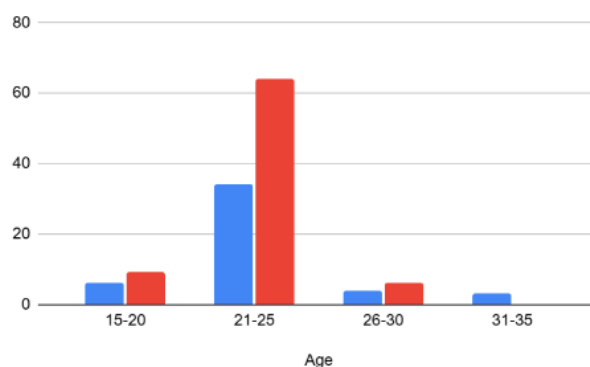
7. METHODOLOGY

The proposed research employed a quantitative design and an online survey to examine how SM influenced Gen Z consumers' buying behavior. It aimed to assess the frequency of purchases resulting from exposure to advertisements, sponsored posts, and influencer marketing. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed online to SM users aged 15–30. The questionnaire covered demographics, social media engagement, buying behavior influenced by advertisements and influencer recommendations, and impulsive buying, all measured on a five-point Likert scale. A pilot test was conducted to ensure the clarity, reliability, and validity of the instrument. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics to explore the relationships between social media advertising and Gen Z purchasing behavior. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, were strictly observed.

8. DATA ANALYSIS

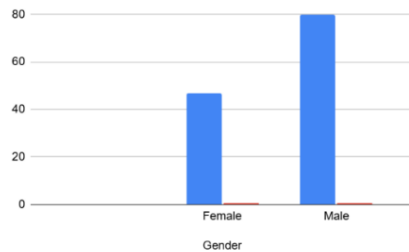
Data from 126 Gen Z respondents formed the basis of this study, providing insights into social media usage and impulsive buying habits. The dataset includes demographics, levels of social media interaction, celebrity influence, emotional triggers such as FOMO, and buying tendencies. Using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, the analysis identifies trends, correlations, and patterns that reveal how social media encourages unplanned purchases. The results are presented coherently, highlighting key trends that enhance understanding of the research problem.

Age



The majority of participants were aged 21–25 (77.95%, $n = 99$), including 34 females and 64 males. This was followed by ages 26–30 (11.81%, $n = 15$), ages 31–35 (7.87%, $n = 10$), and 36–40 (2.36%, $n = 3$, all female). Overall, the sample was predominantly in their twenties, with fewer participants above age 25.

Gender



males comprised 62.99% ($n = 80$) of participants, while females made up 37.01% ($n = 47$). There were no missing or unspecified responses. Overall, the sample shows a notable gender imbalance, with males significantly outnumbering females.

App used

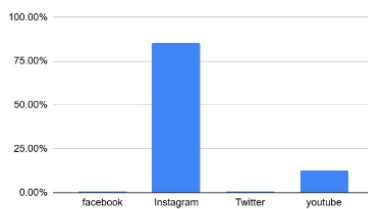


Fig:1 Most used social media app

Instagram is the primary social media platform among respondents (85.71%, $n = 108$), followed by YouTube (12.70%, $n = 16$). Facebook and Twitter had minimal usage (0.79%, $n = 1$ each), indicating that Instagram dominates user preferences, while Facebook and Twitter are largely unused by the surveyed group.

Hours spent

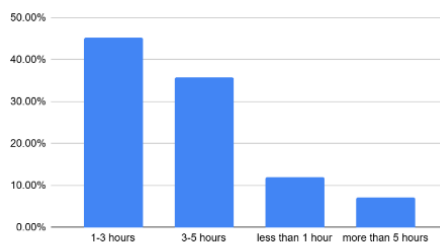


Fig:2 Hours spend daily on social media platforms

The most common daily social media usage was 1–3 hours (45.24%, $n = 57$), followed by 3–5 hours (35.71%, $n = 45$). Fewer participants used social media for less than 1 hour (11.90%, $n = 15$) or more than 5 hours (7.14%, $n = 9$). Overall, most respondents fall within the moderate usage range of 1–5 hours per day.

Advertisements come across while browsing SM

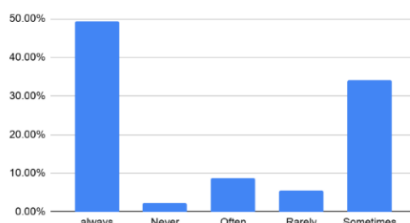


Fig:3 advertisements come across while browsing social media

Nearly half of respondents (49.21%, $n = 62$) reported always encountering advertisements or shopping-related posts on social media, while 34.13% ($n = 43$) sometimes do. Smaller proportions encountered them often (8.73%, $n = 11$) or rarely (5.56%, $n = 7$), and only 2.38% ($n = 3$) never encountered such content. Overall, advertisements are a highly prevalent aspect of social media use.

Unplanned purchase after seeing a product on SM

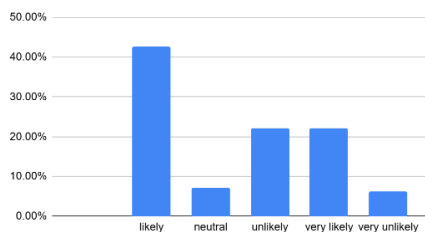


Fig.4 unplanned purchase after seeing a product on social media

The largest group of respondents (42.86%, $n = 54$) reported being likely to make unplanned purchases after seeing products on social media. Equal proportions indicated very likely or very unlikely responses (22.22%, $n = 28$), while 7.14% ($n = 7$) were neutral. Overall, the findings suggest that exposure to product images on social media significantly encourages impulsive buying among a substantial portion of users.

Tendency to make spontaneous purchases

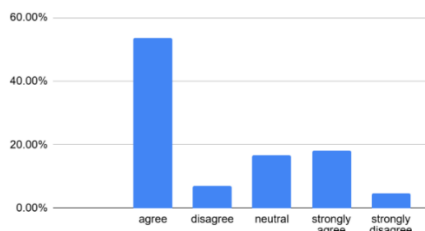


Fig.5 frequent exposure to social media increases your tendency to make...

A majority of respondents (53.97%, $n = 68$) agreed that frequent social media exposure increases the likelihood of unplanned purchases, with 18.25% strongly agreeing. Meanwhile, 16.67% ($n = 21$) were neutral, and fewer than 12% disagreed (7.14%, $n = 9$) or strongly disagreed (3.97%, $n = 5$). Overall, most participants perceive social media as having a significant influence on their impulsive buying behavior.

Regretting a purchase on SM

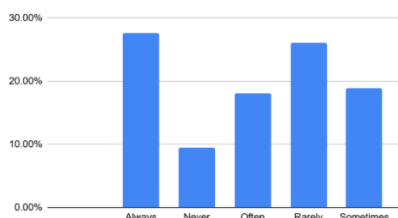


Fig.6 regretting a purchase made after seeing it on social media

The most common response was frequently regretting purchases made after seeing them on social media (27.78%, $n = 35$), followed by rarely (26.19%, $n = 33$) and sometimes (19.05%, $n = 24$). Additionally, 18.25% ($n = 23$) reported occasional regret, while only 8.73% ($n = 11$) never felt regret. Overall, the findings indicate that most respondents experience some level of post-purchase regret, with only a small minority consistently satisfied with social media influenced purchases.

Influence on buying decision

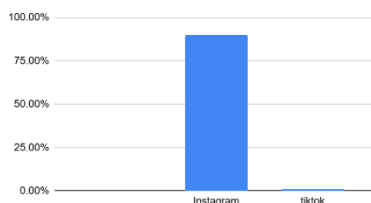


Fig.7 social media platform influences buying decisions

Overall, 90.48% (n = 114) of respondents reported that Instagram was their primary source of influence on purchasing decisions, while YouTube influenced only 9.52% (n = 12). This indicates that Instagram plays the dominant role in shaping purchase behaviour among the surveyed users.

Triggering Respondents

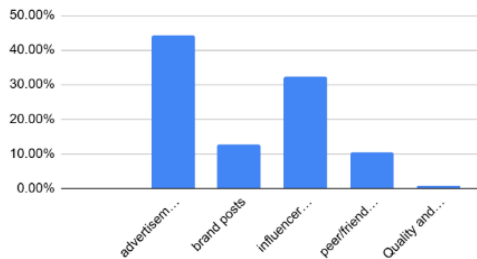


Fig:8 type of content which triggers your buying interest of a product

Advertisements were the most common motivator for purchasing products on social media (44.44%, n = 56), followed by influencer posts (32.54%, n = 41). Brand posts (11.90%, n = 15) and peer recommendations (10.32%, n = 13) had less influence, while product quality and comfort were cited by only 0.79% (n = 1). Overall, advertisement- and influencer-driven content has a stronger impact on purchase decisions than peer influence or product attributes.

purchasing products recommended by SM influencers

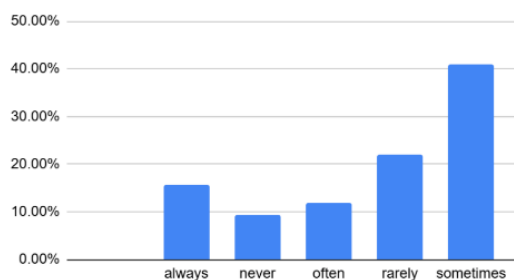


Fig:9 purchasing products recommended by social media influencers

The majority of respondents reported purchasing products recommended by social media influencers to some extent. Most commonly, 40.48% (n = 51) buy such products, followed by 22.22% (n = 28) who rarely do. Additionally, 15.87% (n = 20) always buy and 11.90% (n = 15) often buy influencer-recommended products, while only 9.52% (n = 12) never do. Overall, influencer recommendations influence the majority of users.

10. Trust in peer recommendations

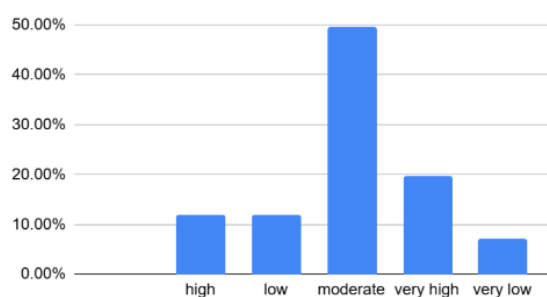


Fig: 10 confidence in peer recommendations & product reviews s...

Nearly half of respondents (49.21%, n = 62) reported a moderately high level of trust in peer recommendations and reviews on social media, while 19.84% (n = 25) reported very high trust. High and low trust were each reported by 11.90% (n = 15), and only 7.14% (n = 9) had little to no trust. Overall, most participants place a reasonable degree of trust in peer-shared product information, with only a small minority expressing doubt.

Impulsive product category

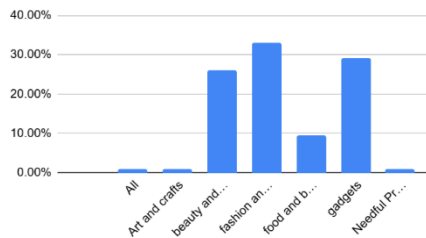


Fig:11 category of product usually buy impulsively after seeing it o...

Fashion and accessories were the most commonly purchased impulsive products on social media (33.33%, $n = 42$), followed by gadgets (28.57%, $n = 36$) and beauty and personal care items (26.19%, $n = 33$). Food and beverages accounted for 9.52% ($n = 12$), while categories such as art, crafts, and essential products were minimal (0.79%, $n = 1$ each). Overall, visually appealing and trend-driven products are the strongest triggers for impulsive buying on social media.

Buying products when feel bored or stressed

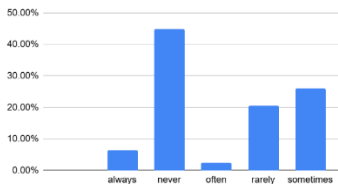


Fig:12 buying products online when you are feeling bored or stressed

The majority of respondents (45.24%, $n = 57$) reported never buying products online when bored or stressed, while 25.40% ($n = 32$) sometimes do. Others reported rarely (20.63%, $n = 26$), always (6.35%, $n = 8$), or often (2.38%, $n = 3$). Overall, most users avoid emotional or boredom-driven purchases, though a notable minority remain susceptible to stress-related online shopping.

Experiencing FOMO

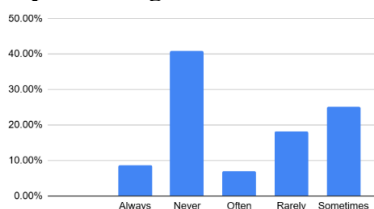


Fig:13 experience "fear of missing out" (FOMO) while trending products...

Most respondents (41.27%, $n = 52$) reported never feeling FOMO when seeing trending products on social media. Others indicated sometimes (25.40%, $n = 32$), rarely (18.25%, $n = 23$), always (7.94%, $n = 10$), or often (7.14%). Overall, while most participants do not feel compelled to buy due to trends, a significant portion experience varying levels of FOMO that influence their purchasing behaviour.

Boosting mood or self esteem

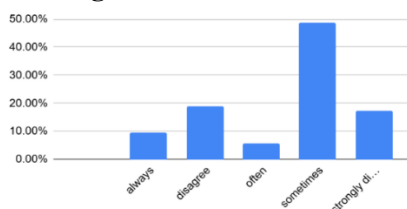


Fig :14 purchasing products on social media boosting mood or self-e...

Nearly half of respondents (49.21%, $n = 62$) reported that purchases made through social media sometimes boost their mood or self-esteem. Conversely, 19.05% ($n = 24$) disagreed and 16.67% ($n = 21$) strongly disagreed, while 9.52% ($n = 12$) said it always improves their mood and 5.56% ($n = 7$) said it often does. Overall, a considerable number of users experience emotional benefits from social media purchases, though the frequency of mood elevation is relatively low.

Buying items without comparing prices

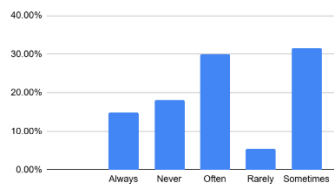


Fig.15 buying items without comparing prices or checking alternatives

The most common purchasing behavior was sometimes buying without comparing prices (31.75%, $n = 40$), followed closely by often (30.16%, $n = 38$). Fewer respondents reported never (18.25%, $n = 23$), always (14.29%, $n = 18$), or rarely (5.56%, $n = 7$) checking prices before buying. Overall, impulsive purchases without much consideration are common, while a minority exhibit cautious buying behavior.

9. RESEARCH FINDINGS

- The influence of SM on GEN. Z's buying habits is found to be substantial, with Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok being the most influencing.
- High-res images along with visuals of the products through videos and reels very much come to be the major drivers of spontaneous purchases being so captured and empathized with the audience.
- Apart from these, influencer marketing also comes to the top but mainly when the influencer is perceived to be genuine, friendly, and even someone you aspire to be.
- Moreover, the personalized ads and the algorithm-powered recommendations greatly contribute to the buying impulse of Gen Z as they are always shown the products that are in line with their action pattern.
- FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) is a vital factor, where giving the customer a limited time to decide, trends and novelties lead to fast and unplanned acquisition of the product.

10. CONCLUSION

This study is focused on understanding the relationship between SM influence and impulse buying behavior among Gen Z consumers. The study found that SM does have a significant impact on Gen Z consumers when it comes to their buying decisions. In addition to being a communication tool, SM acts as a very powerful marketplace that influences Gen Z consumers' attitudes, preferences, and even their impulse purchases. With the fast-growing popularity of visual-oriented platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat, the Gen Z customers are surrounded by a mix of influencer promotions, targeted ads, flash sales, and algorithm-driven content all of which gravitate them to the habit of buying online on impulse. For the marketers and brands, as far as the findings go, SM has an impact on the Gen Z purchase behavior and therefore it is a great tool. Discovering the psychological and emotional aspects that are the roots of spontaneous buying can lead through the process of creating more attractive, ethical and people centered marketing strategies less than company customers. In addition, the companies should also consider promoting responsible consumption and being transparent in their dealings as well as practicing ethical advertising as these would help them win the trust and loyalty of the Gen Z consumers.

11. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The study has certain limitations that may affect its findings. The sample is drawn from specific locations and socio-economic and educational backgrounds, which may limit the generalizability of the results to the wider and more diverse Gen Z population. Additionally, the use of self-reported data may introduce bias, as participants could give socially desirable responses or inaccurately assess their own impulsive buying behaviour. Finally, the rapidly evolving nature of social media platforms, algorithms, and trends means that the findings may reflect only current patterns and could become outdated over time, affecting their relevance to long-term consumer behaviour analysis.

12. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research on social media's impact on Gen Z's impulsive purchases is likely to be even more revealing as digital platforms continue to evolve. AI-driven personalization and advanced algorithms may better predict consumer preferences, increasing impulsive buying. Immersive technologies like AR and VR, interactive product displays, social commerce features, and in-app purchases will further encourage spontaneous purchases. Micro and nano influencers, gamification, predictive trend forecasting, and AI chatbots are also expected to shape new behavioural patterns, leading to more habitual and unplanned buying. Overall, future studies will capture an increasingly dynamic and complex interaction between social media and Gen Z's impulsive purchasing behaviour.

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Rising Privacy Concerns Regarding Instagram Advertising Among Gen-Z Students in Hyderabad and Bangalore

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ABSTRACT: The rapid expansion of social media advertising has transformed how personal data are collected, processed, and monetized. Instagram, one of the most widely used platforms among Generation Z, relies on algorithm-driven advertising systems based on users' browsing behavior, engagement patterns, and inferred interests. While targeted advertising improves relevance and marketing efficiency, it raises significant concerns regarding privacy, surveillance, and user autonomy. This study examines privacy concerns among Gen-Z students in Hyderabad and Bengaluru and explores how awareness of data collection practices influences trust and engagement with Instagram advertisements. Using a descriptive quantitative research design, data were collected through an online survey of 200 respondents aged 18–25. Findings indicate high awareness of targeted advertising accompanied by strong concern over perceived intrusiveness, but limited proactive use of privacy controls. The study highlights a gap between privacy awareness and protective behavior, emphasizing the need for transparent platform practices and improved digital privacy literacy among urban youth.

Keywords:- Gen-Z, Instagram advertising, privacy concerns, targeted advertising, data awareness

1.INTRODUCTION:-

Social media platforms are integral to communication, entertainment, learning, and self-expression among Generation Z. Instagram occupies a particularly influential position due to its visual orientation, influencer culture, and algorithmic content curation, alongside the seamless integration of advertising within user-generated content.

Advertising on Instagram is driven by data-based personalization, enabling brands to reach users with content tailored to perceived interests and online behavior. While personalization enhances relevance, it raises ethical concerns related to consent, transparency, and surveillance, as users often lack clarity regarding the scope and processing of their data.

Heightened global discourse on data breaches and platform accountability has increased privacy awareness, particularly among urban Indian youth. Hyderabad and Bengaluru, as major educational and technological hubs, provide an appropriate context to examine how Gen-Z students perceive Instagram advertising and how such perceptions shape trust and engagement.

In the Indian digital ecosystem, the growth of social media advertising has occurred alongside rapid smartphone penetration and affordable internet access. For Gen-Z students, social media platforms are not merely entertainment tools but integral components of academic coordination, peer interaction, and identity formation. This deep integration amplifies the impact of advertising exposure, as promotional content is encountered repeatedly across social, educational, and recreational contexts.

Moreover, regulatory awareness regarding digital privacy remains uneven in India. Although policies such as the Information Technology Act and emerging data protection frameworks aim to safeguard user data, many young users remain unaware of their rights or the mechanisms available to control personal information. This regulatory ambiguity further contributes to uncertainty and discomfort

regarding platform data practices, reinforcing the relevance of examining privacy concerns within the Indian Gen-Z population.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:-

The framework of surveillance capitalism explains contemporary social media advertising practices. Zuboff (2019) argues that platforms extract 'behavioral surplus' from users' activities and convert it into predictive data for monetization through advertising markets.

Acquisti, Taylor, and Wagman (2016) conceptualize personal data as an information asset and note that information asymmetries lead users to make privacy decisions without full knowledge of associated risks, contributing to uncertainty and reduced perceived control.

Research also highlights emotional dimensions of privacy concerns, including the 'creepy factor,' where overly personalized advertisements generate discomfort and perceptions of constant surveillance, reducing trust and advertising effectiveness.

The privacy paradox is evident among Gen-Z users who express concern for privacy yet continue to engage with data-intensive platforms due to the social and functional benefits they provide.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:-

Uses and Gratifications Theory suggests that audiences actively choose media platforms to satisfy needs such as social interaction and self-expression. Despite privacy concerns, Instagram continues to fulfill these gratifications for Gen-Z users.

Agenda Setting Theory explains how repeated exposure to targeted content normalizes surveillance. On Instagram, persistent advertising reinforces personalization as a routine aspect of digital participation.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:-

A descriptive quantitative research design was employed. The study population included undergraduate and postgraduate students aged 18–25 from Hyderabad and Bengaluru.

Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire using convenience and snowball sampling. The instrument covered demographics, awareness of data practices, privacy concerns, and advertising engagement. A total of 200 valid responses were analyzed using percentage-based interpretation.

5. DIGITAL ADVERTISING, DATA SURVEILLANCE AND GEN-Z:-

The evolution of digital advertising has been closely linked with advancements in data analytics, artificial intelligence, and algorithmic profiling. Social media platforms such as Instagram operate within an ecosystem where user data is continuously collected, processed, and interpreted to predict preferences and consumption patterns. For Gen-Z users, who spend a considerable portion of their daily time on social media platforms, this environment results in constant exposure to data-driven advertising. Unlike traditional advertising formats, Instagram advertisements are embedded within personal content feeds, often appearing indistinguishable from organic posts. This integration increases advertising effectiveness but simultaneously intensifies perceptions of surveillance. Users frequently encounter advertisements that closely align with their recent searches, interactions, or interests, reinforcing the belief that their online activities are being closely monitored. Such experiences contribute to heightened awareness of data surveillance and raise concerns regarding autonomy and control.

Gen-Z users demonstrate a unique relationship with digital technology, characterized by high levels of digital literacy alongside emotional sensitivity to privacy intrusion. While this generation is technologically adept, familiarity with digital platforms does not necessarily equate to informed consent or understanding of complex data processing mechanisms. As a result, privacy concerns often emerge from emotional responses rather than technical comprehension of algorithms and data systems.

In the Indian context, the rapid adoption of digital platforms has outpaced public understanding of data governance and privacy regulation. Many Gen-Z users remain uncertain about how their data are stored, shared, or monetized, leading to a perception of vulnerability. This uncertainty is further amplified by limited transparency in platform communication and the use of lengthy, technical privacy policies that discourage user engagement.

Consequently, digital advertising on Instagram represents not only a commercial activity but also a site of negotiation between convenience and concern. While Gen-Z users continue to engage with the platform due to its social value, persistent exposure to personalized advertising reinforces anxieties related to surveillance and data exploitation. Understanding this dynamic is essential to contextualize the privacy concerns identified in the present study.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Results show extensive Instagram usage, with most respondents spending over three hours daily on the platform, increasing exposure to targeted advertising.

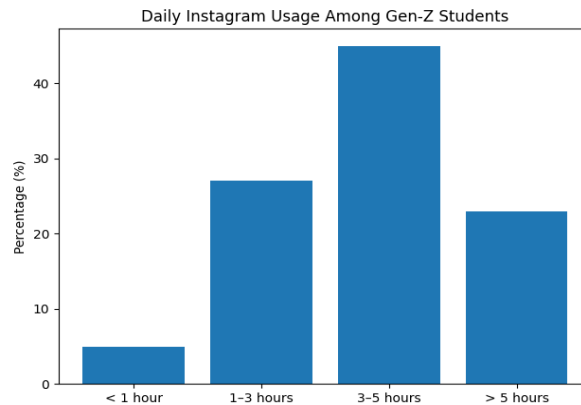


Fig. 1: Daily Instagram usage duration among Gen-Z students

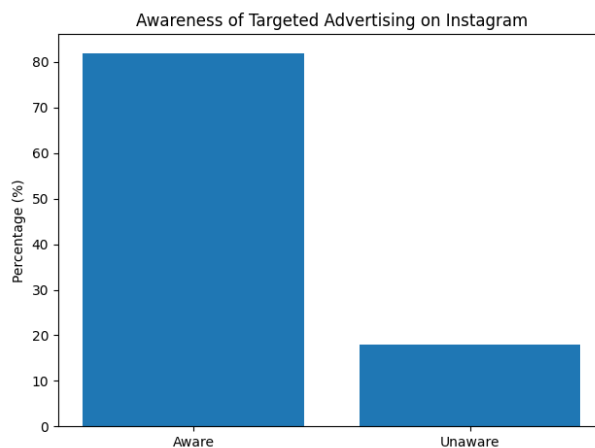


Fig. 2: Awareness of targeted advertising practices on Instagram

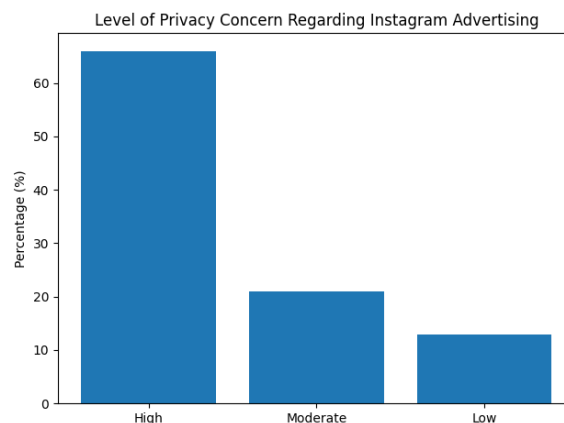


Fig. 3: Level of privacy concern regarding Instagram advertising

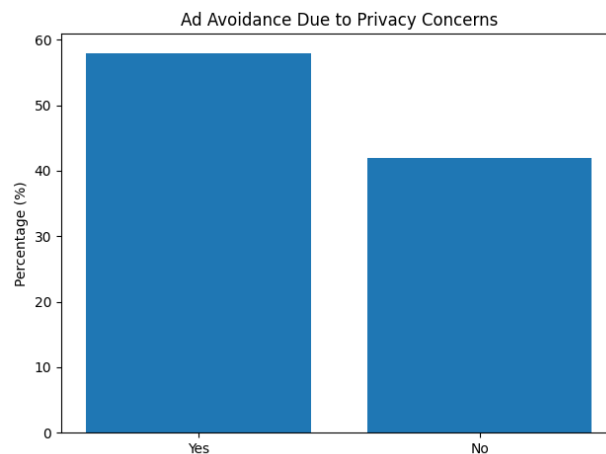


Fig. 4: Ad avoidance due to privacy concerns

The findings indicate high awareness of advertising personalization, alongside substantial concern over data tracking and perceived loss of control. Privacy concerns directly influence advertising engagement, leading to selective ad avoidance.

An important observation emerging from the data is the coexistence of awareness and resignation among respondents. While many students expressed discomfort with targeted advertising, a significant proportion indicated that they continue using Instagram without altering privacy settings due to perceived inconvenience or lack of alternatives. This suggests that privacy concern does not necessarily translate into platform abandonment but instead manifests as passive acceptance.

Additionally, respondents reported varying interpretations of data tracking mechanisms. Some attributed personalized advertisements to explicit online behavior, such as searches and follows, while others believed verbal conversations influenced advertising content. These perceptions, regardless of technical accuracy, contribute to heightened anxiety and reinforce the belief that surveillance extends beyond visible digital actions. Such interpretations play a crucial role in shaping emotional responses to advertising and trust in platform integrity.

7. DISCUSSION:-

7.1 Privacy Awareness and the “High Awareness–Low Action” Pattern:-

The findings of the study reveal a pronounced gap between awareness of data tracking practices and the adoption of protective behaviors among Gen-Z students. Although respondents demonstrated substantial awareness of Instagram’s use of personal data for advertising purposes, this awareness did not consistently translate into proactive privacy management. This pattern reflects a broader trend identified in digital privacy research, where users acknowledge risks but fail to modify behavior accordingly.

Several factors contribute to this phenomenon. Privacy policies are often perceived as complex, time-consuming, and difficult to interpret, discouraging users from engaging with them. Additionally, many respondents expressed a sense of inevitability regarding data tracking, believing that meaningful privacy control is unattainable in contemporary digital environments. This perception reduces motivation to actively manage privacy settings, even among users who express concern.

From a Uses and Gratifications perspective, continued platform engagement despite privacy concerns can be explained by the strong social and emotional gratifications Instagram provides. Social connection, entertainment, and identity expression often outweigh perceived risks, resulting in continued use accompanied by passive acceptance of data practices.

7.2 Emotional Responses, Trust, and Advertising Engagement:-

Beyond cognitive awareness, emotional responses play a critical role in shaping user attitudes toward Instagram advertising. Feelings of discomfort, unease, and mistrust were frequently associated with highly personalized advertisements. These emotional reactions contribute to reduced trust in the platform and negatively influence advertising engagement.

The perception that advertisements are based on excessive monitoring creates a sense of intrusion, even when data collection aligns with stated platform policies. Such perceptions foster skepticism toward sponsored content and may lead to avoidance behaviors, including ignoring advertisements or limiting interaction with promoted posts. Over time, these behaviors can diminish advertising effectiveness and weaken the relationship between users and the platform.

Trust emerges as a central mediating factor in this process. When users perceive data practices as opaque or unethical, trust in the platform declines, affecting both user satisfaction and commercial outcomes. Addressing emotional dimensions of privacy concern is therefore essential for platforms seeking to maintain engagement and credibility among Gen-Z users.

8. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY:-

Platforms should adopt transparent data practices and simplified privacy communication. Educational institutions and policymakers must strengthen digital privacy literacy to empower young users.

8.1 Gen-Z Perceptions and Advertising Ethics:-

Ethical considerations in digital advertising have become increasingly relevant as platforms rely on extensive data profiling. For Gen-Z users, ethical concerns extend beyond legal compliance and encompass perceptions of fairness, consent, and transparency. Advertisements that appear excessively personalized are often interpreted as intrusive, even when data collection practices comply with platform policies.

The findings suggest that ethical advertising for Gen-Z requires a balance between personalization and user comfort. Transparent communication regarding why specific advertisements are shown and how data are utilized can mitigate negative emotional responses. Failure to address these ethical expectations may result in long-term erosion of trust, reduced advertising effectiveness, and increased skepticism toward platform-sponsored content.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS:-

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations can be proposed for social media platforms, educational institutions, and users to address privacy concerns related to Instagram advertising.

Social media platforms should prioritize transparency in their data collection and advertising practices. Providing concise and user-friendly privacy summaries, rather than lengthy legal documents, can improve user understanding and engagement with privacy controls. Platforms should also offer clearer explanations regarding why specific advertisements are shown, enabling users to perceive personalization as informative rather than intrusive.

Educational institutions play a crucial role in strengthening digital privacy awareness among young users. Integrating digital privacy literacy into academic curricula can equip Gen-Z students with the knowledge required to understand data-driven technologies, algorithmic profiling, and consent mechanisms. Workshops, seminars, and awareness programs can further support informed decision-making in digital environments.

From a user perspective, Gen-Z students should be encouraged to actively manage their privacy and advertising preferences. Utilizing available platform tools to limit ad personalization and reviewing privacy settings periodically can help users regain a sense of control over their digital footprint. Promoting responsible digital behavior among young users is essential to balancing the benefits of social media engagement with the protection of personal data.

10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:-

Despite providing meaningful insights into privacy concerns related to Instagram advertising among Gen-Z students, the study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. The research relies on self-reported data collected through an online questionnaire, which may be influenced by respondent bias, social desirability, or subjective interpretation of privacy experiences. As a result, participants' responses may not fully reflect their actual behavior on social media platforms.

The sampling technique used in the study was non-probability based, employing convenience and snowball sampling methods. While this approach enabled efficient data collection, it limits the

representativeness of the sample. The findings, therefore, cannot be generalized to the entire Gen-Z population in India and are primarily reflective of students in urban, digitally active environments. Additionally, the study is geographically confined to Hyderabad and Bengaluru. Privacy perceptions may vary across regions due to differences in digital literacy, socio-economic background, and access to technology. Including respondents from rural or semi-urban areas could provide a more comprehensive understanding of Gen-Z privacy concerns in future research.

The study also focuses exclusively on Instagram advertising and does not compare privacy perceptions across multiple social media platforms. Future studies could adopt a comparative approach to examine whether privacy concerns differ between platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, or Snapchat. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into emerging privacy concerns and serves as a foundation for further research in the area of digital advertising and youth privacy.

11. CONCLUSION:-

The study highlights the growing awareness of data-driven advertising practices among Gen-Z students in Hyderabad and Bengaluru and reveals significant concerns regarding privacy, surveillance, and control over personal information. While Instagram continues to serve as an important platform for social interaction and self-expression, the findings suggest that personalized advertising has become a source of discomfort and skepticism among young users.

A key insight emerging from the research is the persistence of the “high awareness–low action” pattern, wherein users recognize privacy risks yet rarely engage in proactive measures to protect their data. This behavior reflects both structural barriers, such as complex privacy policies, and psychological factors, including perceived inevitability of surveillance in digital spaces.

Addressing privacy concerns among Gen-Z users requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving platforms, educators, policymakers, and users themselves. Transparent data practices, improved digital literacy, and ethical advertising strategies are essential to rebuilding trust and sustaining meaningful engagement. As digital ecosystems continue to evolve, prioritizing user autonomy and consent will be critical in shaping a more responsible and trustworthy future for social media advertising.

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Censorship Practices and Content Regulation in Indian Cinema: A Comparative Study of Empuraan, Janaki V vs State of Kerala, and The Kerala Story

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Abstract: Cinema often becomes a battleground before it screens in theatres. This is where censorship arrives, where stories are sometimes restrained, cut off, or allowed to be spoken. For a very long time, Indian cinema has been a creative and political mix that is also influenced by the people's feelings, and in this kind of situation, the limits of expression are always discussed. As such, censorship is not just a control system; it is more like a mirror of the ruling power, people's beliefs, and the social and political environment of the period. This study examines the tension between three particular cases or films, in which some faced censorship while others did not, highlighting the selective nature of censorship in Indian cinema. The movies which come under this research are Empuran (L2) 2025, Janaki vs State of Kerala (2025), and The Kerala Story (2023). These films entered the screen with heavy political and religious tension, but were presented with various censorship experiences.

Through qualitative content analysis, the research will show how the political and religious themes are framed in the films and how well the films were received by the audience and media. The study will also focus on the key scenes, cut-off scenes, and news narratives to take a deeper dive into films like Empuran and Janaki V vs State of Kerala. It will also focus on how the Kerala story did not have any major alterations despite having similar political or religious tension in that film. By comparing these three cases, the study will give a deeper understanding of how censorship bodies, public institutions, and society interpret film content and regulate its circulation. It highlights the complications of balancing creative freedom with concerns of public perception, collective sentiment, and responsible representation within Indian cinema.

Key Words: Cinema, Politics, Perception, Censorship, Ideology, Freedom

1. INTRODUCTION:

Indian cinema holds a unique place globally, serving not just as entertainment but also reflecting societal, cultural, and political issues. It is a powerful art form that significantly influences audiences through its vibrant visuals and compelling narratives. This influence has led to tensions among filmmakers, political entities, the government, and audiences regarding the boundaries of film content. The Central Board of Film Censorship (CBFC) plays a crucial role in determining these limits, acting as the official certification body under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Overall, the interplay between cinema and society in India highlights the medium's profound impact and the complexities surrounding its regulation.

This paper examines the films Empuran L2 (2025), Janaki V vs State of Kerala (2025), and The Kerala Story (2023), each of which experienced different forms of censorship by the CBFC. It emphasises that public perception significantly influences a movie's acceptance among audiences. The research employs qualitative analysis, focusing on two mass communication theories: Moral Panic theory and Framing theory. The paper highlights how social, political, or religious frames have impacted

the portrayal of these films, with varying degrees of censorship applied. Ultimately, it seeks to provide a foundation for understanding the relationship between public perception and film censorship.

This research utilises qualitative content analysis to explore the narratives created by films, the public discourse surrounding their release, and the impact of moral and political anxieties on audience reactions. It aims to understand censorship methods in the Indian film industry while highlighting the relationship between media framing, public perception, and content regulation. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that these objectives are interconnected and relevant to the analysis.

The study includes: Firstly, to analyse and compare the censorship experiences of *Empuraan*, *Janaki V vs State of Kerala*, and *The Kerala Story*. Secondly, to compare the level of criticism or support each film received from different groups (audiences, political groups, media), and the last one is to identify the key themes or scenes that triggered concerns, discussions, or demands for censorship.

1.1 Censorship in Cinema - Historical Background

The term "censorship" originated in 443 B.C. in Rome, where an officer responsible for the census also sought to moralise the populace. Censorship generally refers to the restriction of speech, ideas, or messages. There are two main types of censorship: direct, imposed by the government, and indirect, which is self-imposed by individuals or groups. Direct censorship involves government intervention before a film or idea is fully developed, while indirect censorship occurs when creators preemptively alter their work. Self-induced censorship often arises from societal pressures or fears of negative reactions to a release.

In 1894, *Dolorita in the Passion Dance*, an Atlantic City peep show production, created a wave of immorality in the US. Later in 1897, *Orange Blossoms* was banned in New York as it raised the topic of public immorality (Richardson, Para 1). Censorship in film emerged due to the portrayal of taboo topics such as civil war, women's rights, and economic disparities, leading to the establishment of censorship boards. The British Board of Film Censors was created in 1912, while New York formed its own censorship body in 1909. Censorship intensified after World War I, resulting in the banning or editing of films with sensational content.

Censorship in Indian cinema was introduced by the British under the Indian Cinematograph Act of 1918/1920, which established censor boards in major cities like Bombay and Kolkata. The first Indian film censored during this period was Bhaktha Vidhur (1912), deemed anti-national for resembling Mahatma Gandhi. The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) was created under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to oversee film releases, established by the Cinematograph Act of 1952. In 1983, the board's name was changed from the Central Board of Film Censors to its current title. The CBFC examines films and issues certification seals like U, UA, and A+, while having the authority to request cuts for compliance with guidelines. The research highlights the CBFC's responses to various films regarding censorship and certification processes.

1.2 Significance

This research shows the evolving role or type of censorship faced by the films through the CBFC, Central Board of Film Certification and how they preached on maintaining religious peace and social sensitivity within the films. By comparing these highlighted film cases like *Empuraan L2*, *Janaki V vs State of Kerala* and *The Kerala Story*, the research will emphasise the censorship differences faced between them. This comparative analysis furnishes subtle discernment of how censorship impinged on the development of not only the artistic but also the sociopolitical sides of the films in both regional and national contexts.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature here mainly focuses on the theory papers, news articles, and interviews regarding these cases. The main focus is on these three film cases, such as *Empuraan L2*(2025), *Janaki V vs State of Kerala* (2025) and *The Kerala Story*(2023) and their controversies regarding censorship differences they faced. The research addresses the comments and changes made by the CBFC regarding

the film. It primarily collects data from secondary sources, including censorship board records, court rulings, news articles, and relevant social media content. Additionally, the research employs qualitative content analysis to focus on the narratives and arguments of various groups.

Frothingham, M. B. (2025, October 10). *Moral panic (Folk devils & moral panics – Cohen, 1972)*. Simply Psychology. Moral panic theory, a concept that Cohen first introduced in 1972, describes the manner in which societies magnify threats by branding certain groups as "folk devils". As per Frothingham (2025), it is the media that contributes majorly in this respect by escalating the incidents, instilling fear, and urging the authorities to react by increasing their control over the situation. The model shows the extent to which moral panics determine cultural narratives, affect censorship, and serve as a ground for the implementation of restrictive policies.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

In this research, "Censorship Practices and Content Regulation in Indian Cinema: A Comparative Study of *Empuraan*, *Janaki V vs State of Kerala*, and *The Kerala Story*", one focuses on the social, political, religious and audience perception through qualitative analysis and for a deeper dive into the topic, one can see how comparative case study analysis is used. This research is dissected through two theories, which are Moral Panic Theory and Framing Theory.

Moral Panic theory is one of the psychological theories which was introduced by Sociologist Stanley Cohen, in his classic book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1972), to describe how the media and moral enforcers give exaggerated reviews or outrage. Moral panics follow a pattern where they amplify the media coverage, escalating public anxiety and creating marginalisation of a certain group. This theory also speaks to how this induces stigmatisation on a certain community, which will create chaos to live within the normal society, thus marginalising them. A moral panic happens when a large group of people become deeply worried that something is threatening the moral values or stability of society (Frothingham, 2025, para.1). Cinema has a significant influence on people's perceptions, particularly in India, where audiences are easily swayed by films and their favourite actors. This influence can lead to misconceptions and major clashes within communities, often based on exaggerated fears or misinformation. These phenomena can resemble mass hysteria, where panic spreads due to misleading narratives. Moral panics are not spontaneous; rather, they are often fueled by parties seeking to benefit from the ensuing chaos. Cohen stated that "a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests" (Frothingham, 2025, para.3).

The concept of Framing theory was introduced by Erving Goffman's (1974) work on frames. analysis in sociology, which states how people organise and make sense of the world. Later, this theory was further elevated and argued by Robert Entman (1993), who stated that it not only organises but also puts concepts or reality into a frame which is to be altered and hung for the people to see and receive a particular promoted perception by certain groups. The framing theory can also be considered as the closer relative of the agenda-setting theory. In this research, one will mainly focus on the human-interest frame, where one can focus on societal perception and sensitivity. According to Framing techniques by Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), spin is considered to present a concept in such a way as to convey a value judgement (positive or negative) that might not be immediately apparent; to create an inherent bias by definition (Davie, n.d., para. 6). And in this research, one will analyse how these films are being put into frame voluntarily or involuntarily to capture or change the audience perception

2.2 Research Gap

Research on censorship in India has focused on many areas, but some, like the controversies surrounding films such as *Empuraan L2*, *Janaki V vs State of Kerala*, and *The Kerala Story*, remain underexplored despite significant public debate. The political tensions and digital wars depicted in these films have not been adequately examined. Existing theories, like Moral Panic and Framing theory, are not widely applied, suggesting that alternative theories could expand the research landscape. There is also a notable gap in openly discussing the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) and its role in censorship. Overall, the selective censorship of films from Kerala presents a lesser-studied area in the context of film research.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this research employs a qualitative research design, primarily focusing on comparative case study analysis. The films included in this comparative study are *Empuran L2* (2025), *Janaki V vs State of Kerala* (2025), and *The Kerala Story*, in which the research will delve deeper to explore the socio-political opinions within society. This research enables the identification of the similarity, patterns and differences.

3.1 Research Design

Qualitative analysis is a research method that does not rely on numerical data, focusing instead on understanding patterns within a subject. It often involves case studies, which require in-depth investigation into real-world scenarios to uncover differences or crises. The research will conduct a comparative analysis of three selected films: *Empuran L2*, *Janaki V vs State of Kerala*, and *The Kerala Story*. This comparative analysis will examine social, political, religious, and censorship differences in the films, particularly highlighting imbalances in regional content. Additionally, the research will include non-participant observation to assess audience reactions, comment patterns, and political backlashes related to the films.

4. CONTENT ANALYSIS & DATA INTERPRETATION

In this research, titled “Censorship Practices and Content Regulation in Indian Cinema: A Comparative Study of *Empuraan*, *Janaki V vs State of Kerala*, and *The Kerala Story*”. The researcher is going to focus on the analysis of these films through a comparative study by applying moral panic theory and framing theory. Let’s start with understanding the movies which the researcher has selected.

4.1 *Empuran L2* (2025)

Empuran L2 is a sequel to a movie called *Lucifer*, directed by Prithviraj Sukumaran, one of the finest directors, actors and producers of Malayalam cinema. The movie is an action thriller released in 2025. This movie starred one of the pioneer Malayalam actors who received the Dada Saheb Phalke Award 2025, Mohanlal, along with Prithviraj, Tovino Thomas, and Manju Warriar. The name of the protagonist is Stephen Nedumpally, who is a criminal who is living a double life as Khureshi Ab'raami. This movie has a time skip of five years to show that he was working internationally as a crime lord, and also shows the backstory of Khureshi Ab'raami's right hand, Zayed Masood (Prithviraj), which was considered the most controversial part of the film. The backstory of his story creates a familiarity with the Gujarat Riots that happened in 2002, which caused a major clash from a particular political party. The film had 24 cuts. Self-induced portions were self-censored due to severe threats by the Hindutva Party. 2 minutes and 8 seconds were cut off from the film, and out of that, 28 seconds of violence against women were cut by CBFC, saying that it's not proper to show violence against women. Another scene that was changed were that the name 'Bajrangi' was changed to 'Baldev' saying that name is similar to a living person, another one is was that “in 2002” was changed to “a few years ago” along with that the list exposes the fact were thank you cards referring to actor-politician Suresh Gopi and Additional Commissioner Income Tax, Jyothi Mohan IRS, was taken out and mixed up with other thank you cards.

4.2 *Janaki V vs State of Kerala* (2025)

Janaki V vs State of Kerala is a Malayalam movie directed by Pravin Narayan. The movie is a legal thriller released in 2025. The plot of the movie follows a woman who was a victim of rape, who decided to fight for justice, where she met an advocate who was ready to question the Indian Judicial system. The film starred actor-politician Suresh Gopi, the advocate whose name was Adv. David Abel Donovan and Anupama Parameswaran as Janaki, who was the victim of the inhuman activity. The movie was previously known as “*Janaki vs State of Kerala*”, but CBFC Mumbai gave a review to change the title of this movie because the name of the rape victim is Janaki, which is another name for the Goddess Sita, wife of Lord Rama. They said that it will hurt the religious sentiment of the people,

which will result in a religious clash. A total of 96 cuts were asked by the CBFC Mumbai to censor, even though CBFC Thiruvananthapuram had allowed them. The CBFC also said they won't clear certification unless they change the title; that's when the filmmaker decides to take this matter to court, saying that it's absolutely unnecessary.

4.3 The Kerala Story (2023)

The Kerala Story is a nationwide movie set in Kerala in 2023. The movie was directed by Sudipto Sen and starred Adah Sharma, who is the main character of the film, Shalini Unnikrishnan from Thiruvananthapuram. This is a story of a girl who went to college to study nursing. Later, she was introduced to a man by her roommate, Asifa (Sonia Balani), who is from another religion, specifically Islam. Shalini was having an affair with a man named Rameez, who was involved in a terrorist group, gaslighting her into converting to her religion.

From Hinduism to Islam. Later, when Rameez left her pregnant, he pulled out of the responsibility and left her alone, and that's when Ishaq, her husband, who married her when she was vulnerable, decided to take her to Pakistan by saying that they were going on a honeymoon in Sri Lanka, which later resulted in her becoming a suicide bomber in Syria. The censorship that was allotted by the CBFC was 10 scenes, which included an interview of Kerala's former Chief Minister, Mr Achudananadan, where he stated that in the coming 10 years, the youngsters will start to follow Islam, and another scene that was cut was regarding the Hindu Deities being addressed inappropriately. There was a dialogue in the movie saying that "Indian Communists are the biggest hypocrites", and here the only term that was deleted was "India", and it was done by the CBFC.

From the plots and the cut scenes of these movies, one can understand how the censorship has been divided between the state and the private sector. The censorship itself can be seen as self-censorship to censoring, that's only favourable for them. Here, we're applying the theories to prove how it was done through the lens of social, political and religious, and to know more about how the audience perceived the movie.

4.4 Social Involvement & Religious Sentiment

Introducing Empuran, a crime-thriller movie, is studied through the theory of moral panic under the lens of social theory. Empuran had a mixed review after its release, mainly focusing on the audience reaction. As mentioned in the content analysis, Empuran had 24 self-censored cuts. It received major backlash from the Hindutva Party, saying that this film was made to target the religion of Hinduism and exaggerated by saying that people of Sanathan Dharma are in danger. The RSS expressed disapproval of the movie "Empuran," claiming it promotes anti-national sentiments and distorts Hinduism and Christianity. Scholars argue that films are primarily entertainment and that "Empuran" reflects the reality of the 2002 Gujarat riots rather than spreading falsehoods. Critics unfamiliar with the facts exaggerate claims that the film is pro-Islam or terrorism, despite Indian law allowing discussions of historical tragedies. In contrast, "The Taj Story," which suggests a Shiva idol exists beneath the Taj Mahal, has faced censorship issues but received support from Hindu organisations through free screenings and tax exemption appeals. This disparity highlights the political biases present in film narratives, as "Empuran" was unjustly labelled anti-national while "The Taj Story" garnered media attention despite public dissent.

The film "Janaki V vs State of Kerala" has faced controversy due to its title, which some believe could offend religious sentiments. Initially, the title "Janaki vs State of Kerala" was submitted for certification but was denied by CBFC Mumbai, which requested 97 cuts. However, the Kerala High Court later intervened, allowing the film to proceed with only two scene cuts. The title's contentiousness arises from its association with Hindu goddesses, particularly Goddess Sita and Goddess Lakshmi. In contrast, another film titled "Lakshmi," released in 2014, faced its own challenges due to violent content but was ultimately allowed by the CBFC.

The Kerala Story is a film directed by Sudipto Sen, featuring Adah Sharma in the lead role. It narrates the harrowing tale of Shalini Unnikrishnan, who aspired to be a nurse but fell victim to 'love jihad' and was trafficked to Syria as a suicide bomber. The director claims that 32,000 women have

been trafficked and converted to Islam through this means, asserting that this issue is prevalent in Kerala. Following strong backlash from the public, a press conference was held where five women who suffered under a terrorist group were presented. The film's initial claims were later discredited by the High Court, leading the filmmakers to alter the narrative to focus on the experiences of three women instead.

4.5 Audience Reception

Indian cinema, like the country's diverse cultures, mirrors each other, but reactions to movies are also highly influenced by personal beliefs. The film "Empuran" elicited varying reactions with a segment of the audience from Kerala strongly supporting and praising the filmmakers for daring to take up the subject. On the other hand, the viewers from the Northern states considered the film to be against religion and the nation because of a supposed misrepresentation, which led to controversies all over the country. As a result of this, a cyber war between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) supporters and the left-wing supporters took place. The disagreement became a big issue when Bineesh Kodiyeri supported the film's UK political message, and that caused a big fight.

In the movie Janaki V vs State of Kerala, when it was put into a controversial stage by the CBFC, the people of Kerala were supportive of the film by saying that a movie is a movie, don't make a mountain out of a molehill. Even though the people were supportive, the CBFC demanded that it be changed; otherwise, it wouldn't be given film certification. There were lots of videos posted on YouTube saying that this film should be banned because it disrespects the Goddess Sita, when the film itself doesn't have any religious background. For example, there is an account named satyasanatan official that has created an AI voice-over video saying that this film hurts religious sentiment, and it should be banned, while the people in the comment section support by hurling hate words against one religion unnecessarily and saying that people should wake up and start protesting, which harms the peace of diversity.

In the movie The Kerala Story, the majority of the Malayali audience stood against the film, saying that this is not their Kerala. They created a hashtag campaign by posting with friends from other religions, saying that #thisismykeralastory and #thekeralastory. Shashi Tharoor, MP of Thiruvananthapuram,

4.6 Major Findings

The analysis of the case studies reveals how half-knowledge can cause harm and influence perceptions of films. The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) shows selective censorship based on socio-political factors, with different films facing varying levels of scrutiny. In Kerala, the films Empuran L2 and Janaki V vs State of Kerala challenge the nation's narrative, while The Kerala Story portrays the state negatively, fostering misconceptions among viewers with limited understanding. The CBFC claims to uphold communal harmony, but inconsistencies in censorship suggest a biased approach. Unlike the Kashmiri Files, which are based on real events, Empuran L2 faced additional censorship challenges, including title changes. Through the lens of moral panic and framing, the research highlights how misinformation in films can manipulate public perception and create unwarranted anxiety.

5. CONCLUSION

"Cinema is a reflection of society and, in most cases, can be a mirror and not just show the problems but also give solutions and help them reach a large number of people through faces and voices that matter."

-Kirti Kulhari

Cinema is an entertainment medium through which anyone can express their opinions, and every filmmaker should be ready to take the responsibility of expressing their ideas to society, since India is a country where people are influenced by every bad film. Freedom of expression is our right, and no one has the right to ask us to keep quiet. Through this research, one can understand how the film was

censored differently and how it was presented to the whole of India as a film. Every film has a way of telling its stories, and it is the responsibility of CBFC to promote only the facts depicted in the story, whether they are real or not, so that when it gets its release, it won't create communal disputes and disrupt harmony within the society.

This study also enunciates how the Indian cinema censorship is different, with their social difference, political tension and religious sentiment playing a major role in how the films are censored. It's evident through the research that the censorship accountability differs from state to state, religion, etc. The comparative study reveals how cinema has become a site of clash for its own ideology. Through moral panic and framing theory, one can understand how the films are being framed to the people by the media or any officials and how it creates panic and unwanted perceptions in their mind, which gradually evolves into hate or marginalisation. The rule is made for everyone, so everyone in this country has to obey and follow it. If this changes for any person or a party, it becomes biased.

Ultimately, this research shows how censorship has evolved and the trend or bend to social and political tension. This research requests the equal application of the rule to every film, which will help in maintaining social and religious harmony.

5.1 Limitations

The limitation of this research was to determine the real intention of the people regarding the ideology of the CBFC, what they prefer, and what made them sanction two different films with the same inner plot but different outcomes. Another was the limited information about the film on the internet; for example, there were major debates and findings for *The Kerala Story*, while the information regarding *Empuran L2* and *Janaki V vs State of Kerala* was limited online. The main limitation is having access to the primary data of CBFC for people to understand how they deal with the censorship of these films. Another major limitation is the media bias and political alignment prevalent throughout society, which often results in either a watered-down version of data or entirely misinformed or false facts.

5.2 Scope

The study titled “Censorship Practices and Content Regulation in Indian Cinema: A Comparative Study of *Empuraan*, *Janaki V vs State of Kerala*, and *The Kerala Story*” only focuses on the qualitative case study analysis, where there are many ways to research this topic. Starting with choosing quantitative analysis, one can dive deeper and go to different sections of analysis and theories to check. Since the theory is limited only to the social, political and religious sentiment along with the audience perception and how the CBFC works on each film, one can use many other ways to dig more into the topic since this is surface-level research.

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Double taps and engagement: exploring Instagram as a medium for public relations

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Abstract: Instagram has altered the process of communication and reputation management strategies for any brand and its audience, taking a deeper dive into this change and trend in Public relations this research studies Instagram as an essential tool for communication during public relations and the impact the social media platform has had on the conveyance of brand content, promotion of organic growth on social and also the rise of influencer marketing along with the corporate reputation management ability provided by the platform. This research takes the responses of 107 survey participants that are from various age brackets and different walks of life in order to understand their use of Instagram and also its effectivity when it comes to branded content and its PR. This study helped realise the role of Instagram in shaping perceptions about a brand, the user interactivity and the attributes that draw and trigger responses, thereby establishing a channel or medium of communication and public relation to build trust, promote and retain integrity, convey clear messages and also as an aid in helping with crisis management. This paper outlines Instagram and its necessity and evolution as an integral tool for PR communication and activities while helping companies to reach their target audience to understand and serve them better while forming favourable impressions.

Keywords: Instagram, public relations, engagement, influencer marketing, brand image, audience trust.

1.INTRODUCTION:

With the rapid growth of social media platforms, the communication process has gone through changes and trends that influence how people consume information. The field of public relations and publicity also adopts this mode of communication to better involve themselves with the target audience via platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn as an integral part of their communication strategy and business activities. Social media has evolved from a means of entertainment to an integral part of communication and networking as users worldwide spend hours engaging with brands and influencers via their content on the platforms and following trends.

As public relations has inherently relied on the concept of trust, credibility and media relations, Supa (2008) defines Public Relations as a “systematic, planned, purposeful and mutually beneficial relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners.” Today, PR operates in the digital space involving journalists, influencers, creators, and audiences for engagement and allowing brand to reach a wider audience, directly shaping PR

communication and highlighting the need for professionals to understand the opportunities and challenges of digital media.

2.Review of Literature:

A recent research paper, "How the utilization of Instagram builds and maintains customer relationships," by Thamwika Bergström and Lisa Bäckman indicated that simple interactive techniques tend to secure substantially more significant levels of engagement than basic corporate updates alone, for example, creating branded hashtags inviting users to contribute content of their own or encouraging participatory challenges. Instagram has been evolving from a site of images to a site of public relations that takes personality, emotion, and traction. (Bergström & Bäckman, 2013)

The research paper "I want to work there: how public relations agencies communicate organisational culture and identity on Instagram" by Brandi Watkins and Stephanie A. Smith has looked at how PR agencies use Instagram in order to present their organisational culture. They have noted that some of the most common ways agencies present organisational culture on Instagram are through highlighting workers, behind-the-scenes activities, community involvement, and awards shown. All of them tend to humanise the workplace and attract both talent and clients (Watkins & Smith, 2022).

The research paper "Strategy Marketing Public Relations Online Shop Body Big Size dalam Membangun Brand Awareness dan Minat Beli Pelanggan Melalui Akun Instagram @BodyBigSize", written by Kemala Tantri Silvia, while focusing on plus-size fashion markets, pointed out that push and pull, and pass PR strategies, promotional collaborations, interactive content, and information posts really work well in niche sectors. It does not stop at marketing and branding; rather, Instagram becomes very helpful for events, building communities, preserving culture, and public communication. (Nisar & Saleem, 2024)

Research Gap

While several studies investigate uses of social media in public relations, most such studies focus on organisational strategies, branding, or marketing communication on Instagram. Much of the available work looks at how companies, agencies, or institutions use Instagram to show off their culture, promote events, or build brand identity. Very little work has been done so far on how the audience perceives and responds to PR communication on this platform. While studies from other countries highlight how Instagram plays an increasingly significant role in storytelling, influencer engagement, and brand visibility, very little research aims at exploring these from the point of view of Indian audiences. This paper identifies an important gap in the literature as it investigates Instagram as a medium of public relations. It uses a quantitative, audience-centred perspective: users' perceptions of brand messages, trust in PR communication, response to influencers, and their view of brand image and reputation on the platform.

3.Methodology

The paper follows a quantitative approach to understand Instagram for the purposes of brand communication, trustworthy relationship-building, collaboration with social influencers, and handling online reputation. Quantitative research was chosen for this purpose because it provides measurable data from a larger population. In this regard, patterns, attitudes, and behaviours related to PR activities on Instagram are easier to observe. Data were gathered using an online survey distributed across digital platforms to active Instagram users. A total of 107 participants responded to the survey. These subjects view, like, comment on, and share brand posts, influencer content, and promotional material; therefore, they are within the objective of this research via a survey that had only closed-ended questions, the majority of which had a design based on the 5-point Likert scale. This has allowed the participants to express the degree of agreement or disagreement over statements with regard to brand messages, trust of influencer roles, and brand reputation. Its construction has thus enabled the collection of clear and comparable data for analysis.

4.Objective

To comprehend how brands use Instagram to communicate their messages.

Learn how PR builds trust and credibility between brands and audiences.

The intention of this paper is to analyze influencer roles in brand communication on Instagram.

Evaluate the effect of Instagram on brand image and reputation in PR.

5. Theoretical Framework

These are sets of theories that explain how digital platforms may affect communication, audience behaviour, and the relationship between brands and the public. Instagram epitomises features such as visuality, real-time interaction, and user participation. A few theories within communications and PR support and help explain why Instagram has emerged as a prime space for audience engagement. Theories that inform and support the basis of this research are discussed below.

1. Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

Accordingly, the Uses and Gratifications Theory by Katz and Gurevitch states that audiences are not passive media consumers; instead, they select a platform according to their needs or expectations. Instagram fits into this concept quite well, as it responds to manifold needs all at once: entertainment, information, connectivity, creativity, and discovery of brands. This theory will explain in PR why people interact with brand posts, follow influencers, respond to polls, or simply double-tap to show approval. It is voluntary for them and motivated by personal satisfaction. That is why PR content should be authentic, relevant, and meaningful if it is to capture people's attention (Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. 1973).

2. Relationship Management Theory

The Symmetrical Theory of Relationship Management by Ledingham and Bruning states that, in order to achieve good public relations, durable and positive relations should exist between an organisation and its public. On Instagram, a natural structure would make it easier to build this relationship: posting, responding to comments, replying to messages, and keeping the conversation going. Features of Instagram, like Stories, DMs, and interactive stickers, have the capability of making brands warm and responsive. This theory points out how Instagram aids in building trust, credibility, and emotional connection that is necessary for any good PR to take place. (Ledingham, J. A., & Bruning, S. D., 1998).

3. Social Presence

The Social Presence Theory by Williams and Christie provides that communication is more persuasive and meaningful when perceived as personal or emotionally engaging. The way in which Instagram reels, stories, live sessions, behind-the-scenes content, and posts by influencers are designed gives a strong feeling of proximity between brands and their audiences. Such a human touch lends more personalised appeal to brands; they appear much warmer and friendlier. In PR, where authenticity and transparency are important concepts, high levels of social presence can increase trust manifold and therefore enhance the perception of the audience towards the brand. Social Presence Theory (Short, J., Williams, E., & Christie, B., 1976).

6. Analysis and Discussion

The demographic profile

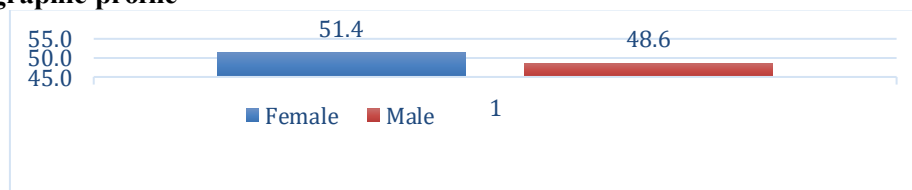


Fig 1.1 Graphical representation of Gender

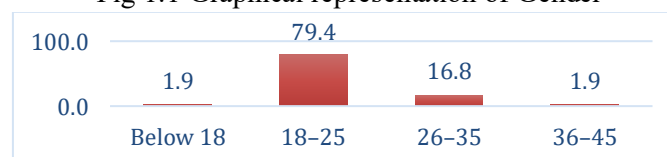
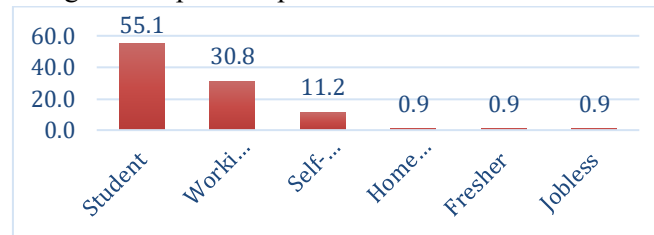


Fig 1.1.1 Graphical representation of Age

The data collected for this research included 107 respondents. Of these, 51.4% (n=55) were women and 48.6% (n=52) were men, as shown in Figure 1.1. The majority, 79.4% (n=85), were between the ages of 18 and 25. Following this, 16.8% (n=18) were in the 26 to 35 age group, and 1.9% (n=2) were in each of the age categories under 18 and 36 to 45. (shown in the fig 1.1.1)

Fig 1.2 Graphical representation of Education level



The educational qualifications of the respondents are as follows. Most respondents held a bachelor's degree, making up 52.3% (n=56). This was followed by master's degree students at 39.3% (n=42). Diploma and associate degree holders accounted for 5.6% (n=6) of the respondents, while the remaining 2.8% (n=3) had secondary education or lower, as shown in Figure 1.2. The employment distribution recorded that 55.1% (n=59) were students. This was followed by 30.8% (n=33) who were working professionals and 11.2% (n=12) who were self-employed or ran their own business.

Active user of social media

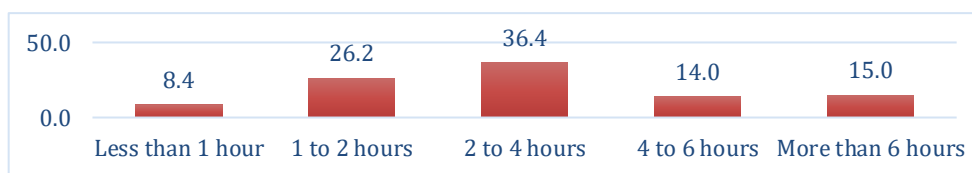


Fig 2.1: Graphical representation of Hours Spent on Social Media Per Day

The activity levels of the recorded data showed that most respondents, 36.4% (n=39), used social media for 2 to 4 hours a day. This was followed by 26.2% (n=28) who spent 1 to 2 hours daily on social media. For those using social media for 4 hours or more, 29% (14+15=29%) (n=15+16=31) had their activity recorded. On the lower end, 8.4% (n=9) of respondents consumed social media for less than 1 hour. (shown in Fig 2.1)

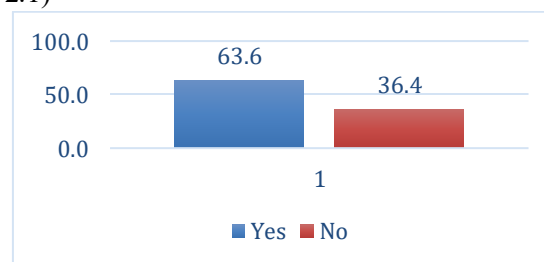


Fig 2.2 Graph representation of Users Who Follow Brands on Instagram

To check if the respondents follow any brands on Instagram to learn about their products or services, 63.6% (n=68) said yes, while 36.4% (n=39) said no. (shown in Fig. 2.2)

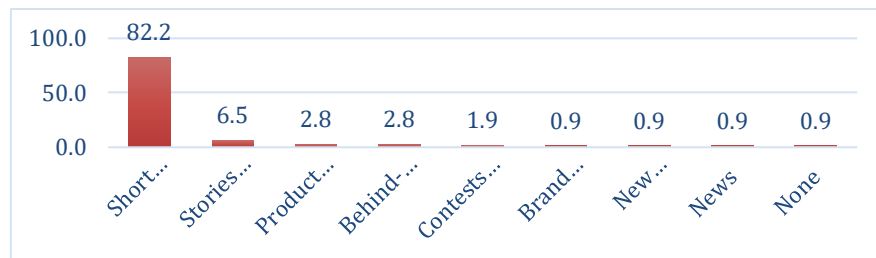


Fig 2.3 Graphic representation of Types of Brand Content That Attract User Attention

When asked which type of Instagram content from brands captures their attention the most, 82.2% (n=88) of respondents said they are entertained by reels and short videos. In contrast, only 17.8% (n=19) of respondents found other forms of content online worth their attention. (shown in Fig 2.3)

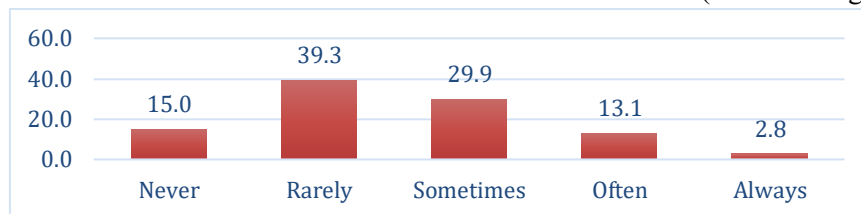


Fig 2.4 Graphical representation of Engagement with brand post on Instagram

The engagement frequency data shows that most respondents interact with brand posts on Instagram only a little. The largest group, 39.3% (n=42), reported that they rarely engage. This is followed by 29.9% (n=32) who said they sometimes like, comment, or share brand content. A smaller group, 15.0% (n=16), indicated that they never engage with these posts. Only 13.1% (n=14) of respondents said they engage often, and a very small percentage, 2.8% (n=3), reported that they always interact with brand posts. Overall, the data suggests that while many consume branded content passively, active engagement is still relatively low among the respondents. (shown in fig 2.4)

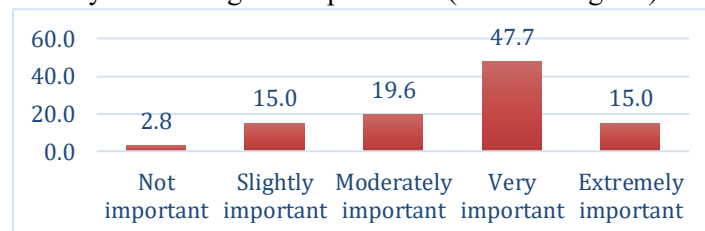


Fig 2.5 Graphical representation of the importance of Instagram for brands to share their messages

The respondents generally view Instagram positively as a platform for brands to communicate their messages. The largest group, 47.7% (n=51), considered Instagram very important for effective brand communication. This was followed by 19.6% (n=21) who rated it as moderately important, which shows that many still recognise Instagram's relevance, even if it is to a lesser extent. Additionally, 15.0% (n=16) saw the platform as slightly important, while only 2.8% (n=3) thought Instagram is not important for brand messaging. Another 15.0% (n=16) rated it as extremely important, indicating strong belief in its role as a key branding tool. Overall, the data suggests that most respondents see Instagram as an essential and impactful medium for brand communication. (shown in fig 2.5)

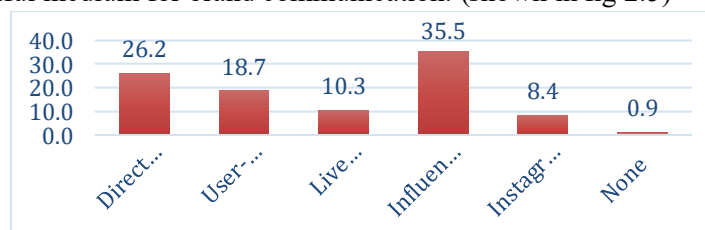


Fig 2.6 Graphical representation of Instagram Features That Build the Strongest Brand Connection

The data on how Instagram features help brands connect with users shows that influencer collaborations are seen as the most effective, chosen by 35.5% of respondents (n=38). This suggests that endorsements or content featuring influencers significantly improve brand relatability and trust. The next most valued feature was direct replies to comments and messages, selected by 26.2% (n=28). This highlights the need for personal interaction and two-way communication in strengthening brand-consumer relationships. Additionally, 18.7% (n=20) said that reposting user-generated content fosters a sense of community and recognition. Meanwhile, 10.3% (n=11) preferred live Q&A or AMA sessions for their ability to provide real-time engagement. A smaller group, 8.4% (n=9), felt that Instagram shopping tags or ads help build connections. Only 0.9% (n=1) said that none of the features create a strong connection. Overall, the findings show that interactive, participatory, and influencer-driven features resonate most with users. (shown in fig 2.6)

Trust-Building Elements in Brand PR Content



Fig 3.1 Graphical representation of Audience Perception of Brand Honesty and Clarity

The findings show that respondents prioritize brand honesty and transparency when they receive information. A significant 43.9% (n=47) rated this as very important. Additionally, 31.8% (n=34) considered it extremely important. This indicates a clear expectation for brands to communicate openly. Fewer respondents viewed honesty as moderately important. Specifically, 10.3% (n=11) selected somewhat important, and another 10.3% (n=11) chose a little important. Only 3.7% (n=4) felt that brand honesty was not important. Overall, the data clearly suggests that most respondents value straightforward and transparent communication from brands. (shown in fig 3.1)

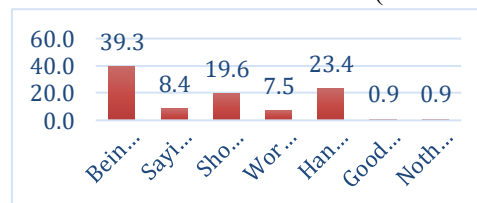


Fig 3.2 Graphical representation of Factors Influencing Brand Trust

Trust-building factors show that respondents value openness and accountability the most. The most important factor was being honest about problems and successes, chosen by 39.3% (n=42). This highlights the importance of authenticity. Next was handling problems quickly and clearly, selected by 23.4% (n=25). This reinforces that timely and transparent crisis management strengthens trust. Additionally, 19.6% (n=21) believed that displaying positive customer reviews helps build credibility. Meanwhile, 8.4% (n=9) emphasized the need for consistent messaging across platforms. Smaller groups chose working with trusted people (7.5%, n=8) and a combination of positive reviews and quick issue handling (0.9%, n=1). Only 0.9% (n=1) thought that nothing builds trust. These results show that honesty and responsiveness are the strongest foundations of brand trust. (shown on fig 3.2)

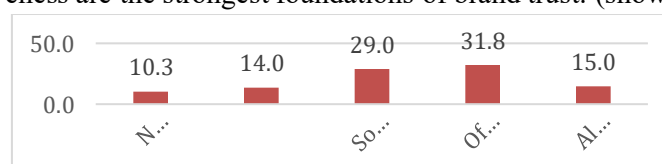


Fig 3.3 Graphical representation of consumer views on Brand Social Issue Communication

Respondents showed moderate to strong interest in brands that address social or environmental issues. A total of 46.8% felt this was important. Of those, 31.8% (n=34) said it mattered a lot and 15.0% (n=16) said it mattered very much. Another 29.0% (n=31) indicated it somewhat mattered. This suggests that many consumers value socially responsible communication, even if it isn't their main focus. Only 14.0% (n=15) felt it mattered a little, and 10.3% (n=11) said it didn't matter at all. Overall, the results show that views differ, but a majority still prefer brands that openly discuss social or environmental issues. (shown in fig 3.3)

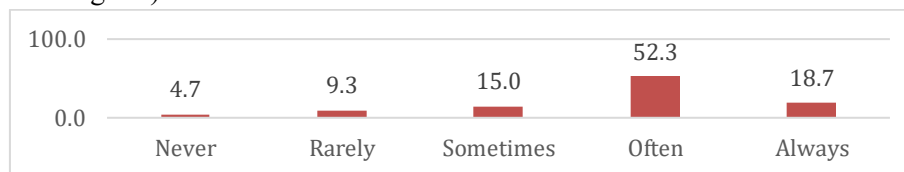


Fig 3.4 Graphical Representation of Consumer Feelings on Fast Crisis Response

The data shows that timely responses during a crisis strongly affect consumer perceptions. More than half of the respondents, 52.3% (n=56), believed that quick responses are very important. An additional 18.7% (n=20) said they are extremely important, highlighting a clear need for fast communication. Some respondents noted moderate importance, with 15.0% (n=16) indicating it matters somewhat, while 9.3% (n=10) felt it matters only a little. Just 4.7% (n=5) said it does not matter at all. Overall, the trend reveals that being responsive in crisis situations is essential for maintaining consumer trust and confidence. (shown in fig 3.4)

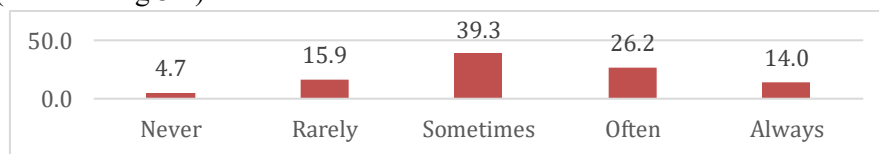


Fig 3.5 Graphical Representation of Role of Employees in Building Brand Trust

The responses show that positive communication from employees influences consumer trust, but to different extents. The largest group, 39.3% (n=42), said they trust a brand somewhat more when its employees speak well of it, indicating a moderate yet clear influence. Additionally, 26.2% (n=28) reported that it greatly affects their trust, while 14.0% (n=15) believed it impacts their trust very much. This highlights that many respondents see employee support as a reliable sign of brand trustworthiness. At the same time, 15.9% (n=17) felt it matters a little, and only 4.7% (n=5) said it does not influence their trust at all. Overall, the data suggests that employee endorsements significantly shape brand trust, with most respondents viewing them positively. (shown in fig 3.5)

Role of Influencers in Shaping Brand Messaging

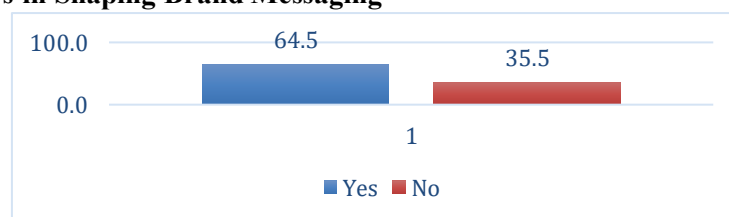


Fig 4.1 Graphical representation of Influencer Impact on Audience Attention

To find out if the audience pays attention to influencers' posts about brands, 64.5% (n=69) of respondents answered yes, while 35.5% (n=38) answered no. (shown in fig 4.1)

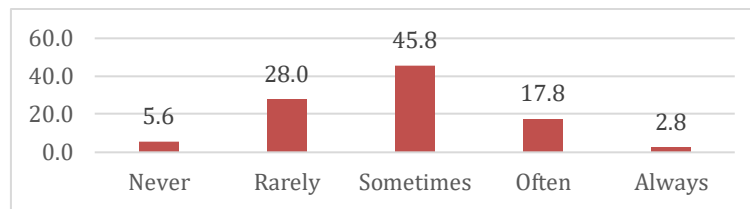


Fig 4.3 Graphical representation of Trust in Brands Promoted by Known Influencers

The data shows a moderate level of trust in brands endorsed by influencers. The largest group, 45.8% (n=49), said they trust these brands somewhat more. This suggests that influencer promotion is important but not fully convincing. Another 28.0% (n=30) reported that they trust brands a little more, while 17.8% (n=19) indicated a higher level of trust, selecting “a lot.” Only 2.8% (n=3) claimed to trust brands completely, which shows that total trust based on influencer promotion is rare. A small portion, 5.6% (n=6), said their trust did not increase at all. Overall, while influencer endorsements do improve brand trust, their effect is usually moderate, not absolute. (shown in fig 4.3)

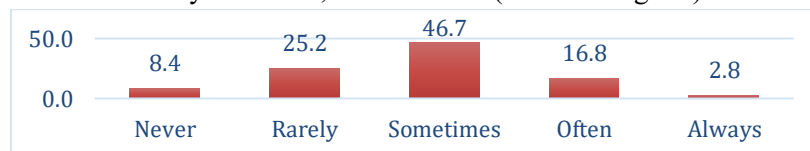


Fig 4.4 Graphical representation of purchase behaviour from Influencer Recommendations

Respondents had a mixed but generally moderate view on buying products recommended by influencers. Almost half, 46.7% (n=50), said they sometimes buy or think about buying items promoted by influencers. This shows occasional influence. In addition, 25.2% (n=27) picked rarely, which indicates that while influencer marketing reaches some consumers, it doesn’t always lead to regular purchases. A smaller group, 16.8% (n=18), reported buying these products often, and only 2.8% (n=3) said they always follow influencer suggestions. Meanwhile, 8.4% (n=9) stated they never buy based on influencer advice. Overall, the trend suggests that influencer recommendations impact consideration more than regular buying habits. (shown in fig 4.4)

Influencer Content Awareness Among Users

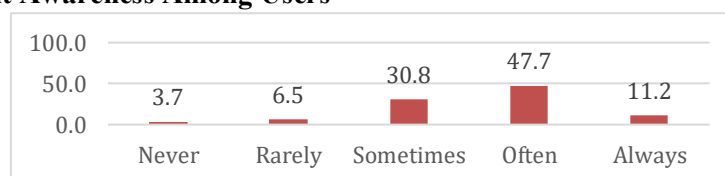


Fig 5.1 Graphical Representation of Role of Instagram in Brand Image Building

The findings show that respondents largely believe Instagram plays a meaningful role in enhancing a brand’s image. Nearly half, 47.7% (n=51), felt that Instagram contributes to a great extent, while a further 11.2% (n=12) rated it as contributing to a very great extent. Another 30.8% (n=33) indicated that Instagram improves brand image to a moderate extent, reflecting a generally positive perception of the platform’s influence. Only small proportions felt the impact was limited, with 6.5% (n=7) selecting to a small extent and 3.7% (n=4) stating not at all. Overall, the data suggests strong confidence in Instagram as a tool that significantly strengthens brand image. (shown in fig 5.1)

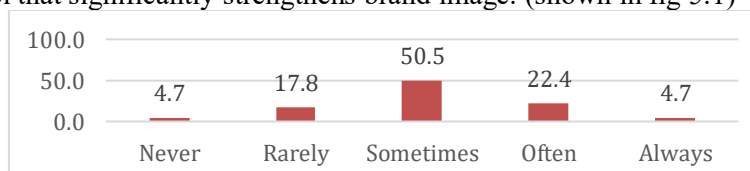


Fig 5.2 Graphical representation of Impact of Brand Content on Audience Perception

The data shows that Instagram stories and posts from brands strongly affect how respondents view those brands. Over half of the participants, 50.5% (n=54), said they were moderately influenced. Meanwhile, 22.4% (n=24) felt greatly influenced. This underscores the strong persuasive power of branded visual content. Additionally, 17.8% (n=19) indicated that stories and posts influence them slightly, while only 4.7% (n=5) believed this content does not influence them at all. Another 4.7% (n=5) felt influenced to a very great extent. These results suggest that most respondents are open to brand messages delivered through Instagram's visual formats. (shown in fig 5.2)

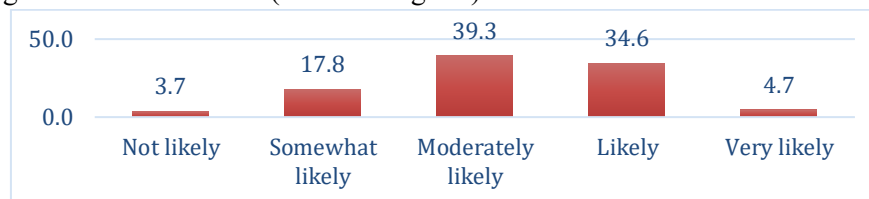


Fig 5.3 Graphical representation of Trust in Brands That Actively Engage on Instagram

Respondents showed a strong tendency to trust brands that communicate often and engage with followers on Instagram. The largest group, 39.3% (n=42), said they were moderately likely to trust these brands. Meanwhile, 34.6% (n=37) stated they were likely to trust them, highlighting a clear link between engagement and trust. Smaller numbers were somewhat likely (17.8%, n=19) or very likely (4.7%, n=5) to trust brands that actively communicate. Only 3.7% (n=4) said they were not likely to trust these brands. Overall, the results suggest that consistent interaction and responsiveness on Instagram significantly improve consumer trust. (shown in fig 5.3)

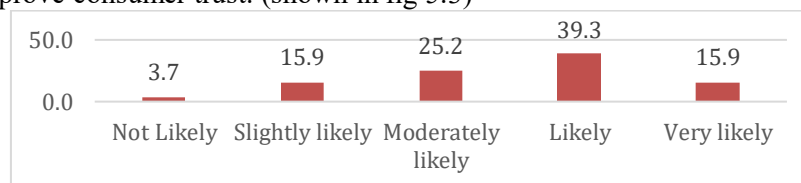


Fig 5.4 Graphical representation of Instagram's Role in Crisis Reputation Management

The findings show that respondents consider Instagram as an important platform for brands to handle their reputation during crises or negative events. A total of 55.2% rated Instagram as important (39.3%, n=42) or very important (15.9%, n=17). This indicates that timely updates and transparency on the platform are crucial during high-pressure situations. In addition, 25.2% (n=27) thought it was moderately important, suggesting that the platform remains relevant, even if not central. Smaller groups felt Instagram's importance was limited. Specifically, 15.9% (n=17) said it is slightly important, while only 3.7% (n=4) believed it is not important. Overall, these results show that Instagram is seen as a key communication channel for crisis management. (shown in fig 5.4)

7. Major Findings

Most PR people use Instagram for their primary means of communicating with people, building their brand, and publishing interesting pictures and videos.

They use posts, Stories, Reels, and hashtags to communicate with followers, share news, make their brand feel approachable, and create interaction.

Most PR workers claimed that Instagram does help them gauge what people like through giving clear numbers, insight, and fast responses. This way, they can build better posts.

Some said that even though Instagram works well, its ever-changing rules and the fierce competition might in the future force PR teams to shift to other applications like YouTube, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

8. Conclusion

The conclusions of this present research show that Instagram has become a keystone in today's public relations landscape, most particularly among a young, digitally active audience. As smartphones have ensured very easy and continuous access to social media, PR efforts have obviously shifted into this

visually driven, quick online environment. Data from 107 respondents, most of whom are between 18 and 25 years of age, shows how easily users engage with brand content on Instagram and thus make the medium a favourite among PR professionals.

The study brings to life how brands use Instagram not only for promotional posts but to build relationships through Reels, Stories, polls, influencer partnerships, and direct messaging. These features allow a brand to show its personality and what is happening in real-time, which helps speak to customers naturally and effectively. Perhaps more important to note, however, many respondents mentioned how this type of content actually changes the way one thinks about a brand. Just as Facebook initially gave PR pros a conduit to reach journalists, Instagram today gives them the conduit to have their brand build credibility and an emotional connection with their publics. Honesty, clarity, and the consistency of messaging have been echoed throughout the key themes for earning the trust of your public, and the need for open dialogue from a brand was emphatic.

9.Limitations

While this research provides an instructive understanding of how Instagram supports public relations and audience engagement, several limitations are at the fore. The sample size was relatively small, active Instagram users, which may not take into account less frequently active users or those who may be interacting with brands on other platforms. Given the research focus on the features of Instagram, such as likes, comments, and stories, PR practices that are essentially multi-platform may not be captured. The research adopts a cross-sectional approach that limits the chances of looking into the pattern of long-term engagement or the effect of support on PR efforts based on Instagram. The speedy character of the activity of Instagram and the introduction of new features may have impacts on how the audience engages with PR content. That is to say, some findings might change over time. These limitations should, therefore, be considered while reviewing the results.

10.Scope for future studies

These findings represent several avenues of future studies on Instagram as a public relations platform. As Instagram continues to unveil new features, procedures are updated, and user habits evolve, there is an added possibility to investigate the way such modifications would impact long-term engagement and brand loyalty. Further research could seek to understand how Instagram influences trust and credibility and emerging competitor apps. Research could also move beyond the 18 to 25 demographic and connect how older age groups recognise brand communication on Instagram. This would be particularly valuable given the rapid growth of social media assumptions. It would be helpful to go more in-depth with how the audience builds trust over time with various types of influencers: expert, nano-creator, employee, or celebrity.

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Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Perception of Quick Commerce Platforms

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ABSTRACT: The rapid growth of the technological frontier along with digital ecosystem advancements in India has been the cause of the emergence of several platforms for quick commerce that can deliver in just 10 to 20 minutes. Various social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook are active in promoting these services and have partnered with influencers, posted funny content, and employed targeted advertising, while doing real-time engagement.

In the current world characterized by speed, where students, professionals and urban consumers value instant delivery, quick commerce platforms rely on social media communication that is skilful to sway opinions, win the trust and make the buying decisions. The research examines the impact of social media marketing on consumer perceptions of quick commerce platforms by looking into the aspects of brands communication, promotional content and user engagement. Quantitative research methodology was utilized in this study, and data was gathered from 105 social media active users who frequently interact with and purchase from these platforms.

Therefore, the research highlights how young adults interpret and respond to social media marketing strategies based on their personal experiences, social media usage frequency and trust in this different platform. In whole, the study offers valuable content about the growing link between social media communication and consumer behaviour in the quick commerce ecosystem.

Keywords: Quick commerce, social media marketing, consumer perceptions, digital engagement, influencer Marketing, online Consumer Behaviour, Brand communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last ten years, the social media landscape has transformed from a public share space to one of the strongest platforms for digital marketing, consumer influence and brand development. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, X (Twitter), WhatsApp, and LinkedIn are now active environments in which users not only passively receive information but where they experience it by making complex judgements about brands that has reshaped brands communication and how consumers interpret credibility, authenticity, and reliability. (Gupta, 2024)

Quick commerce, commonly known as q-commerce or on-demand delivery, is hailed were platforms like Blinkit, Zepto, swiggy Instamart have reset consumer expectations by promising delivery in 10 to 20 minutes becoming one of the service model that is being built on hyper-local warehouses, data-driven logistics system and AI – optimized inventory algorithms. But what truly sets them apart is that notably social media marketing. From Blinkit's quick wit on Instagram to Zepto's humorous campaigns and Instamart's influencer partnerships showcasing convenience and affordability, these brands have joined the cultural conversation. As a result, their brand visibility and consumer engagement now rely heavily on the shifting dynamics of social media. (Mukherjee, 2025) (Nirmit sanghi, 2023)

Social media marketing has become essential for quick commerce Platforms like Blinkit, Zepto, Swiggy Instamart, Amazon Now and Flipkart Quick no longer compete only on delivery speed but they compete on personality, communication style, trust and relatability. Jokes, tone, memes and late-night responsiveness create a perception in consumers mind over time, influencing satisfaction and building loyalty without users even realising it. People prefer short, crisp, visual and personalised content, especially in quick commerce where purchases are spontaneous or urgent. Social media now acts as an open window where brands show transparency, credibility and everyday interactions. Reviews, unboxing videos and influencer vlogs have become modern versions of word-of-mouth. (Oliver, 2010) In this regard, a research inquiry should prioritize finding out how social media marketing is linked to consumer perception in quick commerce. The strategies that drive awareness, adoption, and loyalty. Brands like Blinkit, Zepto, Instamart, Amazon Now, and Flipkart Quick are still the ones to shape the modern shopping trends, and the social media marketing in these cases gives a lot of insights into the changing consumer psychology in India. (Yogesh k. dwivedi, 2021)

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study **“A Study on Emergence of Quick Commerce”** by Shivom Gupta examines the rapid rise of Q-commerce in India how 10 to 20-minute deliveries have transformed the shopping practices the shift from standard e-commerce to hyperlocal models supported by micro-warehouses. Along with the benefits, the author identifies key challenges such as high operating costs, pressure to maintain delivery speed, labour-related issues and concerns about long-term sustainability. The study also emphasises how aggressive pricing from major Q-commerce players affects local Kirana stores. (Gupta, 2024)

The Research **“Influence of Social Media on Quick Commerce”** Points out that reels, memes, influencer promotions, and interactive ads are the main Promotional tools used by Q-commerce Platforms The study also presents a quick commerce analytics as a major factor in understanding customer preferences and behaviours. On the other hand, the chapter highlights some challenges such as high marketing budgets, the constant demand for content that is regularly updated, and the possibility of creating fantasies regarding the delivery timeframe. (Hmidi, 2025)

The Research **“From Convenience to Sustainability: Reimagining Quick Commerce in India”** by Haneefa & Singh points out that the 10–20-minute deliveries require a lot of money to be operational costs, which includes workers’ wages, fuel and replacing the stock constantly. The environmentally-harmful aspect of the model is that it causes more packaging waste, higher carbon emissions and traffic jams. Adopting eco-friendly practices in Q-commerce will determine whether the model can sustain itself in long-run or become another short-lived trend. (Singh, 2024)

The article **“Customer Satisfaction Toward Quick Commerce”** examines superfast delivery services where he underlines the delivery accuracy, punctuality and as the main factors affecting satisfaction. They also point out that poor delivery can impact the future usage of the service. On the other hand, delays or unresolved complaints that are not resolved can quickly lead to a decline in satisfaction The study concludes that, in the Q-commerce industry, maintaining consistent quality across all customer touchpoints is difficult but essential to build long-term trust and loyalty. (Ajay l. Ambaliya, 2024)

The research paper **“Study of Brand Promotion Strategy with Reference to Amazon and Flipkart”** by Alok Rathore scrutinizes the ways which helps in leading e-commerce brands apply digital promotions for trustworthiness and visibility. The research is also considering the phenomenal app experience, trustable customer care, and quickness in delivery as factors that alter the perception of the brand the article does not mention Q-commerce explicitly but it does take parallels that clarify how digital strategies are influencing consumer trust and loyalty in a similar way across different sectors. (Rathore, 2025)

The Study **“A Study on the Growth Prospects of Q Commerce and Its Role Play in eCommerce Business in Present-Day India”** by Datta & Bose showcase how quick commerce has turned out to be a crucial addition to India's digital retail market. As per the authors, the major reason for the growth of Q-commerce is that the consumers have started to expect nothing less than super-fast delivery, very easy-to-use apps, and availability of products in real-time where the new model not only strengthens but also makes the e-commerce ecosystem more efficient through improved last-mile logistics, hyperlocal sourcing and even setting up new service standards. However, there are also difficulties that

the authors talk about such as very high operating costs, very competitive market, and the need for eco-friendly delivery systems. (Datta & Bose, 2023)

The study **“Rise of Quick Commerce in India: Business Models and Infrastructure Requirements”** by Gauri Ranjekar and Debjit Roy provides a thorough examination of the rise of quick-commerce in India, the researchers delineate the various approaches that Q-commerce companies have adopted from inventory-led dark stores to hyper-local fulfilment and omnichannel models that enables 10-30-minute deliveries. The article further describes the essential infrastructure components such as speedy internet connection, real-time stock management, efficient dark-store design and strong logistics networks. It contends that without such infrastructure, the claims of instant delivery cannot be met in a sustainable manner. (Roy, 2023)

The study **“The Influence of Social Media Marketing Activities on Customer Loyalty: A study of e-commerce industry”** by Bui Thanh Khoa and Tran Trong Huynh examines how affect customers’ long-term relationship with brands. The paper shows that when customers find social media content useful and engaging, they feel more attached to the brand and are more likely to return for future purchases. Overall, the authors argue that social media is not just a promotional tool but a space where meaningful interactions can influence customers’ attitudes and encourage repeat behaviour. (Huynh, 2023)

RESEARCH GAP

Several studies have explored different angle of quick commerce research on how consumers form perceptions of these platforms through social media is still limited. There is also very little work that examines how young consumers interpret humour, influencer posts, short videos, real-time brand responses and personalised content are now central to the identity of platforms like Blinkit, Zepto, Instamart, Amazon now and Flipkart quick. This study responds to that gap by focusing specifically on how social media marketing shapes consumer perception within the Indian quick commerce ecosystem, using insights from active social media users who regularly interact in different social media platforms.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The **Uses and Gratifications Theory**, introduced by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in the 1970s, suggests that people actively choose media based on their needs which they want to fulfil. Users interact with posts from brands like zepto, Blinkit and swiggy Instamart users find practical value in discounts updates. The same process applies to customer reviews and influencer content because they work together to create trust and genuine experiences. The speed of information delivery, along with its emotional content and relatability, determines how people interact with it. The uses and gratification theory provides a useful framework which helps analyse how social media marketing affects Indian consumer views towards quick commerce platforms. (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973)

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study on **“Impact of social media marketing on consumer perception of quick commerce platforms,”** a quantitative research method approach was employed were a systematic online survey regarding the participants attitudes, behaviours, and experiences. A sample of 105 individuals including college and university students and working professionals who are active users of social media and familiar with quick commerce service have responded to the survey. The study also included secondary data through a review of literature were the questionnaire consisted of multiple – choice questions and Likert- scale statements which assess perceptions related to trust, brand communications and promotional content, influencer collaborations, humour – based posts and real – time customer engagement on social media.

Objectives

1. To examine how social media marketing shapes consumer perception of quick commerce services.
2. To analyse the preferences and trust elements that arise from various social media promotions by prominent quick commerce platforms.

3. To evaluate how effective various digital marketing strategies are at driving consumer awareness and adoption.
4. To assess the role of social media platforms in building brand loyalty for quick commerce Services

SAMPLING

The study uses snowball sampling, a non-probability method where a few initial participants shared the survey link. As the link circulated, more participants joined in, created a natural chain of responses making them ideal respondents for understanding how social media marketing shapes their perception. from college students, university learners and early working professionals who relies on 10–20-minute delivery services for convenience, late-night cravings, quick groceries, and impulse buying, which made their knowledge valuable for the study.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The data were collected through a survey conducted in India using the snowball sampling method via Google Form, and consisted of respondents from five different age groups: below 18, 18–25, 26–35, 36–46, and above 46. The total number of respondents amounted to 105, and the purpose of the research was to analyse how social media marketing affects consumer perception, trust, and decision making towards quick commerce platforms.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

1. AGE

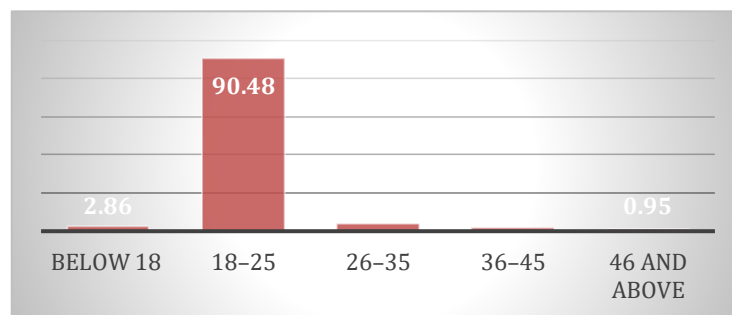


Figure 1.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Out of 105 respondents, 90.48% (n=95) belong to the 18–25 age group, followed by 3.81% (n=4) in the 26–35 category. Respondents below 18 account for 2.86% (n=3), while 1.90% (n=2) fall between 36–45 and only 0.95% (n=1) are above 46 years. The result shows that young adults dominate quick commerce usage, making them the most influenced by social media marketing.

2. Gender Distribution

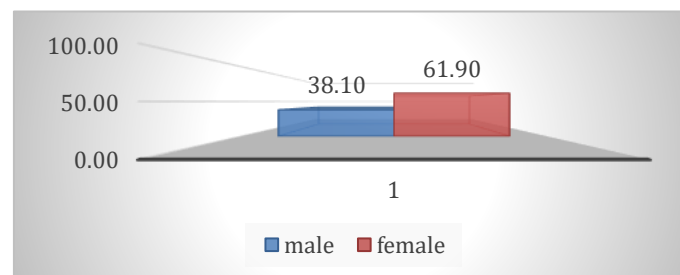


Figure 1.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

The study includes 61.90% females (n=65) and 38.10% males (n=40). The higher female participation suggests that women are more engaged with online grocery and convenience services, possibly due to daily household and lifestyle needs.

3. Education Level

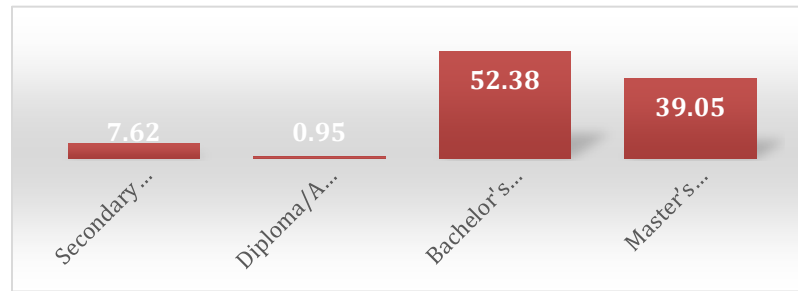


Figure 1.3: Education Level of Respondents

Most respondents are well educated, with 52.38% (n=55) holding a bachelor's degree and 39.05% (n=41) holding a master's degree or higher. Only 7.62% (n=8) have secondary education, and 0.95% (n=1) possess a diploma. This indicates a digitally literate audience capable of evaluating online promotions critically.

4. Occupational Background

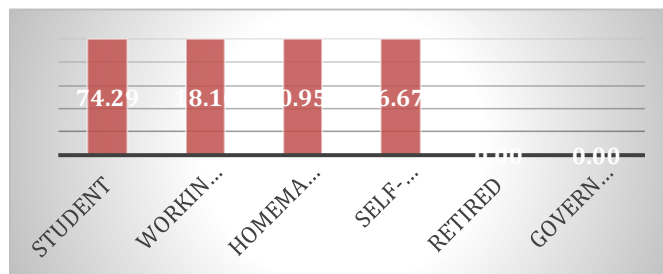


Figure 1.4: Occupation of Respondents

Students from sample 74.29% (n=78) of respondents, followed by 18.10% (n=19) working professionals. Self-employed individuals account for 6.67% (n=7) and homemakers 0.95% (n=1). This shows that students and early-career professionals are the primary users of quick commerce platforms.

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE & CONTENT ENGAGEMENT

5. Social Media Usage

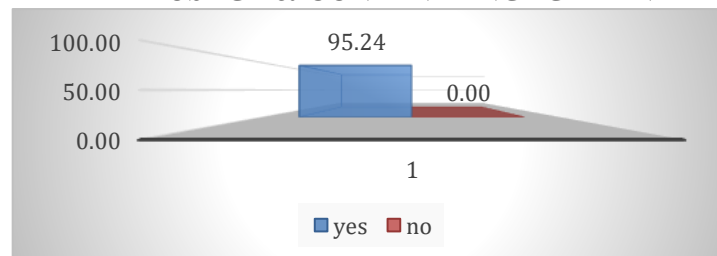


Figure 2.1: Social Media Usage Among Respondents

The data suggest that social media use is nearly obligatory for all subjects in the study. An overwhelming 95.24% (n=100) of respondents actively use social media, while none reported non-usage. This confirms that social media is an unavoidable and effective medium for quick commerce marketing.

6. Time Spent on Social Media

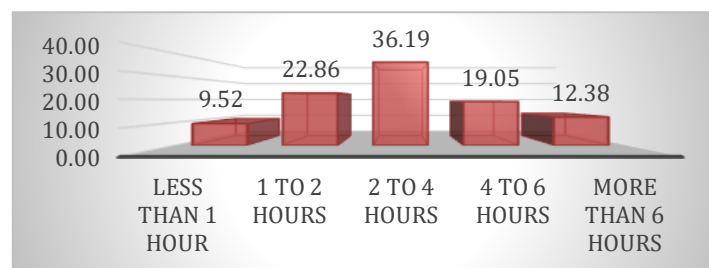


Figure 2.2: Daily Time Spent on Social Media

The largest segment of users, comprising 36.19% (n=38), spend as 2 to 4 hours. They are followed by 22.86% (n=24) of respondents, who spend 1 to 2 hours, and 19.05% (n=20), who are active for 4 to 6 hours daily were 12.38% (n=13), whose daily times exceed 6 hours and 9.52% (n=10) are occasional users who spend less than 1 hour.

7. Visibility of Q-commerce Content

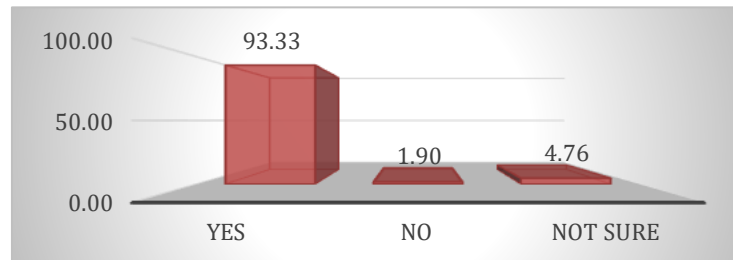


Figure 2.3: Visibility of Q-Commerce Content on Social Media

A strong 93.33% (n=98) have seen Q-commerce content on social media, while only 1.90% (n=2) stated that they had not. An additional 4.76% (n=5) expressed uncertainty. This highlights the strong digital presence and frequent advertising by Q-commerce brands.

8. Engaged Content Types

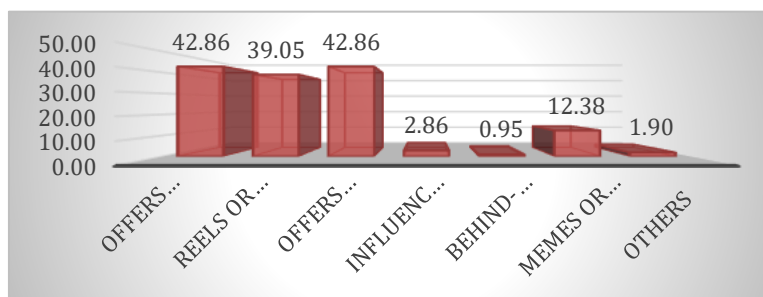


Fig 2.4: Type of Q-Commerce Content That Attracts Consumers

The participants demonstrated explicit inclinations in terms of social media content that would initially attract their attention. Discount and offer posts attract 42.86% (n=45) of users, followed by reels or short videos at 39.05% (n=41). Memes attract 12.38% (n=13), while influencer content attracts 2.86% (n=3). Just 0.95% (n=1) were drawn to behind-the-scenes posts, and 1.90% (n=2) opted for the "Others" category.

Brand Visibility & Consumer Response

9. Frequency of Seeing Q-commerce Posts

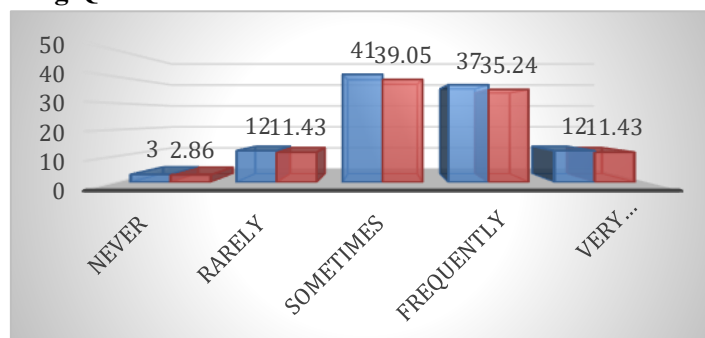


Fig 3.1: The Frequency of seeing Q-commerce posts.

The largest proportion of respondents, 39.05% (n=41), see posts sometimes 35.24% (n=37), see the posts very often. Moreover, a small portion of the respondents, 11.43% (n=12), are very frequent. Only 11.43% (n=12) said that they rarely see posts and just 2.86% (n=3) go as far as to say that they never see them. This consistent exposure ensures strong brand recall.

10. Perceived Trust Influenced by Social Media Promotions

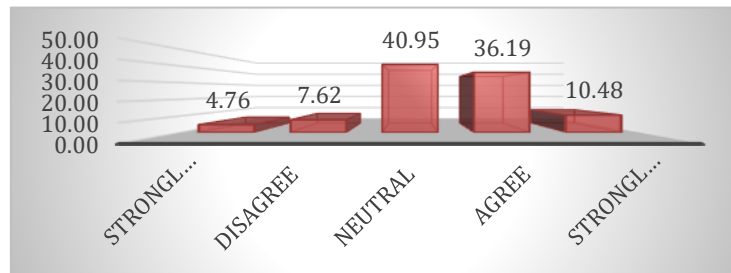


Figure 3.2: Perceived Trust from Social Media Promotions

Around 36.19% (n=38) agree and 10.48% (n=11) strongly agree. The neutral middle group comprised of 40.95% (n=43), while 7.62% (n=8) expressed disagreement and 4.76% (n=5) very strong disagreement. This suggests that social media builds initial trust, but real experience still matters.

11. Genuineness of Q-Commerce Advertisements

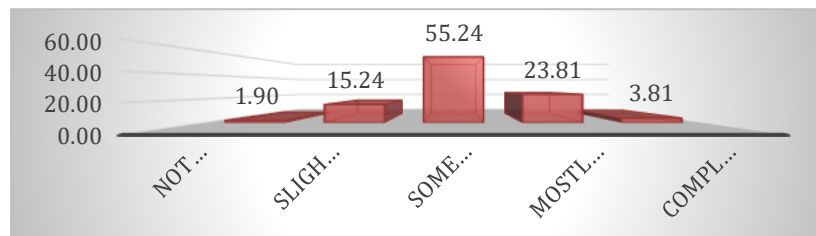


Figure 3.3: Perceived Genuineness of Q-Commerce Advertisements

The majority of those surveyed consider the Q-commerce platforms' advertising as real and true. 55.24% (n=58), deemed them to be genuine, while 23.81% (n=25) classified them as mostly true. On the other hand, 15.24% (n=16) labelled them as a bit authentic, and very few people believed they were either not true at all 1.90% (n=2) or true (3.81%, n=4). This reflects cautious acceptance rather than blind trust.

12. User Interaction With Q-Commerce Social Media Content

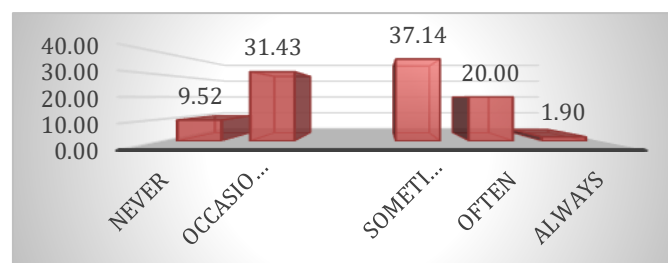


Figure 3.4: Frequency of Interaction with Q-Commerce Content

The interaction levels with Q-commerce posts show a huge difference among the users. 37.14% (n=39), is sometimes interacting with the content 31.43% (n=33) who do so occasionally where 20% (n=21) are frequent interactors and (1.90%, n=2) are the one who always does and lastly (9.52%, n=10) is never. This indicates passive engagement still influences perception.

13. Interest Driven by Social Media Offers and Campaigns

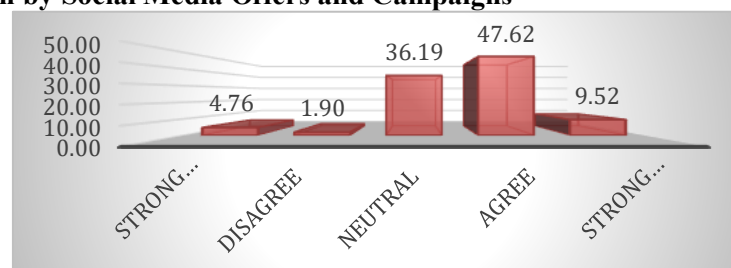


Figure 3.5: Effect of Social Media Offers on Consumer Interest

Most of the people surveyed think that social media campaigns have an impact on their decision regarding which platform to choose. 45.71% (n=48) who agreed with the statement and 6.67% (n=7) expressed strong agreement. On the other hand, 39.05% (n=41) did not take a stance, while only 7.62% (n=8) expressed disagreement and 0.95% (n=1) stated that they strongly disagreed with it.

LOYALTY & OVERALL BRAND PERCEPTION

14. Social Media's Role in Building Consumer Loyalty

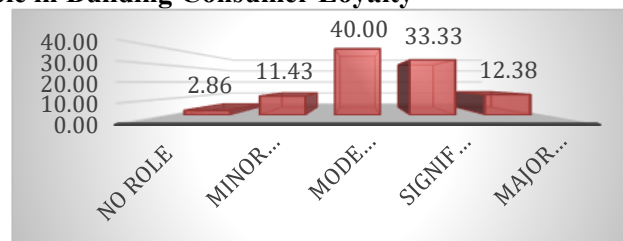


Figure 4.1: Role of Social Media Marketing in Building Long-Term Loyalty

The results indicate that most participants believe social media marketing affects brand loyalty where a majority viewed its influence as moderate (40.00%, n=42) or important (33.33%, n=35), while 12.38% (n=13) considered it a significant factor. Only a small proportion felt it has a minor impact (11.43%, n=12), and very few believed it has no impact at all (2.86%, n=3). Consistent communication helps retain users over time.

15. A Trust Through Social Media Interactions

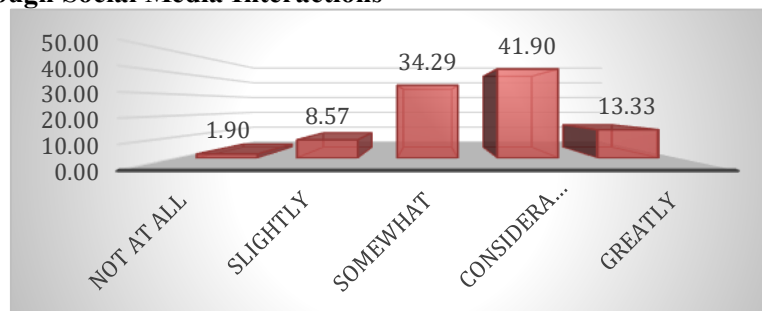


Figure 4.2: Impact of Social Media Interactions on Trust and Comfort

The data shows that meaningful social media interactions were most respondents felt that these interactions improved trust considerably (41.90%, n=44) or somewhat (34.29%, n=36), while 13.33% (n=14) felt trust was strengthened greatly. Only a small group felt the impact was slight (8.57%, n=9), and very few felt it made no difference at all (1.90%, n=2).

16. Social Media's Influence on Platform Loyalty

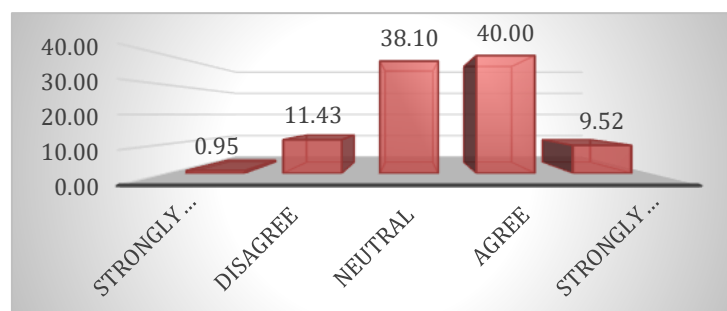


Figure 4.3: Effect of Social Media Engagement on Platform Loyalty

The responses show that social media engagement has a noticeable influence on consumer loyalty 40.00% (n=42), agreed that engagement encourages them to stay loyal, while 9.52% (n=10) strongly

agreed. 38.10% (n=40) remained neutral, suggesting they may rely more on personal experience than online posts. Only 11.43% (n=12) disagreed and a very small 0.95% (n=1) strongly disagreed.

17. Analysis of Overall Role of Social Media in Shaping Brand Image

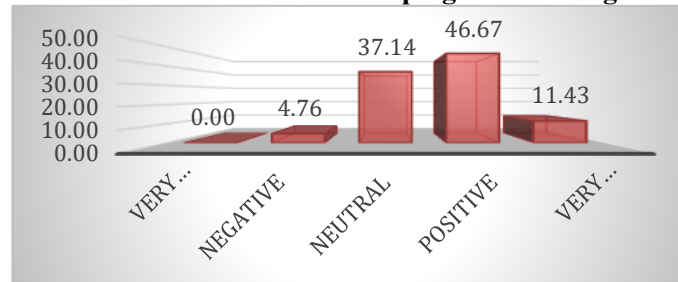


Figure 4.4: Overall, Role of Social Media in Shaping Brand Image & Credibility

Nearly half described its impact as positive (46.67%, n=49), while 11.43% (n=12) saw it as very positive. A sizeable group remained neutral (37.14%, n=39). Only a small minority had a negative view (4.76%, n=5), and none rated it as very negative, suggesting general trust in social media's role in building credibility for quick-commerce brands.

5. CONCLUSION

The research points to a significant impact of social media marketing on the young people's perception and interaction with quick commerce platforms in the digital age. It is indicated that content based on discount, short videos and posts by influencers are the most potent means of building trust and determining the choice of platform. Compelling visuals, man-friendly brand interactions, and inventive participation methods create the impression of the platforms being reliable and friendly users.

The data further imply that the social media presence is not only assimilated as a source of attracting new customers but also as a means that leads to the building of customer loyalty through regular communication and well-directed campaigns. However, the tempered reactions imply that customers are still mixing their personal experiences with online content to come up with their views. To sum up, the research has proved that social media has taken the position of a major point of contact for quick commerce platforms in the eyes of the consumers when it comes to making their presence felt, winning their trust, and having a good brand image in a crowded market.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

With 105 respondents, the study has a small sample size the findings may not be fully represent the wider social media user base in India. The sample was also dominated by young adults aged 18–25, which limits the representation of older age groups. A respondent pool that shares similar online behaviours or networks. The research is based on self-reported responses, which means the data may be influenced by personal bias. since the research uses only quantitative data, it does not explore the behind users' responses.

7. FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The current study looked at adults aged 18 to 25. A larger sample size with diversity, across cities, income groups and digital habits can give generalizations. future research can compare the Q-commerce brands which marketing strategies work. Researchers can add methods such, as interviews or focus groups to capture emotional responses. Researchers can look at the reasons, for loyalty or distrust of a Q-commerce brand. Another good direction is to study term behaviour. Researchers can look at AI recommendations personalized ads and influencer led shopping trends and can check how the new formats affect the consumer perception, in the market.

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Visualizing Power and Identity: Representation of Women in Malayalam Cinema Through Visual Storytelling

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Abstract: Malayalam cinema is known for unique storytelling with female characters are often represented in a stereotypical way and with gender norms, Indian cinema, especially Malayalam cinema has gone through a massive makeshift in narratives which has empowered portrayals of women. In this study, through a qualitative frame-by-frame analysis of two films: *Thira* (2013) and *The Great Indian Kitchen* (2021) analyse the representation of women in art and how the characters broke several stereotypes and gender norms. Using feminist theory and realistic theory, the research investigate how cinematic representation of women has changed over time from a patriarchal social structure to more Gender-conscious way. By examining visual frames, dialogues and character arc, the study highlights how *THIRA* represents women's strength and individuality portrayed through a thriller storyline, meanwhile *THE GREAT INDIAN KITCHEN* deconstructs domestic oppression and inequality through realism. The analysis also shows the significant change from earlier stereotypical portrayal of women in Malayalam cinema moving to more layered portrayals showing women's real challenges and aspirations. Overall, the study shows how such films contribute to understand women's role in both cinema and society making Malayalam cinema as a site of cultural transformation.

Key Words: Gender-conscious, Patriarchy, Domestic oppression, Individuality, Women-centric film,

1. INTRODUCTION

In Indian cinema, Malayalam cinema represents the society and mirrors the untold harsh reality like a taboo in society and also capturing its culture identity and ideological structure. For ages, the portrayal of women in screen was often based upon the patriarchal norms, often limiting female characters to perform traditional gender roles or portraying them as submissive figures whose identities were shaped by male gaze. From a stereotypical way of portrayal to more firm and empowered female characters, contemporary Malayalam movies have shown a shift, which also shows a clear cultural shift towards gender equality. The way Malayalam film industry visualising female power and identity has changed in past years, as the industry started to focus more on women centric movies which give importance to female protagonists and started to depict challenges faced by women as well. The growing presence of women as characters as well as the contribution of females to the technical including in the area of direction, production, editing, story writing and other aspects of cinema has contributed to more diverse representation.

The purpose of the study is to interpret and examine how Malayalam cinema visualizes female power and identity, specifically, to analyse the representation of women in the films “*Thira*” (2013) and “*The Great Indian Kitchen*” (2021). Both showcase women as powerful protagonists breaking patriarchal norms and traditional gender norms. Where the movie *Thira* (2013) powerful female protagonist who shows individuality and power while in *The Great Indian kitchen* (2021) shows the female protagonist breaking the patriarchal power and domestic oppression that imposed upon her to become more empowered woman. By exploring these aspects, the study provides insight into the ways cinema can

act as a powerful tool for cultural transformation and an area to discuss ideas of gender, identity and power.

1.1 Historical Background

Malayalam film industry also fondly known as Mollywood have a long history of producing many innovative storytelling ways and films. From emergence of the industry in around 1920s to contemporary time, the film industry has been a mirror in showcasing the state's tradition and socio-cultural dynamics. The industry has evolved throughout the decades and one of the main aspects that changed must be the representation and visualisation of woman in movies.

Throughout the early decade, female characters were represented in such a way of rigid binaries, the "good woman" who is selfless, obedient and domesticated and the "bad woman" is always the one who is independent or challenges the male authority. Female characters who expressed their opinion or the one who seek for individuality or independence were often "punished" in the storyline which showcasing the limits the women have to face both in family and society. These depictions weren't accidental, but a reflection of patriarchal norms that was in the society at that time.

However, changes or shift in representation of women in Malayalam cinema started to occurred in late 20th century and early 21st century mainly influenced by social movements, increased awareness and work of women in both in front and behind of camera. In contemporary Malayalam cinema the representation of female characters has been faced a major shift as in today's cinema began to showcase the challenges that faced by women and also began to portray independent, brave and ambitious female characters.

1.2 Aim Of the Study

- To analyse and interpret the visual representation of women's identity and power in Malayalam cinema through these two contrasting yet complimentary movies.
- This study aims to understand how Malayalam cinema used visual storytelling techniques such as cinematography, character portrayal and narrative structure to showcase challenges faces by women in a patriarchal society and her resistance against different forms of oppression and inequality.
- The study examines the use of space and social settings to portray different dimensions of where "Thira" focuses on public domain and activism and "The Great Indian Kitchen" focuses on domestic sphere, understanding the role of dialogues that construct women's identity.

1.3 Significance of the Study

- To know how cinematic language mirrors and challenge realities of gender in Kerala's socio-cultural context.
- This research highlights how cinema can represent conventional gender roles and stereotypes and challenges faces by women in different circumstances.
- Analysing how these movies depict female character's resistance and empowerment will helps to know how modern Malayalam movies provide new spaces to portray these socially relevant topics.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this research the review of literature focuses on evolving portrayal of women in Malayalam cinema. Over recent decades, Malayalam films have increasingly challenged traditional and stereotypes. This review of literature mainly focuses on two such movie, "Thira" (2013) and "The Great Indian Kitchen" (2021). This review through the gender representation, feminist critiques, and cinematic techniques in Malayalam and world cinema intends to understand how the filmmakers deal with the themes of identity, freedom, and criticism of the society

Patricia White, 2015, Women's Cinema, World Cinema: Projecting Contemporary Feminisms. Patricia White's monograph is a detailed study of how feminist film practices merged with the worldwide circulation of movies in the 21st century. She argues that "women's cinema" should not only be seen as a film genre influenced by the gender of filmmakers but also as a transnational phenomenon that interacts with "world cinema". White focuses especially on a generation of women directors, those who started making feature films after 2000, whose films are a reason of the changing global production,

distribution, and exhibition of the film industry which is digital technologies, global film festivals, transnational financing, and new forms of circulation.

Meena T Pillai. 2017. The Many Misogynies of Malayalam Cinema. (JOURNAL ARTICLE). "The Many Misogynies of Malayalam Cinema" by Meena T. Pillai analyses the never-ending misogyny in the Malayalam film industry, especially in light of a high-profile sexual-assault case involving a female actor. The article states that the male desires, have so deeply penetrated the Malayalam cinema that it has practically become a commercial business shaped by patriarchy where female actors and gendered identities are not only marginalized but also invisible.

Research Gap

Most existing study examines the movie based on its theme and narrative structure, but rarely analyse the visual language of cinema that symbolise the female representation in Malayalam movies. Systematic way of visual analysis is less in Malayalam cinema research. Most of the gender studies discuss about oppression or empowerment, but the study about how the power and patriarchy is visually represented through symbolism, lighting, sound and cinematography is comparatively less. Prior research only focuses on mainstream films; there's a gap in depicting different cinematic approach to portraying women in cinema. Depicting identity of women in cinema is often discuss in basic of character development and dialogues but visual symbols and metaphors which shapes the women's identity has not been deeply studied. Research talks about women's role but rarely study about how cinematic language communicate it.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frame work of this study is based on feminist film theory and realism theory, applied through qualitative research method. Feminist film theory is a lens to critically examine how these films challenge the patriarchal norms and represent women in more empowered and independent way. One of the most important ideas in feminist film theory is the "male gaze", a concept developed by Laura Mulvey, which maintains that typical cinema presents women through a male viewpoint, thus making them the objects that are looked at and desired, which in turn gives the film the power of the man over the woman. Meanwhile, Realism theory in cinema is about showing to the audience life and human experiences in the most authentic and truthful way possible. It deals with the idea of depicting the reality of the society and the lives of common people without the use of heavy stylization or artistic enhancement. Realist films seek to be authentic through naturalistic acting, real locations, and dialogues that are similar to real life speech.

Both these theories are very apt to analyse the two movie "Thira" and "The Great Indian Kitchen", because both are women-centric movies which depicts the problems and challenges faced by women in their daily life. Feminist film theory can apply in both movies because, in "Thira" the protagonist shows an independent and powerful characters where she breaks all the conventional gender role and has a firm identity. In "The Great Indian Kitchen" depicts a character who breaks the patriarchal norms and domestic oppression face in own household.

Realism is also an important element while showing feminist topics where these movies are great example of depicting movies in a realistic setting where it shows the reality as it is. "The great Indian Kitchen" is shown in a very realistic setting where it shows common household and life of common people as well as the real problems face by women in a patriarchal society. While "Thira" also showcase realistic problems and challenges happening in the society in a thriller genre.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, to investigate the portrayal of women in selected Malayalam movies, would be using qualitative method as it is subjective in nature, emphasising on frame-to-frame analysis of two movies "Thira" (2013) and "The Great Indian Kitchen" (2021) where these movies were carefully selected because of the narrative style in these movies that its thematical focus on empowering women and reimagining the usual portrayal of female characters. The qualitative research method is selected because it helps to get an in-dept knowledge about the movie and how it uses certain symbolic representation, ideologies and cultural representations embedded within cinematic narratives. The data

collection process includes carefully watching both the movies several times to understand the dept of narratives and symbolism used in each movie.

This study uses a visual analysis of a frame-by-frame and scene-by-scene approach. This technique involves a detailed examination of narrative and cinematic technique including cinematography, metaphors used to represent certain elements, symbolism used, lighting, character development, mise-en-scène and symbolism. Each of these elements helps to analyse the how they contribute in representing women and the challenges they face as well as their position within the social and domestic settings.

3.1 Qualitative Visual Analysis

Malayalam movies have always been the platform to represent socio-cultural challenges of the current society. It mostly shown the powerful hero that helps the heroine from a social evil and become the positive protagonist in the movies. But in 2013, a movie was released that broke all the conventional portrayal of a “hero” and replaced it with a powerful character name *Rohini*, who showcased an immense amount of bravery and individuality as a female character in the movie “Thira” directed by Vineeth Srinivasan, one of the prominent directors in Malayalam film industry. Even though the film had a fuel of changing a male as its protagonist or “hero” the story took a turn in cliché storyline to portraying powerful female character. The movie *Thira* beautifully portrayed the powerful fight of a community to protect their children in an in-depth focus.

The second movie “The Great Indian Kitchen” (2020) directed by Joe Baby, is one of the most powerful movies that spoke against patriarchal norm and a stereotypical society. The movie represents the socio-cultural elements that forces women to follow certain norms and the way that is used as a weapon to oppress women in the name of tradition. This movie uses sound effects, mise-en-scène, narrative structure, and symbolisms to portray oppression that faced by women in their own household. The movie unfolds by an educated female who enters an arrange marriage and gradually get trapped in a cycle of cooking, cleaning, sexual and emotional neglect, while the men in the house treat her like a labour and invisible. Through repetitive kitchen scenes and almost documentary like scenes the movie shows how domestic routines turns into gender exploitation rather than duty of both men and women. There are many symbolisms and scenes shown in this movie to convey different meanings that goes throughout the entire.

4. FRAME ANALYSIS

Both *Thira* (2013) and *The great Indian Kitchen* (2020) is great example of using cinematic technique to represent women’s experiences and challenges they face. Even with same storyline of portrayal of women’s journey to empowerment it used different narrative and cinematic techniques to showcase each symbolism and elements in the movie.

The movie *Thira*, a women centric thriller movie, where the protagonist fight against human trafficking, the film uses tight close-ups of the protagonist face show the evoke emotions and tensions she faces creating intimacy with the viewers. The movie uses lighting as an important element to portray symbolisms, often showing contrast shadows, and cool and dim tones to represent the thrilling environment. Coming to the movie *The Great Indian Kitchen*, sound and mise-en-scène plays an important role in showcasing domestic oppression and challenges faces by the protagonist. Static shots and repetitive aspects of household chores help in showing a newly married women get trapped in the loop of patriarchal norms. The messy kitchen and dirt show exhaustion and emotional suppression.

4.1. Case Study 1 – Thira (2013)

The movie *Thira* directed by Vineeth Srinivasan is a great example of conveying messages and symbolising elements through light. Throughout the movie uses certain cinematic techniques such as close-ups, silence, centre-frame compositions, plain clothing and minimal makeup to bring realistic effects as well as conveying thriller aspect. The main protagonist is a cardiac surgeon who also helps to rescue girls who has been sexually assaulted and owns a shelter to help them and her character is established through minute details and symbolisms. The whole movie used the colour red to represent

the emergency and how dangerous the situation is and one main example is one of the opening scene where the protagonist came to know that the kids from the shelter is kidnapped by human traffickers. The movie uses close-up shots to portray the emotions and resilience of the character. Even without dialogues the close-up helps to show the mental power and still eye contacts (figure 01)



(Figure 01)

The colour pattern that used throughout the movie is cool, desaturated tone reinforcing the grim realities she faces. The usage of blue, cool tone represents strength. In several scenes there are emergence of white light or sunlight where the entire movie is in a dim mode but the emergence of light represents hope and reaching a particular goal and this is a main visual element used for symbolisms.

Other than these elements the movie uses female gaze a primarily focus of narrating the story. The whole film's perspective is based on the female protagonist's point of view, especially challenging the traditional patriarchal gender roles of women not being strong or a need a men's aid to solve a problem. The female character *Rohini* showcase a bold and firm behaviour even while interrogating criminals and also someone who balance both work life and social service. The movie also find way to showcase the protagonist's character through her appearance that of plain cloths and minimal make up as she portrays the character of an expert cardiac surgeon and she always rushing around for problem solving and also helps to show the harshness of the environment the protagonist is in. She also showcases a motherly affection and helping mentality throughout film which helps in character establishment. Editing plays an important role in depicting the chaos and urgency through sharp cuts and quick editing during action sequences, while slowing pacing used during emotional sequences helps audience to connect and get the emotions in an in-depth way also to absorb the characters inner conflicts.

4.2 Case Study 2 – The Great Indian Kitchen (2020)

The movie “The Great Indian kitchen” (2020), directed by Joe Baby, is another well-known movie which broke all conventional norms and way of portraying women. In this movie, the newly married protagonist who was a well-educated dancer, came to the husband's household after marriage and came to face the daily household chores which's only the women in the house are doing. This is the first patriarchal norms that forced on her, from there the protagonist is facing a long line of oppression and disrespect from her in-laws

The film employed *Mise-en-scène* to depict the harsh environment and the work pressure from her house. The film often uses static, locked-down shots in the kitchen to emphasize the repetitive nature of household chores. Each scene shows the protagonist doing chores including, cooking cleaning, washing and sweeping in a repetitive order to show the audience the loop or cycle of oppression she got trapped in. even though she does all the works her husband didn't give her any emotional support by telling her to “adjust”.



(Figure 02)

Her whole life started revolve around the kitchen which is done through frequently framing the character in mid-shot enclosed by kitchen utensil, walls, counter tops and vegetables, visually symbolising her confinement within domestic roles (figure 02). Constant use of natural writing enhances the raw and realistic settings of the movie. Close-ups hands, dirty water, food stains and spilled food emphasize the labour intensity that only woman faced in a patriarchal society which reduces her identity into mere work.

The visual elements evolve around the protagonist while she develops a sense of individuality and her growing awareness where in the beginning the character shows obedient posture while later in the movie, she shows bolder and confident body postures showing the character reaching the triggering point of getting out of the pressure and disrespect she faces in the house. There are many metaphors used to show the depth and emotional vulnerability of the character, for example, repetitive shots of broken or leaking household utensils metaphorically show fractured marriage or the exhausted life of the protagonist. The minimal outfits and makeup for the character give the authenticity of common household, in the entire movie the depiction of realistic setting emphasize on the problem faced by most of the married women. The movie also presents oppressing women making tradition and culture as a reason. Taboo and superstitions become a barrier to the protagonist to leave in comfortable environment even during periods. During the climax the protagonist leaves the house and the journey to her own house symbolise her journey towards freedom and independence. The journey to independence can see when the character becomes a dance teacher and the ending dance sequel is an important element to showcase the empowerment and identity she gained.

4.3. Analysis and discussion of movie “Thira”

The transition from patriarchal narratives of Malayalam cinema to a gender conscious narrative style was appreciative. By analysing these two movies *Thira* (2013) and *The Great Indian Kitchen* (2020), we could understand that these movies played an important role in breaking that conventional, stereotypical gender role which are forced upon women in the name of tradition and culture. As movies can be seen as the reflection of the society, these movies played an important role in showcasing the perspective of the society towards such gender norms and patriarchy as the modern society is against these inequalities. These two movies broke all the stereotypical way of portraying women in cinema and gives the society a relevant message about power and identity of women.

In *Thira*, visual storytelling techniques such as dim colour pallet, camera movements and tight framing is used to establish the character *Dr Rohini Pranab*, who resist patriarchal violons not through being a victim but with authority and empathy. The use of close-up shots and over-the-shoulder shots especially during confrontation scenes shows her as an intellectual force. The movies have a repeated element of feminist film theory by showing the female character as ‘subject’ rather than an ‘object’. This aligns with the feminist theory of not objectifying women but showing them as someone who takes control traditionally held by men and with problem solving ability. Through leadership and critical thinking, the character in this film has portrayed a powerful women character who broke all the stereotypical portrayal of women till then. The movie also uses firm dialogues to express the power and identity of the character, along with different lights to convey the emotions of each character.

On the other hand, *The Great Indian kitchen* destroys the idea of gender role in domestic sphere by using realistic cinematography and repetitive shots to depict the loop of domestic chores that trapped the protagonist in a daily basic. The visual representation of continuous work such as cooking, cleaning, sweeping and other household works along with different sounds like utensils and also silence in the house functions as a feminist critique of domestic oppression. Different shot of men in the house sitting relaxed while the work in the house only done by women shows the hierarchy by the patriarchal society. The gradual transformation of the female protagonist from an obedient daughter-in-law to a rebellion powerful character shows the journey of every woman from inequality to independency as in this case the household symbolise the society itself.

These movies represent the cultural transformation of the society that the female subjectivity parallels the shift in Kerala's social conscious about gender inequality. The depiction of women as the ones who bring changes highlights the influence of movies in changing people's perception of identity and making them question the patriarchal norms in the society. These to movies are not only fiction it is the reality of many women in the society and depicting these kinds of topics helps in shaping the societies perception towards the real problems faced by women because of gender norms and oppression even from their own household. These movies in which they record daily patriarchal practices and bring up women's problems, become instrumental to the growing feminist awareness and movements in the entire society of Kerala.

5. CONCLUSION

The paper talks about visualisation of Malayalam film industry and how they portray women and their identity, primarily through the movies like *Thira* and *The Great Indian Kitchen*. The change of the depiction of women from clichéd characters to more realistic and empowered ones is a reflexion of the socio-cultural changes of Kerala, where gender norms are criticised. Through the depiction of women as the ones who bring in change by reducing male dominant role and not as the ones who suffer silently, the industry is changing to the type of narratives which question the dominance of men and propagate the feminist ideology.

The cinematographic aspect of these films is equally innovative as they depend on visual symbolisms and realism to bring out the emotional as well as the physical side of women and their lives. The portrayal of such themes is a major cultural shift in Malayalam cinema as a major platform for social critique and change.

To sum up, the research lays emphasis on how the Malayalam film sector is a part of a large-scale effort to change people's cultural perception of gender by showing women not simply as subordinates of the patriarchy but as a complete human being who explore their identities and challenge oppressive systems. This change in film art reflects the enormous social upheavals in Kerala, by turning Malayalam cinema into a powerful medium for the expression of feminist voice that could have a far-reaching effect on public opinion and cultural norms besides this.

5.1 limitations

This study is limited in that it is qualitative research that focuses only on two films and may not capture the whole spectrum of women's representation in Malayalam cinema. The paper adopts feminist and realistic theories that may have caused in excluding the application of other critical lenses that might reveal more insights into the gender portrayal. While the cultural context of Kerala is very important, it might not allow the findings to be generalized to the Indian cinema or global contexts. Lastly, the fact that cinema and societal gender norms are changing implies that the results that got by this research are temporary. These limitations point to the necessity of further studies with a larger sample of films, intersectional approaches, and audience response, research to deepen the understanding of feminist representation in Malayalam cinema.

5.2 Scope

This research has done a qualitative study of the representation of women in modern Malayalam movies, mainly focusing on two landmark films: *Thira* (2013) and *The Great Indian Kitchen* (2021). The purpose is to discover how these movies use visuals and characters to break gender norms and stereotypes.

Through this study, Malayalam cinema is recognized as a platform that feminist engagement, which is at the intersection of cinema, gender politics, and social change. Nevertheless, the study is mostly confined to these two films and the Malayalam film industry, so, it is a single case study rather than a detailed investigation of Indian or global feminist film representation. Therefore, the results offer insights that serve as a stepping stone for comprehensive studies covering more extensive filmographies and different feminist viewpoints in Indian and regional cinemas

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Music as Cinematic Language: Analyzing the Role of Musical Elements in Narrative Construction and Commercial Success in Prem's Early Kannada Directorial Works (2003-2005)

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Abstract: This research paper dwells into the use of music as a foundational cinematic language in the early movies of Kannada Director; Prem namely, Kariya (2003), Excuse me (2003) and Jogi (2005) with the integration of a qualitative analysis on the bases of Michel Chion's audio-vision Theory, leitmotif analysis and a documentation of the films commercial performances. This paper portrays that music goes beyond being a supplementary compliment to function as a primary narrative device, it also serves as a medium of emotional architecture, commercial asset and cultural significance mechanism. Based on a scene-by-scene breakdown and textual analysis using leitmotif tracking and diegetic and non-diegetic analysis boundary examination, this research establishes that Prem's distinctive directorial signature in his early works, [Kariya (2003), Excuse me (2003) and Jogi (2005)] upholds an analytical consistency with compositional variations along with the diversity in narratives while correlating across the three blockbuster commercial successes. This research addresses the literary gaps in regional cinema studies while also contributing to development in film-music theory and serves as a study with further expansion and analysis of commercial regional cinema with auteur theory frameworks.

Keywords: Film music, Kannada cinema, leitmotif, audio-vision, synchysis, commercial success, narrative construction, cultural authenticity, Prem, regional cinema, music as language.

1. INTRODUCTION

For decades the relationship between music and narrative devices in cinema has captivated the attention of scholarly studies, however the unexplored depth of regional cinematographies remain at large within the focus of music-film theory. While bringing in a significant commercial value to the Indian cinema, Kannada cinema, recognised critically, still occupies a marginal value in scholarly literature addressing film's multivalent functions. This paper addresses the gap via analysing prem's career-making and defining works [Kariya (2003), Excuse me (2003) and Jogi (2005)] as case studies to help demonstrate that regional films achieve analytical complexity and theoretical sophistication on the same stages as globally curated cinemas.

With three consecutive blockbusters in his directorial debut within a three-year span, Prem's career represents an exceptional achievement in Kannada cinema history. Kariya (2003) starring Darshan in a gangster-love story setting, Prem set a cultural achievement as the status of "Sleeper hit" was bestowed upon the film with an initial run of 56 days at Kapali theater before its re-release generating a 100+ days aggregate with theatrical run driven by soundtrack popularity, particularly the song "Kencha Lo Macha Lo" being the "Anthem of the year" as a music charts topper. In 2003, Excuse me, a romantic-comedy starring Ramya and music by R.P. Patnaik, the title "Cult success" was associated with the film by

repeating audiences for musical sequences with simple narratives. Jogi (2005), an action-packed family drama that highlighted emotional sentiments, produced a star performance through ₹3 crores first-month collection and became first Kannada film screened simultaneously in United States, as the Filmfare recognised Musical director R. Thangavelu's talents through his compositions.

The collective of these films achieved aggregate box office collections exceeding ₹25 crores, maintained 100+ day theatrical runs across multiple centres, establishing the "Hat-trick" of Prem's directorial career as an exceptional designation within the contexts of regional cinema. Although the three films spanned across two years gained valuable commercial and critical success, no published peer-reviewed research analyses these three films for academic purposes. This absence represents a significant scholarly gap across multiple interconnected domains of academic research and analysis on regional cinema, film music theory, director auteurism and audio-visual synchronization analysis.

2. Research Objectives

- To establish music as a foundational cinematic language
- To identify music to be a directorial signature to establish Auteur Status

3. Scope of Research

- Analyses Prem's Directorial hat-trick of movies to establish music as a foundational cinematic language
- Examines music to be a directorial signature to establish Auteur Status

4. Significance of Research

- Demonstrates how music functions as a foundational cinematic language
- Identifies music to be a directorial signature to establish Auteur Status

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

While many research papers study the relation between music and film's narrative elements like Banerjee, Poulami (2021), Biswal, Santosh Kumar (2021), Jhingan, Shikha (2021), Kamble, Chandrakant Goutam (2021), Kandpal, Anupama (2025), Mary M., Saumi (2016), Rai, Amit S. (1994, 2003), Sharma, Rashmi (2021).

Studies have analysed how music can be used for beyond the purpose of entertainment in a film, in the research paper, "Cultural Identity in Hamsalekha's Music", 2023, by Eshwar & Dr. B. K. Ravi explores how Hamsalekha's musical compositions reflect and resonate with Karnataka's essence and cultural identity via cinema. The major findings of this study explain how music has a vital role in capturing cultural identity through cinematography by employing content analysis to thematically analyse Hamsalekha's songs. It identified that musical elements, such as instrumentation, lyrics and themes serve as cultural markers in a film and its roots and also further precedent for analyzing composer contributions to regional cultural representation.

While thematic storytelling has been a core feature of films, only a few studies highlight it as a core feature to a movie's ability to send a message as a cultural remark. The paper "From Folklore to Film: The Politics of Storytelling in Kantara - Ecological Discourse and Empowerment" authored by Meenakshi and Abhishek Shah, revolves around the core of Tulu folk music and a testament to how kantara functions as its agent. The main findings of this research highlight how the music of this film is the heartbeat and contributes to how folk music rhythms mirror natural cycles and establish a realistic connection to the landscape of the film. With the analysis based off of Timothy Morton's environmental philosophy framework in this paper, it is seen that the movie demonstrates the emotional bond and engagement with cultural landscapes. One noteworthy line in this paper as said would be "Sound shapes how we inhabit and imagine our environments"- Timothy Morton.

In Manjula Shenoy, Dr. Venkatraman and Dr. Shifalika's paper "Exploring Kantara's Pan-India Connect - How Regional Cinema Touched a Chord and Enthralled Audiences, Nationally" focuses on the reasons for the pan-Indian success of Kantara despite its cultural exclusivity regional cultural themes, key findings suggest that word-of-mouth as commercial driver for regionally-themed film is a

crucial aspect for a film's success and also helps in demonstrating commercial viability of culturally – grounded narrative.

“A Historical Analysis of Themes and Trends in Kannada Cinema”, a paper by Eshwar and B.K.Ravi, focused on how the kannada film industry (sandalwood) has evolved over the years, the key themes highlighted to be historical progression, cultural significance, and modern trends of Kannada cinema from the inception of the contemporary period. The findings of this study deeply discuss the innovative period of Kannada cinema 1960s-1970s which were led by directors such as Puttanna Kanagal and G.V. Iyer. Documenting the diversification from mythological narratives to the varied social issues, romance, drama and comedy. Further highlighting on how technology has been adapted into modern sandalwood films, the study serves as a great reference to Kannada cinema's role in cultural identity preservation.

The research paper “South Indian Cinema: An Analysis of Production, Consumption and Culture” by Namrata Bagchi and Manjunatha M, took to depth on the comprehensive analysis of south Indian film industry's consumption patterns and its cultural significance. The paper takes a mixed methodology approach on the films, Pushpa, Minnal Murali, KGF Chapter 1 & 2, Ponniyin Selvan 1 & 2, the major findings discuss on how South Indian cinema preserves its cultural identity and authenticity by rooting stories in local traditions, rituals, myths and social issues.

Shikha Jhingan's paper, “Film Music Analysis: A Study of South Asian Cinematic Scores” discusses in depth on how South Asian Cinema has a dominance of “Song-Driven approach” and addresses in depth on how important the relation between verbal (lyrics) and non-verbal (instrumental) musical elements work in synchronisation to provide an elated experience. It studies the connection between classical raga-based traditions and modern film practices. This paper draws on the scholarly work by Ashok Da. Ranade's aesthetic principles for combining audio-visual elements of a film.

“Cultural Dependence in Question: An Exploration of Musical Practices of South Indian Film in Singapore”, the paper by Eugene Dairianathan, explores on how the south Indian population residing in Singapore cultivated a unique musical and cultural identity despite being a minority, the paper documents cultural-specific and cross-cultural reception. The key findings of this paper highlighted that the dependence of Indian musical scene in Singapore is solely dependent on India for cultural support. Film and music have held a great significance in the evolution of cinema in India, Ashiwini Deshpande's paper, “Evolution and Cultural Impact of Hindi Film Music from the 1940s” stands out as reference for how music evolved from the 1940s to the modern era of music and furthered on how the Hindi Film Music (HFM) evolved from a studio dependent art form to a global cultural phenomenon. Analysing on how the HFM broke the monopoly of entertainment by mass producing music and creating a culture of attachment to daily lives regardless of class or caste. This genre of music and films successfully blended and assimilated the diverse cultures of Indian music being Classical ragas and folk traditions with western takes. This paper sees “Languages as emotions” and traces the composition practices and cultural responsiveness of the audience.

The musical industries have evolved and shown a great variety of techniques and composition practices. “Kantara - Music and Sound Design Analysis” refers to an academic video essay featuring the film's composer, B. Ajaneesh Loknath, and sound designer/re-recording mixer, M.R. Rajakrishnan. The video explores on how the 2022 hit Kantara's music and sound design was a perfect blend of use of traditional Karnataka instruments (morsing, koragadalu, tase) alongside contemporary instruments (didgeridoo) and demonstrated a deep and profound understanding of leitmotif's narrative function.

6. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

This research paper uses Michel Chion's audio-vision theory as its primary framework for analysis by furthering in on concepts such as western cinema analysis to Prem's early films and study upon regional cinema. Chion's theory is applied to highlight how sound's fundamental role goes function as a supplementary aspect of a film but rather as a mean-making process that elevates a film. Chion defines synchresis as “involuntary and immediate fusion of sound and image” showing the willing and subconscious acceptance of audio-visual pair as a unified semantic. In Prem's films synchresis is a key function in audience engagement particularly seen in *Kariya* (2003) where the violent images and major key sound aspects are well synched into the heroic status, whereas the minor key sound is used to create

a psychological disturbance. The audio-visual contract discusses on how with the use of deliberate disruption and boundary manipulation to disrupt the viewer's expectation brings in diegetic and non-diegetic presences to further the audience's audio-visual contract and experience via complexity clearly seen in *Excuse me* (2003) attributing to Prem's success. The added value concept to boost emotional amplification and psychological depth in the movie *Jogi* (2005) to highlight the mother-son bonds, music highlights what mere visuals cannot put through.

The leitmotif analysis provides a foundation to study the recurring patterns in musical themes as narrative functions to analyse how Gurukiran and R.P. Patnaik used repeated melodic phrases in order to develop character. For example, in *Kariya* (2003) Darshan's character the low notes highlight his assassin vibe while showing a vulnerability via the complexity of contradicting visuals and audio sounds, showcasing how character-specific leitmotif is a valuable part of Prem's movies that accredited to his success. To highlight Jogi's Mother-son dynamic and emotional markers in the film with the use of traditional Kannada instruments (sarangi, veena) Prem showcased emotional authenticity and breaking the notion of excitement over sentiment, a key element to be noted in emotional leitmotif in Prem's successful trio.

The Diegetic and Non-diegetic aspects of Prem's films highlighted in *Excuse me* (2003) complements and complicates this dynamic as Prem exists both as a performer and a character within the narrative space with musical performances addressing the audience, viewers cannot simply classify Prem's scenes as character performance (diegetic) or narrative commentary (non-diegetic), this duality draws an allusion with the narrative emotional complexity of romantic confusion showcased via musical expressions such as audio ontological indeterminacy highlighting psychological uncertainty.

7. RESEARCH GAP

While Prem's Movies [*Kariya* (2003), *Excuse me* (2003) and *Jogi* (2005)] being a hat-trick of successful directorial debut films both in terms of finance and cultural significance, with the aggregate box-office collections crossing over 25 Crores and over 100 days of theatrical runs, there is no peer reviewed research papers that analyse these films in terms of literary studies. To address this gap in academic sources and studies, this paper takes a deep dive across multiple interconnected research aspects.

8. METHODOLOGY

8.1 Research design

1. **Primary Methodology: Film Textual Analysis; Narrative Analysis**, A scene-by-scene music function, **Audio-Visual Analysis**: Synchresis, sound & image meaning, **Leitmotif analysis**; repeated themes, **musical composition**: melody, harmony, and orchestration, **Diegetic Analysis**; Diegetic Vs Non-Diegetic analysis, **Lyrical analysis**; meaning, character alignment and cultural tone.
2. **Secondary method; Comparative Analysis**; Cross-film Comparison, composer composition, character psychology and contextual comparison.
3. **Tertiary Method**: Box office comparison, music popularity, audience response & marketing link
4. **Quaternary Method**; Cultural elements, Authenticity and Cultural Resonance.

8.2 Data Sources

1. **Primary sources: Film Texts**; *Kariya* (2003), *Excuse me* (2003) and *Jogi* (2005), **Music**; Soundtracks & background scores, **Reception**; Reviews and Awards
2. **Secondary sources**; Interviews, Industry history, Academic Literature, Film theory, musical studies, leitmotifs, raga systems and harmony

9. CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

9.1 Music as a foundational Cinematic Language

Music as a primary narrative device; the core function is to serve as a narrative driver and provide a depth that goes beyond dialogue. The leitmotif analysis speaks on how music serves as a carrier for

character psychology and emotional transformation to the audience via narratives beyond dialogues. In Kariya (2003) the dual leitmotifs highlight the minor key notes to take an indepth psychological depth and the presence of a sarangi's high notes for character depth. The music serves as a dissonance to consonance medium while the music also helps in integration of power themes via higher notes and bass to merge vulnerability and violence. In Jogi (2005) the mother's aesthetic and vibe were highlighted by Prem and the musical composers via sarangi and veena to create an emotional depth and authenticity. The use of harmonic shifts from minor to showcase worry to higher to showcase acceptance creating an effect of development that goes beyond dialogue.

Music as an emotion architect; through harmonic, melodic and orchestral choices Prem's movies revolved around emotional intensity through musical notes and going being the visual medium by adding music to amplify the emotional connect with the audience. For example, the emotional pacing in Jogi (2005)'s climax, Prem used a harmonic progression to switch from tension to resolution with a melodic contouring from the ascending to signify hope to the descending to highlight conflict. The use of instruments such as western percussions and traditional instruments such as sarangi created emotional depth in the context of Prem's movies.

Music as a Commercial Asset; During this era of films, it is clear that, the box office success rate is directly proportional to the success of the movie's sound tracks and prominence. For example, Kariya (2003)'s "kencha lo macha lo" was a chartbuster that opened success via multiple radio plays and its re-release was also successful with its musical presence. A repeat audience is also a key factor in the success of Excuse me (2003) as a cult classic with its extended theatrical run of over 100 days. Whereas Jogi (2005) used a pre-release musical promotion tactic that caught the audience attention and earned a strong first month collection and also awards recognition.

Cultural Signification of music; Music serves as a medium as well as a source for cultural identity and authenticity, also in turn serves as a commercial strength to draw in a culturally united yet diverse population via musical mechanisms. Mechanisms such as traditional instruments, raga-based compositions, linguistic authenticity and a string resonance with the audience are the most prominent and dominating role in Prem's early directorial success gaining recognition for audio-visual components working well together in order to deliver compelling story to the audience with narratives that go beyond dialogues.

9.2 Music to be a directorial signature to establish Auteur Status

Consistent Directorial Method, Prem's signature style of music as a narrative device in his films that gained paramount success despite their diversity, kariya (2003) with a gangster romance with themes of violence and romance, Excuse me (2003) a comedic romance story with elements of sentiment and humourism and Jogi (2005) stars an action-family drama that highlights on emotion, action and adventure. All three movies stood tall in employing Leitmotif character development with recurring musical themes to deliver complex characters. All three films also have music-emotional intensity correlation as by using music as a primary meaning-making mechanism rather than just as a compliment. music to be a directorial signature to establish Auteur Status. This consistency method across multiple genres makes it evident that directorial identification through musical choices is comparable to traditional auteur's markers.

Using **Director-Composer Collaboration**, collaborating with composers such as Gurukiran, R.P. Patnaik in Kariya and Jogi respectively, the movies hold key to understanding how Prem's directorial vision was translated to music as a narrative device via composer individuality. Gurukiran's recurring leitmotifs with the use of traditional instruments and harmonic complexity starred well with the audience and gained popularity with Kariya. While Jogi's musical exploits came with R.P. Patnaik's excellence highlighting the character-centred themes and cultural grounding using accessible melodies gave outcomes on both fronts of success, popularity and box-office sales via music and character psychology linking with emotional constructs and cultural identity expression all done with boundary manipulation. These showcased how despite variation, Prem's directorial framework remained consistent and is comparable to traditional auteur's markers.

Music as a directorial voice, keeping in mind the traditional Auteur's markers of visual style, editing rhythm and narrative themes, Prem's movies highlighted musical centred markers such as, musical-

emotion linkage, leitmotif-driven psychology and cultural-contemporary balance with diegetic ambiguity shows how well Prem's methods and techniques via his films showcased how rem's directorial framework remained consistent and comparable with traditional auteur's markers.

Compositional outcomes being shaped by Directorial authority, Prem's movies serve as a great study for comparative composer analysis as they reveal that directorial authority influences how composers are given their individuality, both Gurukiran and Patnaik held their own individualities of music as composers yet gave structural similarity and supported Prem's directorial requirements by balancing emotional-intensity, cultural consciousness, and integration of traditional instruments with the employment of boundary manipulation and diegetic and non-diegetic strategies, this difference being united in Prem's films suggest that Compositional outcomes are influenced heavily by Directorial authority.

10. APPENDIX

Appendix A: Leitmotif Analysis Tables

Table A1: Leitmotif Usage in Kariya (2003)

Scene/Sequence	Leitmotif Name	Musical Features	Associated Character/Theme	Narrative Function
Protagonist's Entry	Kariya's Power Motif	Brass, percussion, minor mode	Kariya (Darshan)	Establishes criminal underworld identity and emotional distance
Family Flashback	Mother's Memory	Veena, high strings, gentle ascending melody	Kariya's mother	Conveys nostalgia and latent vulnerability
Internal Conflict	Duality Motif	Repeating two-note figure, unresolved harmony	Kariya	Expresses psychological struggle and hint at reformation
Climax	Resolution Theme	Motif combines previous elements, moves to major	Kariya/mother	Reconciliation, moral closure

Table A2: Leitmotif Usage in *Excuse Me* (2003)

Scene/Sequence	Leitmotif Name	Musical Features	Associated Character/Theme	Narrative Function
Lovers' Meeting	Romance Motif	Flute, soft percussion, melodic intervals	Ajay & Ramya	Signals innocence and budding romance
Jealousy/Conflict	Discord Motif	Syncopated strings, chromatic movement	Ajay/Supporting cast	Underscores love triangle conflict

Comic Relief	Friend Motif	Plucked strings, playful repeating rhythm	Friend character	Provides comic and tonal relief
Reunion/Resolution	Union Motif	Choral voices, fuller instrumentation, soaring melody	Lovers/Family	Brings emotional catharsis and narrative closure

Table A3: Leitmotif Usage in Jogi (2005)

Scene/Sequence	Leitmotif Name	Musical Features	Associated Character/Theme	Narrative Function
Mother's Search	Mother's Theme	Sarangi, slow ascending melody, lament quality	Mother (Sharadha)	Expresses longing, grief, eternal mother-child bond
Jogi's Transformation	Transformation Motif	Layered percussion, electric guitar & folk fusion	Jogi (Shiva Rajkumar)	Represents rise from village to city; struggle theme
Climax Reunion	Reunion Motif	Full orchestra, major key, melodic motif reprise	Mother/Jogi	Delivers emotional climax, symbolizing reunion
Closing Montage	Home Motif	Folk instruments, slow tempo, resolved harmony	Home/roots	Conveys return to identity and cultural belonging

11. DISCUSSIONS

This research takes a deeper approach to study how regional cinema from scholarly marginalization towards the centre stage by demonstrating achievements with analytical complexity on par with global cinema with contributions such as:

- **Establishing regional films as theoretically sophisticated**, via Prem's work demonstration of sophisticated narratives, music and cultural standout.
- **Validating region-specific theoretical application**, upon application of Michel Chion audio-vision theory to kannada cinema, showcases how the framework utility across cultural and regional contexts, agree with Western theory of cross-cultural applicability.
- **Movies can be documented as economic model**; Analysis of music's independent revenue played a massive role in early 2000s Kannada cinema documents economic structures in difference from Hollywood models.
- **A foundation for Auteur Studies**: an analysis of Prem's directorial work establishes itself as a foundation for auteur's theory application with their commercial success that were formerly excluded from the auteurism discourse.

Contribution to Auteur Theory and Direction

- This research extends upon Auteur's theory and identifies **music as a directorial signature** as it satisfies the traditional auteur markers (visual composition, editing) by furthering it beyond visual analysis.
- **Commercial Auteursm** is also studied to find the relation between auteur theory from art cinema domain to commercial cinema contexts.
- This study clearly suggests that **directorial authority dictates the outcomes of compositional work** and contributes to the regional cinema's success and studies.

12. CONCLUSIONS

This research demonstrates that;

- **Music serves as a foundation for cinematic language** and not as an accompanying factor and can serve as a primary narrative device, emotion architect, commercial asset and a mechanism for cultural signification.
- **Music as a directorial signature**, consistent music methodology across three films that gained popularity and success showcased how Prem's music is comparable to Auter's traditional markers
- **Commercial success and Cultural recognition go hand-in-hand** as regional authenticity functions as a commercial driving factor as well as a magnet for audiences and revenue.
- **Regional cinema can be as theoretically sophisticated as global cinema**

13. LIMITATIONS

This study only focuses only on 3 specific movies of a specific director and the time frame of this study proved to be a hurdle when it came to adding more filters and areas of study to better connect the movies to the research.

14. SCOPE OF FUTURE STUDIES

- Extended director career stories
- Comparative director studies
- Audience perception research and analysis
- Archival preservation of regional cinema
- Cross-cultural Audio-Vision Studies.

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Ageing gracefully in Malayalam cinema: the legacy of actress Urvashi

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ABSTRACT: *The representation of ageing female stars in Malayalam cinema overshadows deep-seated biases related to gender and age. While male actors tend to retain leading roles in cinema well into later life, it is generally common for women to be relegated to supporting or typecast characters once they cross a certain age. This study centers on critically acclaimed Malayalam actress Urvashi, whose professional life presents a compelling example against these limiting norms. On a structural level, ageism and gender bias in casting, coupled with the typecasting of performers into certain tropes who wish to go further and push their boundaries, still persist (Greeshma, 2021⁽¹²⁾, Arya, 2019⁽¹⁾). Destruction of these obstacles and to give full creative freedom in the industry would enable the artists to connect with the audience at higher levels. The findings contribute to ongoing debates on ageism, gender equity, and the cultural politics of stardom in Indian cinema.*

Key Words - Ageing gracefully, Female stardom, Ageism, Role Typecasting, Gender bias.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Malayalam cinema, while male actors often continue to play lead roles and enjoy stardom into older age, women are often marginalized or relegated to secondary roles with age. This asymmetry reflects deep cultural and industry biases that shape the actresses' on-screen stories and also affect the careers and images of women actors in their real lives.

Urvashi's career

Kavitha Ranjini, popularly known as Urvashi, epitomize as a challenge to prevailing narratives of the decline of women in the industry, demonstrating resilience and flexibility that are rarely highlighted in mainstream scholarship. With a career spanning four decades across the Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada industries, her recent movie *Ullozhuku* (2024) received critical acclaim and significant awards, including the Kerala State Film Award for Best Actress and the National Award for Best Supporting Actress (Urvashi biography, ⁽²³⁾) Despite a highly successful career, her longevity remains an exception in an industry where gendered and ageist stereotypes are widespread.

1.1 Significance

The paper fills gaps by highlighting how industry practices and audience perceptions systematically disadvantage ageing female stars and thus, providing insights for more equitable cinematic cultures. The idea of “female stardom” is explored by showing how it is possible for systemic marginalization and the star status co-exist.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The case of Indian cinema, particularly the regional sectors like Malayalam, the depiction of ageing women is a combination of the factors of gendered stardom, societal attitudes, and the ever-changing media world. This study draws attention to the long-existing gap between male superstars and their

female counterparts. Arya MP, 2019⁽¹⁾. Discussing the influence of Bollywood on upper socioeconomic classes and media literacy proves that these conventions of ageing and female representation are not limited to the narration but also exercises its effect on the perceptions of audiences, thereby furthering age-based exclusion. Madhukullya and Gupta, 2025⁽²⁾.

2.2 Research Gap

While there is some existing literature on Indian cinema that critically addresses the onscreen representation of ageing women, there are only a few studies researching the real-life career paths of female actors. Previous studies have looked through filmic and narrative representation but have either neglected or overlooked the complete picture of industry practices and personal experiences that shapes the opportunities, setbacks, and career changes for women in Malayalam cinema.

2.3 Theoretical framework

2.3.1 Feminist Film Theory In this paper, the researcher aims to apply the **Feminist Film Theory** to encourage mass understanding and critical reasoning of ageism and gender discrimination in Malayalam cinema. At the core the **Feminist Film Theory** interrogates the way cinema reflects to its audience about the gendered and age-based power that are mostly granted to men. Central to this framework is the 'male gaze', a concept coined by Laura Mulvey in her 1975 essay. Women portrayed as passive objects for male pleasure (Mulvey, 1975²⁰). This theory stands especially relevant when comparing the sustenance of male actors' centrality on screen while female actresses slowly fade into irrelevance once they visibly age. The theory envelops broader understanding of the evolving filmic landscape and captures Urvashi as a case study, situating her versatile career in the bigger picture.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The analysis of the study is completed through acquiring information about Urvashi's filmography, media interviews, and awards to explore the ever-evolving reception of female stars in the Malayalam industry. Through this study, the researcher intends to study dominant narratives imposed on her in the advent of her career and how resisting it has helped in the construction of her star-like persona.

3.2 Analytical framework

The analysis is using a hybrid framework that applies **Feminist Film Theory** includes:

- **Stuart Hall's Representation Theory** (1997)
- **Thematic analysis**

Unit of analysis: Urvashi

Urvashi the Malayalam actress is analyzed from a feminist and socio-cultural standpoint. Observations are deemed fundamentally interpretative and focuses on symbolic and ideological media dimensions.

3.2.1 Stuart Hall's Representation Theory

Representation: The reflection of female characters adopted by *Urvashi* in her early career days included youthful and often times naive love interest with senior artists.

Year	Film	Urvashi's age	Male co – star	Male co-star's age
1983	<i>Munthanai Mudichu</i>	14	K. Bhagyaraj	30
1985	<i>Ente Ammu Ninte Thulasi Avarude Chakki</i>	16	Balachandra Menon / Venu Nagavalli	31
1985	<i>Pathamudayam</i>	16	Mohanlal	26
1993	<i>Aayirappara</i>	24	Mammooty	42

The role of these actors and Urvashi in each of these films can be explained with the help of a brief character breakdown:

1983 - *Munthanai Mudichu*

- Urvashi as Parimalam: A village girl characterized by childlike naivety often pulling shenanigans. Her reckless behavior and emotional impulsivity can be argued as a common narrative choice adopted by directors to showcase youthful femininity.
- K. Bhagyaraj as the village school teacher: A widower and single father that represents moral uprightness and who also has a practical mindset. The character heavily outlines male dominance and viewing Parimalam as a ‘nuisance’.

1985 – *Ente Ammu Ninte Thulasi Avarude Chakki*

- Urvashi as Thulasi – she plays the key female presence in the film. Urvashi portrayed the character with exceptional emotional depth as she navigated between strength and vulnerability. Her role however reflects a common trope of women being emotionally vulnerable and requiring male intervention or protection in order to alleviate their troubles.
- Balachandra Menon as S. Nandakumar – he plays the role of a dentist, a friend of Shakthi. Although the plot establishes Urvashi’s character as the emotional core of the film, the attention is quickly shifted to Balachandra Menon’s character for embodying control over the situation by shifting focus from Thulasi’s personal struggles to his strategic plans.

1985 – *Pathamudayam*

- Urvashi as Valsala - The character Valsala provides as an emotional depth to an otherwise action driven plot. Valsala, is the character Vikraman’s love interest. Her character is lesser known or explored but is essential in the core concept.
- Mohanlal as Jayamohan and Vikraman – Jayamohan is a sub-inspector and Vikraman is a gangster. The movie role failed to contribute to expanding and challenging her acting capacity, once again relegating her to a typecast role.

1993 – *Aayirappara*

- Urvashi as Parvathy – presented as the female lead and emotional support counterpart to the character Shauri. Her role does not expand independently with primary focus on the emotional grounding she offers to Shauri.
- Mammooty as Shauri (pronounced *Showri*) – presented as the male lead and the influential leader set to bring about revolution in his village with the villagers. His character is charismatic and embodies strength and resilience in the face of corruption. A well-established character with an interesting sub plot which is lacking in Urvashi’s character.

3.2.2 Thematic analysis

Theme (1) – Ageism in Role Selection and Portrayal

- Key data point – Early in her career, Urvashi’s roles were focused on youthful characters. She reveals that her sister was screened in the initial casting but the directors were drawn to her looks and chose her as the lead actress in their movie. (Interview: AVM Archives, 1992⁽¹⁷⁾. Kairali TV, 2002⁽¹⁸⁾).
- Summary – her filmography reveals diminishing role opportunities, showing consistent ageist casting decisions in Malayalam Cinema.

Theme (2) – Gendered industry expectations

- Key data point – In the 2024 Nere Chovve interview, Urvashi shared about her character ‘leelamma’ and about her always having a piece of herself in her acting and that ‘leelamma’ the character reflects in every woman who faces obstacles alone. She shared the strength to challenge oneself comes from within. Demonstrating passion for her work (Manorama News interview, 2024)¹⁶.

- Summary – Despite industry typecasting, her female stardom breaks apart traditional boxes that try to cage women and their capabilities. Her resilient nature also attempts in reforming future decisions surrounding gendered assumptions and industry biases.\

4. MAJOR FINDINGS

The research provided insight to ageism and gendered expectations in the context of Urvashi's career. Her journey may carve and outline the realities of many such actresses. Limited roles were also described as a career hinderance by several other actresses. Her early career roles were laced with thinly written roles that showed little to no character arc/development. The researcher has revealed the implications of these biases in her life through a thematic analysis of interviews.

5. CONCLUSION

This study contributes to discussions for inclusivity and Urvashi's career is a statement against the systemic injustice in Malayalam cinema due to ageism and gender bias. The present research contributes to a critical understanding of how age and gender intersect to shape cinematic practices in Malayalam cinema.

5.1 Limitations

1. The scope is limited to a single case study – although it may be insightful, it fails to capture other actresses' diversified perspectives on their experience in the film industry
2. Qualitative over Quantitative – the study heavily relies on qualitative methods. There is a lack of quantitative data that discusses the role allocation, pay gap and age-gender representation over the years.

5.2 Scope

The attempt here is to comprehend how Urvashi has threaded her way through Malayalam cinema, her roles, the ups and downs of her career, and the manner in which she pushes against the grain of the conventional age and gender biases. It explores the intersectionality of gender and age in Malayalam cinema. The aim of the study is to contribute to wider discussions and debates about inclusivity and gender equity in Malayalam cinema.

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Digital Divination – The Rise of Astrology Content Among Gen-z on Social Media

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Abstract: *In contemporary digital culture, astrology has re-emerged as a prominent form of social media content among Generation Z. Platforms such as Instagram and YouTube Shorts circulate astrology through memes, reels, and short videos that emphasise relatability, humour, and emotional resonance. Despite astrology's lack of scientific credibility, its widespread popularity among young users raises important questions about its appeal in digital spaces. This study examines how astrology content functions beyond entertainment, serving as a tool for self-expression, emotional reassurance, and social connection among Gen Z. Using a quantitative survey approach alongside analysis of engagement patterns, the research explores motivations for consumption, levels of interaction, and identity-related outcomes. The findings indicate that astrology's appeal lies less in literal belief and more in its ability to provide emotional comfort, self-reflection, and a shared cultural language. Algorithmic amplification further reinforces its visibility, making astrology a normalised and relatable presence within everyday social media use. The study concludes that the rise of digital astrology reflects Gen Z's broader search for identity, affirmation, and belonging within an algorithm-driven media environment.*

Keywords: *Astrology, Gen Z, social media, digital spirituality, belief systems, digital culture.*

1.INTRODUCTION:

Astrology's transition from traditional, text-heavy practices to visually appealing, bite-sized social media content has led to its resurgence as a potent digital trend, particularly among Gen Z. Astrology has been redefined as "content astrology" by social media sites like Instagram, YouTube Shorts, and Snapchat, where zodiac meanings are condensed into visually appealing posts, memes, and reels that are simple to watch and share. Because of this change, astrology can now serve as a cultural language rather than a formal belief system, assisting young people in expressing their personalities, feelings, and daily experiences. Astrology has been reimagined to fit the pace and tastes of digital life through humor, graphics, and relatability. Astrology provides rapid emotional validation and a sense of community for Gen Z true digital natives navigating stress, identity formation, and algorithm-driven media environments. Astrology provides rapid emotional validation and a sense of community for Gen Z true digital natives navigating stress, identity formation, and algorithm-driven media environments. In addition to facilitating participation through tagging, sharing, and meme culture, zodiac-based content offers symbolic explanations for emotions and social experiences. By rewarding emotional engagement, social media algorithms further magnify such content, making astrology seem ubiquitous and culturally relevant. Astrology is still popular as a means of self-expression, amusement, and fostering community despite its lack of scientific validity. Therefore, by investigating why and how astrological content resonates so strongly with Gen Z in today's digital ecosystem, this study aims to fill the empirical research gap.

2.OBJECTIVES :

- **To examine** how digital astrology content functions as a tool for digital identity constructions among Gen Z.
- **To assess** the motivational factors that influence Gen Z's consumption of astrology-based media.
- **To measure** the extent of Gen Z's engagement with astrology-related content on social media platforms.

3.SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY : This study is significant because it provides quantitative evidence in an area largely dominated by qualitative observations and cultural commentary. By examining measurable patterns of behaviour, motivation, and identity expression related to astrology content on social media, the research contributes to communication and media studies, particularly in understanding digital identity construction among Generation Z. It also highlights the rise of digital spirituality, explaining why young people seek emotional guidance, self-reflection, and community in algorithm-driven online spaces. Beyond academia, the study offers insights for media educators and content creators by clarifying audience engagement with spiritually oriented content, and contributes to discussions on digital well-being by showing how astrology is used to cope with stress and uncertainty.

4.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK : Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

UGT views audiences as active users who choose media to meet specific needs. Applied to Gen Z and digital astrology, it explains motivations such as entertainment, stress relief, self-reflection, identity exploration, and social connection. Astrology content, including memes and discussions, helps users feel understood and connected, supporting Objective 2.

1. **Social Identity Theory (SIT)** SIT explains how people form identity through group belonging. In digital spaces, zodiac signs function as identity labels that express personality and foster online micro-communities through memes, reels, and compatibility content. This framework supports Objective 1 by highlighting identity as socially constructed online.
2. **Combined Framework** Together, UGT explains why Gen Z consumes astrology content, while SIT explains how it shapes identity and belonging. Combined, they provide a strong basis for analysing the emotional and social appeal of digital astrology on social media.

6.ROLS: 1. Astrology and Mental Health: A Psychological Analysis of Its Influence Across Cultures

Published on [SSRN](#)

Bhupesh Dabhade (2025) examine the impact of astrological beliefs on mental health across India, the UK, and the US, finding that moderate belief is linked to emotional balance and a sense of control during uncertainty, while excessive reliance increases anxiety and reduces self-efficacy.

2. Exploring identity and intimacy through astrology

Published on [SAGE Journals](#)

In their 2025 study, Isabella Boyd and Rachel Simmons examine astrology as a tool for identity and intimacy formation in digital culture through qualitative interviews and digital ethnography. They argue that astrological language helps users express vulnerability, navigate relationships, and build emotional connections on social media, positioning astrology as a socially accepted framework for intimacy in digitally mediated spaces.

3.Swiping Through the Stars: Exploring Identity and Intimacy through Astrology Sensemaking on Douyin

Published on [SAGE Journals](#)

Zhang (2025) explores how Gen Z users on Douyin engage with short-form astrology videos to construct identity and emotional intimacy. Using qualitative interviews, the study shows that these videos support self-understanding and relationship interpretation while fostering community through interactive features like commenting and sharing. Zhang concludes that astrology thrives on social

media because it blends personal reflection with collective belonging in ways that resonate with contemporary digital culture.

4. Becoming Free through Fortune-telling: Value-Seeking and Self-Transformation in Contemporary China

[Published on SpringerOpen](#)

Jiang Z. (2025) examines how digital fortune-telling and astrology-like practices function as tools for self-transformation among Chinese youth. Using interviews and ethnographic methods, the study shows that Gen Z users view online divination as a flexible, self-development resource rather than superstition, offering emotional support and agency in navigating uncertainty.

7. METHODOLOGY:

1. **Research Design** This study adopts a quantitative, descriptive, and correlational survey design to examine how Generation Z engages with astrology content on social media. A quantitative approach enables the collection of numerical data from a broad sample, allowing for statistical analysis of patterns related to motivation, identity, and engagement. The descriptive component outlines Gen Z's exposure to astrology content, preferred platforms, and interaction styles, while the correlational aspect helps identify relationships between content consumption, beliefs, and engagement behaviour.
2. **Population and Sample** The study focuses on Gen Z individuals aged 16–26 who actively use social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat. This group is central to the rise of digital astrology due to their high engagement with algorithm-driven content. Data will be collected using purposive and convenience sampling through online platforms and student networks, with stratified sampling used where possible to ensure demographic balance. A sample size of 104 respondents is considered adequate for reliable analysis, with larger samples enhancing validity and subgroup comparison.

8. DATA ANALYSIS

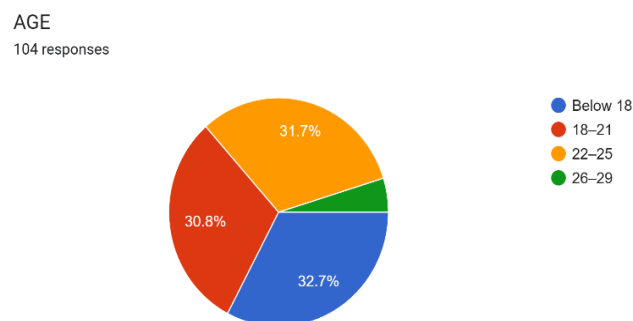


Figure 8.1- Age of Respondents

The age distribution shows that the sample is largely composed of younger Gen Z users. Most respondents are below 18 (32.7%), aged 18–21 (30.8%), or 22–25 (31.7%), together accounting for nearly the entire sample. Only a small share falls in the 26–29 age group (4.8%). This pattern indicates that astrology content resonates most strongly with teenagers and young adults who are highly active on social media and engaged in identity exploration. Overall, the data supports the study's focus on Gen Z, highlighting astrology's appeal among younger digital natives.

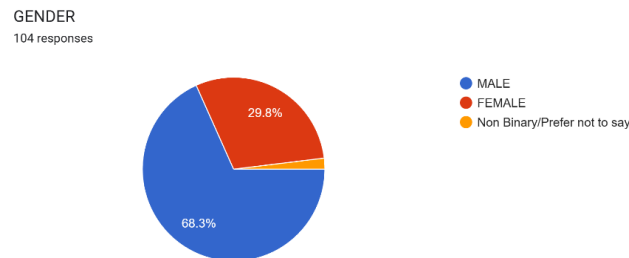


Figure 8.2- Gender Of Respondents

The gender distribution shows a clear imbalance, with males forming the majority of respondents (68.3%), followed by females (29.8%), and a small share identifying as non-binary or preferring not to disclose. While astrology is often stereotyped as appealing mainly to women, this data suggests that male users also engage significantly with astrology content. Overall, the findings indicate that astrology on social media reaches a more gender-inclusive audience than commonly assumed, even if certain groups are more prominently represented.

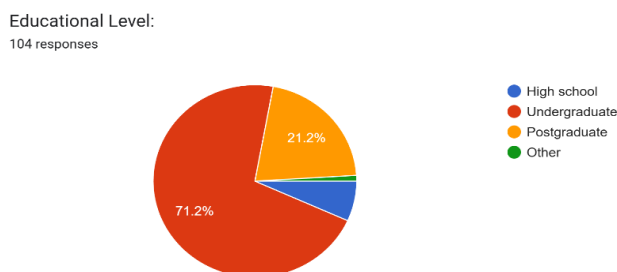


Figure 8.3- Education Level of Respondents

The educational data shows that most respondents are undergraduates (71.2%), reflecting the core Gen Z group that is highly active on social media and engaged in identity and emotional exploration. Postgraduates make up 21.2%, indicating that interest in astrology continues into higher education and early professional life, often for self-reflection or stress relief. A small share consists of high school students and others. Overall, the findings suggest that while astrology appeals across educational levels, it is especially popular among undergraduates due to their social media use and stage of personal development.

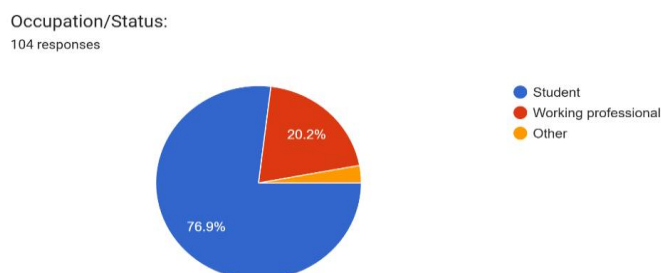


Figure – 8.4 Occupation/Status of Respondents

The occupation data shows that most respondents (76.9%) are students, aligning well with the study's focus on Gen Z and strengthening the relevance of the findings. Working professionals account for 20.2%, suggesting that astrology content continues to appeal to Gen Z even as they enter the workforce, possibly as stress relief or light entertainment. A small group falls under "Other." Overall, the results indicate that astrology strongly resonates with young people in transitional life stages, functioning as both a coping tool and relatable digital entertainment.

1. Which Social Media Platform do you use regularly (Select all that apply):

104 responses

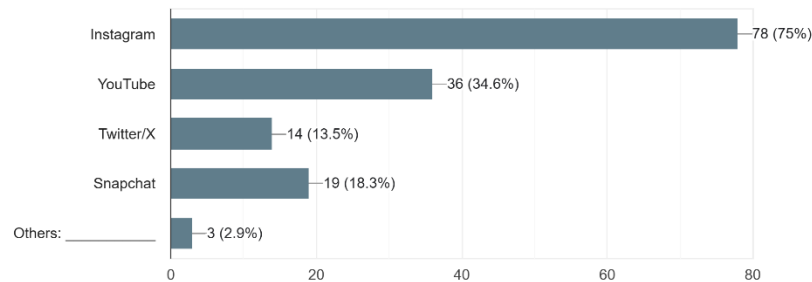


Figure – 8.5 Most Used Social Media Platforms

The data shows that Instagram is the most used platform among Gen Z, with 75% of respondents selecting it, making it the primary space for encountering astrology content like reels, memes, and aesthetic zodiac posts. YouTube follows at 34.6%, likely supported by the popularity of YouTube Shorts. Snapchat (18.3%) and Twitter/X (13.5%) are used by smaller groups, while very few rely on other platforms. Overall, Instagram has the strongest influence on how Gen Z consumes astrology content, reflecting their preference for visual and short-form formats that suit modern digital astrology.

2. How often do you see astrology content on social media?

104 responses

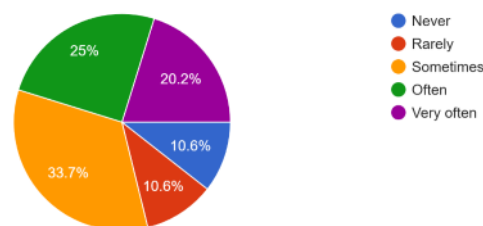


Figure – 8.6 Exposure to Astrological Content

The data shows that astrology content is highly visible in Gen Z's daily social media use. Most respondents encounter it sometimes (33.7%), often (25%), or very often (20.2%), indicating frequent and algorithm-driven exposure. Only a small share sees it rarely or never (21.2%). Overall, the findings suggest that astrology has become a normalized part of Gen Z's digital environment, reinforced by trends, algorithms, and peer sharing, making it familiar and relatable even for non-believers.

3. How often do you interact with astrology content (like, save, share)?

104 responses

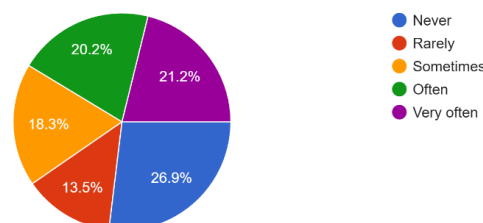


Figure – 8.7 Engagement with Astrological Content

The data shows varied levels of interaction with astrology content among Gen Z. While 26.9% never interact, the majority engage at least occasionally. Around 31.8% interact rarely or sometimes, while over 40% engage often or very often, indicating strong and regular involvement. Overall, the findings suggest that although some Gen Z users remain passive viewers, many actively like, share, or save

astrology content, increasing its visibility on social media and reflecting its role as both casual entertainment and a relatable social activity.

4. How often do you comment on astrology posts or videos?
104 responses

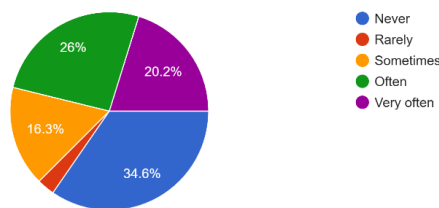


Figure – 8.8 Comments on Astrological Content

The data shows that many Gen Z users do not actively comment on astrology content, with 34.6% never commenting. Smaller groups comment rarely (4.8%) or sometimes (16.3%), suggesting occasional engagement when content feels relatable or funny. However, a notable share comments often (26%) or very often (20.2%), indicating active participation in astrology-related discussions. Overall, while commenting is less common than passive viewing, astrology still serves as an interactive and social conversation topic for many Gen Z users.

5. How often do you post or share astrology-related content yourself?
104 responses

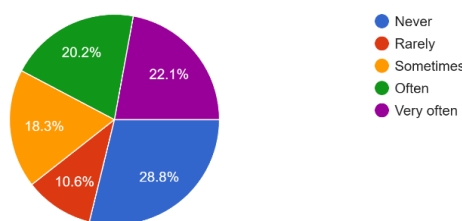


Figure – 8.9 Sharing of Astrological content

The data shows varied levels of sharing astrology content among Gen Z. The largest group (28.8%) never shares such posts, indicating many prefer to consume astrology passively. Others share rarely (10.6%) or sometimes (18.3%), usually when content feels relatable or entertaining. Notably, over 40% share astrology content often or very often, actively contributing to its spread. Overall, the findings suggest that while some Gen Z users remain passive viewers, a significant number actively fuel the visibility and popularity of astrology content online.

6. Have you ever used astrology content to make a personal decision (e.g., relationships, planning, choosing something)?
104 responses

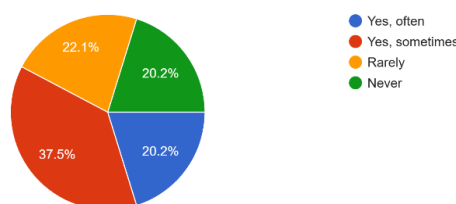


Figure – 8.10 Influence of Astrological Content in making Decisions

The data shows a mixed pattern in how Gen Z uses astrology for decision-making. About 37.5% sometimes rely on astrology, treating it as a light guide rather than a strict rule. Around 20.2% use it often, while 22.1% do so rarely, indicating moderate and situational engagement. Another 20.2% never

use astrology for decisions, viewing it mainly as entertainment. Overall, the findings suggest that while astrology is not taken very seriously, it still influences the thoughts and small everyday choices of many Gen Z users.

7.I consume astrology content mainly for entertainment.
104 responses

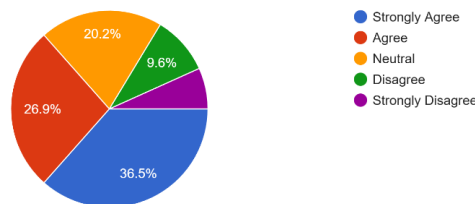


Figure – 8.11 Consumption of Astrological content for Entertainment

The results show that entertainment is a key reason Gen Z consumes astrology content, with over 60% viewing it as fun and light-hearted. About 20.2% are neutral, suggesting astrology may serve multiple purposes for some users, while only a small group disagrees. Overall, the findings confirm that astrology for Gen Z is driven more by enjoyment and pop-culture appeal than serious belief, aligning with its meme-based presence on social media.

8.Astrology content helps me understand myself better.
104 responses

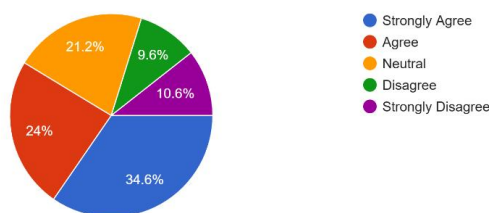


Figure – 8.12 Self Insight

The responses show that nearly 60% of Gen Z users feel astrology helps them understand themselves better, suggesting it serves as a reflective tool for personality and emotions. About 21.2% are neutral, enjoying astrology without finding it deeply influential, while around 20% disagree, seeing it as irrelevant. Overall, the findings indicate that astrology plays an emotional and introspective role beyond entertainment, helping explain its continued popularity among Gen Z.

9.Astrology content makes me feel connected to others.
104 responses

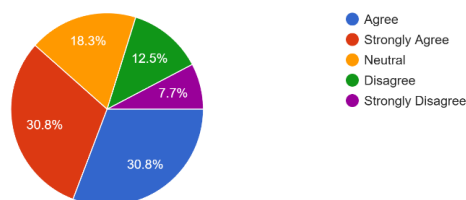


Figure – 8.13 Connection

The results indicate that astrology plays a social role for many Gen Z users. A majority (61.6%) feel it helps them feel more connected to others, suggesting zodiac content creates shared identity and conversation opportunities. About 18.3% remain neutral, while a smaller group (20.2%) disagrees, viewing astrology mainly as personal or entertainment-based. Overall, astrology acts as a form of digital social glue, helping young people connect and engage on social media.

10. Astrology content provides comfort during stressful times.
104 responses

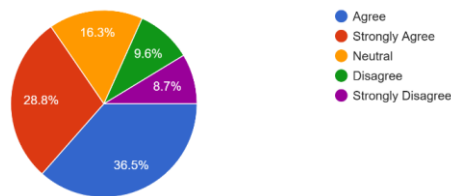


Figure – 8.14 Comfort

The chart shows that most Gen Z users turn to astrology for emotional comfort, with 65.3% agreeing that it helps during stressful times. About 16.3% remain neutral, while a small minority disagrees. Overall, the findings suggest that astrology functions as more than entertainment, serving as a gentle coping tool that offers reassurance and relief during stress.

11. I follow astrology content because it is trendy or popular.
104 responses

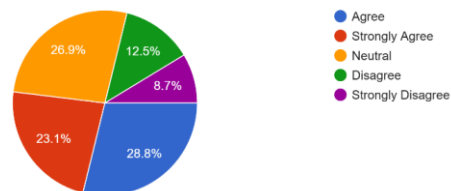


Figure – 8.15 Trendiness

The chart indicates that trendiness significantly influences Gen Z's engagement with astrology content. Over half of the respondents (51.9%) agree or strongly agree that they follow astrology partly because it is popular, reflecting its strong presence in memes, reels, and online conversations. While some remain neutral or disagree, the findings suggest that astrology's viral nature and cultural visibility play an important role in its widespread appeal, positioning it as both a belief-related and trend-driven aspect of Gen Z's digital culture.

12. I identify with my zodiac sign.
104 responses

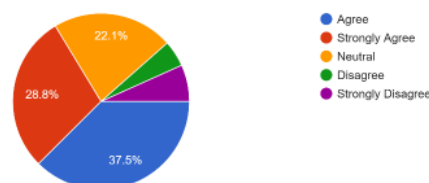


Figure – 8.16 Identity

The data shows that a majority of Gen Z respondents identify with their zodiac sign. Over two-thirds (66.3%) agree or strongly agree that they relate to their sign, indicating that astrology provides a familiar and relatable language for understanding personality and emotions. While some remain neutral and only a small minority disagree, the findings suggest that zodiac signs play a meaningful role in self-perception for many Gen Z users, contributing to the continued popularity of astrology content on social media.

13. Astrology influences how I present myself on social media.
104 responses

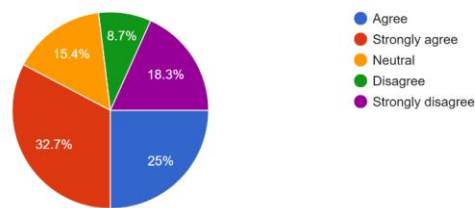


Figure – 8.17 Presentation

The results indicate that astrology influences online self-presentation for a majority of Gen Z users. Over half of the respondents (57.7%) agree or strongly agree that astrology shapes their digital identity through practices such as sharing zodiac memes, using signs in bios, or reposting relatable traits. While some remain neutral or disagree, the findings suggest that astrology extends beyond entertainment and functions as an identity marker that helps many young users express themselves and connect with others in digital spaces.

14. Astrology helps me express my personality online.
104 responses

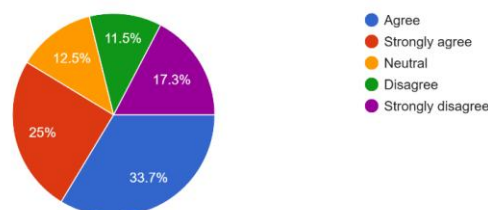


Figure – 8.18 Expression

The data indicates that astrology supports online self-expression for many Gen Z users. A majority (58.7%) agree or strongly agree that astrology provides a fun and relatable way to showcase their personality through memes, zodiac traits, or posts reflecting their emotions and behaviour. While some remain neutral or disagree, the overall findings suggest that astrology functions as a creative identity tool, offering young users an accessible and culturally familiar way to express themselves and engage with digital trends.

15. I use astrology to interpret my behaviors or traits.
104 responses

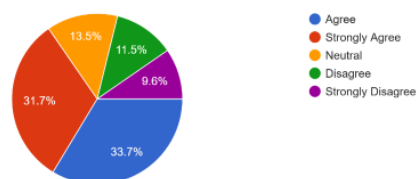


Figure – 8.19 Interpretation

The findings show that most Gen Z respondents use astrology as a tool for self-reflection. A clear majority (65.4%) agree or strongly agree that astrology helps them understand their behaviours and personality traits, indicating its role as an accessible and relatable framework for self-interpretation. While some respondents remain neutral or disagree, overall the data suggests that astrology functions as a symbolic mirror for many young people, offering labels and narratives that help them make sense of themselves in a familiar and comforting way.

16.I feel more confident sharing aspects of myself because of astrology content.
103 responses

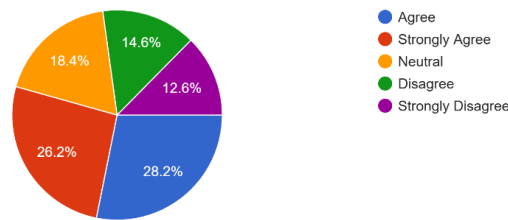


Figure – 9.20 Confidence

The chart indicates that astrology content enhances self-confidence in online self-expression for many Gen Z users. A majority (54.4%) agree or strongly agree that astrology helps them comfortably share their personality or emotions by providing a relatable and socially accepted language for self-disclosure. While 18.4% remain neutral and a smaller proportion disagree, the overall findings suggest that astrology functions as a supportive tool for self-expression, enabling young users to present themselves online with greater ease and confidence.

9.KEY FINDINGS: Most respondents regularly encounter astrology on platforms like YouTube and Instagram, where it is widely shared and normalized through peer activity and algorithms. While primarily consumed as entertaining, meme-driven content, many users say astrology also promotes self-reflection, emotional comfort, and social connection. Even without strong belief, its trendiness and viral appeal make it both a cultural pastime and, for some Gen Z users, a tool for identity and decision-making.

10.CONCLUSION: The findings show that astrology has become a normalized part of Gen Z's digital lives, particularly on platforms like YouTube and Instagram. Algorithmic exposure and peer sharing have transformed astrology from a passing trend into a familiar and often reassuring form of content, even for users who do not actively seek it out. Engagement ranges from passive viewing to active liking, sharing, and commenting, positioning astrology as a shared social language rather than a strict belief system. Beyond entertainment, astrology appeals to Gen Z by supporting self-understanding, emotional reflection, and stress relief, while also fostering connection and influencing online self-presentation. Overall, Gen Z's engagement with astrology reflects a broader search for identity, meaning, and belonging within an algorithm-driven digital environment.

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Youth Engagement and Digital Consumption: YouTube's role in popularization of retro rock in Bangalore

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Abstract: Retro rock music, an era that started in the 1960s and lasted until the 1980s with mega famous bands such as The Beatles, Queen, Pink Floyd, Eagles, and The Rolling Stones, is becoming popular again. At present, where the digital media is the king, YouTube is the main influencer that decides the fate of different music genres across the public. It is also the stream through which the young audience can find older styles and connect with them. The present research discusses the importance of YouTube in introducing retro rock to Bangalore college students by measuring their awareness, engagement, and retention in this genre. According to the research survey, which was based on a quantitative method, 120 respondents aged 18 to 25 from different colleges in Bangalore were surveyed through an online questionnaire. The impact of YouTube on music discovery, retro rock culture exposure, and emotional connection of the young listeners is also analyzed. The results are expected to give some understanding of how digital media has integrated and overlapped youth culture, thereby driving revival of culture and influencing modern music tastes. Besides, the research contributes to the debate over media nostalgia and how past cultural styles are interpreted in the digital era.

Key Words: YouTube, Retro Rock, Youth Culture, Music Revival, Digital Media.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, YouTube has become the biggest venue for music discovery, and not just for the new and popular ones, since it has made more than 70 million songs available without any restrictions as to the time and place. The platform, where the audience actively participates and comments, shares, and creates content, mainly drives music through algorithmic recommendations, thus mediating music by reintroducing old songs to new listeners. The youth in India, especially the ones in cities, are staying connected with the digital world and thus exposed to the global musical trends together with the local ones. This situation mirrors the post-liberalization identity of the Indian youth wherein the listeners are balancing the global influences with the local tastes. Bangalore, with its rich history of rock music and IT industry, presents an interesting cultural background for the study of the digital music consumption phenomenon. The existing research mainly investigates current trends and general internet usage but at the same time ignores how the digital media are the revival and the re-interpretation of the old genres. This is the case with our study as well, which looks at the linkaging of YouTube viewings and the retro rock re-popularity amongst the college students in Bangalore.

2. OBJECTIVES:

These three objectives outline the key focus areas that this study addresses:

- To find out how aware Bangalore youth are of retro rock music through YouTube.
- To study how often and in what ways students engage with retro rock music on YouTube.
- To understand the reasons why young listeners are interested in retro rock music today.

3. SCOPE OF RESEARCH:

Based on the objectives, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

- How aware are the college-going youth in Bangalore of retro rock music through YouTube?
- How frequently and in what ways do students engage with retro rock music content on YouTube?
- What are the key factors that influence young listeners' interest in retro rock music today?

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH:

This research looks into the transmission of culture in virtual life with its major emphasis on algorithmic curating and cultural consumption in the Global South. It not only covers the communication and media studies area but also powerfully supports the proposed concepts of cultural revival and invented tradition through the application of a case study method. The study delves into the contribution of YouTube to Bangalore's rock subculture and puts forward a counterargument to the conception of revival cultures merely as "fakelore." The research identifies Retrospective Rock as a channel through which young people can interact with colonial history and contemporary global culture. Last but not least, the paper provides the music sector and teaching with practical suggestions by showing the desired platforms of Gen Z along with their reasons and ways for the adaptation.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

1. The editors and contributors of the Popular Music & Nostalgia special issue discuss nostalgia as a complicated phenomenon that combines individual emotions, collective memories, and intentional revival efforts. The study reveals that media technologies, such as reissues, streaming services, and video formats, play a major role in helping people to rediscover and share old music again. Different case studies have been presented by the contributors showing that revivals are a mix of emotional longing, social identity, and cultural value.
The editors have shown their support for using various methods including ethnography, discourse analysis, as well as quantitative techniques in unravelling the nostalgia concept in today's media environment. Furthermore, they have brought the political and economic dimensions of revival to the forefront by questioning which histories are made visible and how commercial players take advantage of the nostalgic sentiments for their profit. (Dauncey, Tinker, et al., 2013-2015)
2. The Times of India feature team presented a story that covers Bangalore's rock music history from the 1960s through the 1980s. It marks the key places like 3 Aces and Chin Lung, as well as the lively college-band scene which was the city's early live-music culture influence. The piece demonstrates the case of English-speaking urbanites who looked at Western rock as a sign of progressive civilization and thus, welcomed it. They even formed strong listener communities over the years. Besides, the article mentions the institutions, venues, and people who were behind the music scene's growth and longevity. The recent reports also mention that Bangalore still has places like Indigo Live for live-rock which is a part of ongoing music festivals. This indicates the city does not cease to be a rock-friendly place. Besides that, the article also provides researchers with rich archival information, venue histories, and personal narratives through which the city's long association with global rock culture is drawn out. (The Times of India, 2014)

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Theoretical frameworks of **Uses and Gratifications and Media Convergence** are deployed in this research to elucidate the retro rock resurgence among the younger people of Bangalore. It is revealed that the younger consumers forcefully select YouTube as an outlet to meet their emotional, nostalgic, social, and identity needs particularly by way of listening to retro rock music, watching videos, and participating in community online. The mega mixing of different media on YouTube audio-visual media, social interaction, and algorithmic recommendations besides, adds to the instantaneous discovery, easy accessibility, and resurgent fandom of the music genre.

7. RESEARCH GAP:

The current literature discusses the digital media use of Indian youth, touches upon culture's revival and reinterpretation in post-colonial contexts, yet does not provide empirical data on the causes of enjoying the Retro Rock genre which is historical and non-local. While the theory of Uses and Gratifications gives a good breakdown of the various motivations behind media consumption, there is still a lack of quantitative evidence regarding the aesthetic, emotional, and social rewards like nostalgia, identity negotiation, and expression in which the youth of Bangalore prefer Retro Rock over modern music. Researchers have not been able to assess the role of algorithmic recommendations, reaction videos, and old concert footage in shaping the awareness and consumption of historical music.

8. METHODOLOGY:

8.1 Research design

The research uses a descriptive quantitative research design to assess the impact of YouTube on retro rock music popularity among the youth in Bangalore. This method captures and measures people's attitudes and behaviors pertaining to music and allows for the systematic measurement of the associated factors such as awareness, viewing frequency, content preferences, and cultural perceptions. In this way, it is able to accurately demonstrate how YouTube has become a powerful platform for both the discovery and revival of music.

8.2 Research Approach

The research employed a survey method with a structured questionnaire as the means of data collection from the students. It measured the level of awareness, viewing habits, and patterns of YouTube usage by the students as well as their attitudes towards retro rock music. This method made it possible to evaluate in an impartial manner whether or not such YouTube features as algorithms, reaction videos, and documentaries had any effect on the popularity of retro rock among the youth audience.

8.3 Population and Sampling Method

The research was conducted among college students in the age range of 18–25 living in Bangalore who are regular consumers of digital media with YouTube as their main source for music and entertainment. Convenience sampling was used to select a sample of 120 respondents because of the accessibility and time limitations. The participants were recruited from different colleges in Bangalore which gave a diverse but still relevant representation of the regular YouTube users who are interested in music content.

8.4 Data collection Method

Data were collected by means of a Google Forms questionnaire with a structured format that contained closed-ended, multiple-choice, and Likert-scale questions. The form dealt with the demographic information, knowledge of retro rock, interaction with related content, and YouTube's cultural influence. Employed through WhatsApp, email, and college groups, this technique provided fast, easy, and effective data collection along with systematic digital storage of replies.

8.5 Data Analysis Techniques.

Descriptive statistics were used to clarify and visualize the survey data in the analysis. The automatic percentages, bar charts, pie charts, and other graphical representations produced by Google Forms' analytical tools were very helpful in identifying the patterns that emerged quite effortlessly. The analysis concentrated on the levels of awareness, the frequency of engagement, interest driven by nostalgia and cultural appreciation changes. By looking at these visual data outputs, the research could figure out which factors among YouTube recommendations, trending videos, reaction channels, and music documentaries were the most powerful in influencing listening behavior.

8.6 Ethical considerations

Compatibility with the primary ethical standards set for research was one of the factors that the study was built on. The researchers communicated that their processing of the data collection was completely

anonymous and confidential since no personal, identifiable, or sensitive information had been gathered at any step. The participants were also informed about their right to refrain from the survey whenever they wished without facing any consequences. The data collected was used solely for academic and research purposes, and it was kept in a secure place that could not be accessed by anyone unauthorized.

9. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION:

Data Analysis

- **Age:** According to the age distribution of the survey, the largest part of the sample is made up of the 22-23 age group, which represents 37.5% of the survey respondents. Hence, it is deduced that a considerable number of the surveyed participants belong to the twenties age range. The second and the third largest age groups are 20-21 (24.2%) and 18-19 (20.8%) respectively, which indicate that the younger college-going population is well represented. The 24-25 age group contributes the least with 17.5%, but their contribution is still significant in the total sample. In general, the findings reveal a young demographic that could be a target for studies related to music preferences and digital media exposure.
- **Gender:** The gender distribution of the respondents shows that there are more females than males, with female participants constituting 60.2% of the entire sample. Male participants, on the other hand, make up 37.3% of the total, which is a significant but smaller representation in the sample. There was also a very small percentage of people who responded with 'Prefer not to say', which points to the fact that there is very little non-disclosure of gender identity in this study. This gender imbalance indicates that the female students were either more responsive to the survey or were more interested in it.
- **Name of the college:** The responses indicate a significant level of collaboration from a variety of colleges in Bangalore, which in turn reflects the diversity of the sample. Kristu Jayanti College was the most represented college with the highest number of responses (15.4%), followed by Christ University (11%) and Jain University (9.9%) that also added considerably to the dataset. Besides, the contribution of PES University and Reva University with 3–6% each is an indication of their moderate involvement.

Have you heard retro rock music before? (Songs like Bohemian Rhapsody”, “Hey Jude”, “Sweet Child O’ Mine”, “Stairway to Heaven” ad “Hotel California”)

As per the results, it's evident that retro rock music is a familiar term for most of the interviewees. To be precise, as much as 76.7% acknowledged having heard retro rock songs at least once, which means the genre is quite familiar to the public in general. Besides, only a mere 15.8% of those surveyed admitted they had never experienced this kind of music, and a very small number (7.5%) were not certain about it. This indicates that the mentioned classic hits like Bohemian Rhapsody, Hey Jude, and Hotel California are still very much alive in the memory of the respondents.

Where did you first come across this kind of music?

The data indicates that friends and acquaintances are the most influential in the case of youth discovering retro rock, indicated by 36.1% of the surveyed people naming this option. The second source, YouTube, came in with 20.2%, emphasizing once again its pivotal role in the music-discovery process. Social media is also a decisive factor, with Instagram/Reels being responsible for 21% of the responses from the young audiences. The family played a role with 9.2% only, while music apps together provided 11.8% influence. A mere fraction said they had not heard retro rock at all or that books were their only means of exposure to it.

How familiar are you with retro rock music?

1 = Not familiar | 5 = Very familiar

As per the results, it's evident that retro rock music is a familiar term for most of the interviewees. To be precise, as much as 76.7% acknowledged having heard retro rock songs at least once, which means the genre is quite familiar to the public in general. Besides, only a mere 15.8% of those surveyed admitted they had never experienced this kind of music, and a very small number (7.5%) were not certain about it. This indicates that the mentioned classic hits like Bohemian Rhapsody, Hey Jude, and Hotel California are still very much alive in the memory of the respondents.

Has Youtube helped you become aware of retro rock music?

The data demonstrate that YouTube is a pivotal factor in the respondents' awareness of retro rock music. Very nearly half (44.5%) acknowledged the direct role of YouTube in their discovery or learning of the genre. A further 31.1% said that to some degree it was helpful. Thus, the latter, though not as much, still corresponds to their exposure due to the platform. Only 24.4% considered YouTube to be an unhelpful medium which is still a comparatively small number. In sum, YouTube undoubtedly stands up as a very strong channel for the entire process of retro rock music promotion and its gradual awareness in the audience group.

How often do you listen to or watch retro rock music on YouTube?

Most of the participants declared that their listening or watching of retro rock music on YouTube is very rare, and that was the most frequent engagement. A lesser number of people stated that they are watching it on a monthly basis which reflects moderate but not regular interest. Weekly viewers were even fewer thus signifying sporadic but purposeful engagement. A few people only were found to watch the retro rock content every day, which implies that it is not a part of the media habits of most of the students. Roughly, one out of ten said they never watch it indicating that the total non-engagement is there but at the same time it is not the majority.

What type of retro rock videos do you usually watch on YouTube? (You may select more than one.)

The findings indicate that classic music videos are the top-ranking retro rock content on YouTube that people view, thus being the most active interaction of the audience with the genre. A considerable number of students are drawn by live concerts, which implies wanting real musical interactions. The viewership for cover songs and tributes or fan-made videos is moderate, which means that the audience still welcomes the contemporary restyling. Interviews, band history, or documentary clips are watched by a minor group, which demonstrates some artistic background curiosity.

Approximately how much time per week do you spend listening to retro rock on YouTube?

The majority of participants reported that they listened to retro rock on YouTube for less than 30 minutes a week. This is an indication that their engagement was very brief. The second group of participants who reported 30 minutes to 1 hour indicated that their listening habits were moderate. Still, it was limited. A small group only devoted 1 to 3 hours suggesting a minority with deeper interest. Very few students did listen for more than 3 hours. This is an indication that heavy engagement is not usual. In general, the information points to the fact that retro rock is being liked but is not a big part of the media consumption of most students on a weekly basis.

Do you like, comment on, or share retro rock music on YouTube?

The analysis reveals that the majority of the participants infrequently perform the actions of liking, commenting, or sharing retro rock music videos on YouTube, which means there is a low level of active participation. Only a tiny number of the respondents are in the position of making content interactions on a regular basis, thus it is not common for students to be highly engaged. A large part of the students never gets involved, which demonstrates that they consume the videos passively and do not take part in social activities. With all the results from the study, it can be concluded that even if students are watching retro rock videos, they are not the kind of audience to use the interactive features on YouTube.

Have you subscribed to any YouTube channels that share retro rock content?

The data reveals that the most considerable segment of the respondents does not follow any retro rock YouTube channels, which indicates a low long-term commitment. A little less than half of the respondents prefer watching videos randomly without subscribing, which is a sign of not only casual but also spontaneous consumption. Subscriptions to such channels are held only by a minority, thus it can be concluded that those who are really interested in retro rock content are not many. The pattern is such that the majority of the students are engaging with the genre in a flexible and non-committal manner. In conclusion, the data illustrates that the retro rock audience is there but their engagement is not channel-based and consistent.

What attracts you most to retro rock music?

The survey results indicate that the main appeal of retro rock to the listeners are vocal style and musical instruments which form 28.8% of the total interest. Emotional and nostalgic attachment has a share of 18.6% while social influence from peers and family is 20.3% indicating that all three are important

factors in music discovery. Lyrics, cultural history, and meaning are somewhat important, but the number of people who stated that there was no attraction at all is very low, which means retro rock is still popular among the listeners.

Do you feel retro rock music has qualities that are missing in many modern songs today?

A pronounced majority of participants (65.3%) hold the opinion that retro rock music has characteristics that are missing in a lot of contemporary songs today. This reflects a very strong notion of uniqueness, profundity, or genuineness among former music styles. On the contrary, just a tiny percent (7.6%) expressed dissatisfaction, meaning that there is a very small acceptance of the view that today's music lacks some of the artistic elements. At the same time, 27.1% of respondents are in doubt, and this could indicate limited exposure or the difficulty of comparing different genres. In sum, the results reveal a considerable recognition of retro rock's musical merits by the participants.

How likely are you to continue listening to retro rock in the future?

1 = Not likely | 5 = Very likely

The findings indicate a considerable liking towards the retro rock music genre as the future 29.2% of the respondent chose a very high likelihood score (5). A further 30.8% selected a moderate likelihood (3), meaning that the majority of the listeners are willing to discover more of this type of music. At the same time, 17.5% had given level 4, which again suggests a positive attitude towards the engagement with the music. Just 10.8% and 11.7% of the respondents had chosen levels 1 and 2 respectively, which indicates that there isn't much reluctance or lack of interest. To sum up, the results support the idea that most of the people are highly interested and can listen for a long time to retro rock.

10. CONCLUSION:

This research aims to show the way YouTube encourages young people in Bangalore to be aware of, get involved in, and appreciate retro rock music. The results expose the interaction of the new generation with the old ones through the use of digital media that depends on factors such as demographics, exposure sources, viewing habits, and motivations. One of the main findings is that almost 50% of the participants mentioned YouTube as their main source of retro rock discovery and listening. The researchers state that the interface with retro rock by the young people is selective and incidental, but the genre still has cultural and emotional significance. To sum up, the research emphasizes the function of YouTube as a cultural link between the old and the young and recommends the drawing of more academic attention to the cross-generational music trends in the digital age.

11. LIMITATIONS:

The investigation was based exclusively on the self-reported responses collected through Google Forms, which can suffer from recall bias, misinterpretation of questions, or the giving of socially acceptable answers. Consequently, the engagement with retro rock and YouTube reported by the respondents might not be indicative of their real listening habits. The study prioritized YouTube to a great extent and thereby confined itself by disregarding in detail the other platforms such as Spotify, Instagram Reels, or TikTok. Besides, the use of strictly quantitative methods left out the qualitative ones that could have revealed the deeper emotional, cultural, and motivational factors that influence retro rock consumption.

12. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The research was mainly based on swiftly gathered quantitative data, hinting that the future study would be combining qualitative methods like interviews and focus groups for profound understanding. Such methods would not only allow for the capture of the numerical data but also be able to reflect the emotional, cultural, and nostalgic ties of the young audience with retro rock. A major limitation is that the research looked at YouTube only and did not consider the other digital platforms like Instagram Reels, Spotify, TikTok, blogs, and online communities. A comparative approach across different platforms should be taken by the future studies to find out how various digital environments are contributing to the rediscovery of retro music. Moreover, if the period for data collection is

prolonged, it will be possible to gather a larger and more varied sample, thus improving the dependability as well as the representativeness of the results.

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The Role of Music and Jingles in Advertising and Brand Recall: A Study on Indian Jingles

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Abstract: *Music acts as an important position in consumer behavior since it shapes memory, feelings, or the perception of brands. Jingles, lyrics, songs or background music are probably some of the strongest memory triggers for consumers in India. The paper focuses on jingles referring to short, catchy musical songs used in advertisements to make brands more identifiable and memorable. The research examines whether the use of jingles in Indian advertising stimulates brand recall, and whether consumers feel emotionally attached to jingles. Adopting a mixed methods approach, 100 sample surveys provided the quantitative data, and 10 young adult one-one qualitative interviews provided an in-depth understanding. Through qualitative and quantitative surveys, the findings show that jingles have an impact on brand recall and claim that when participants hear a jingle, they often connect emotion to feelings of nostalgia, or general joy, or pleasure or simply familiarity. The paper concludes that jingles are strong memory sleighs and some also function as emotional triggers in memory that create greater depth and understanding in relationships between consumers and companies and the brands they created. Overall, this further confirms that audio branding is needed in India and furthermore offers insights for industry and advertisers that could help create connections with consumers.*

Key words: *Music in Advertising, Jingles, Brand Recall, Consumer Emotion and Indian Advertising*

1.INTRODUCTION:

Advertising is not just about information; it is about generating experiences connecting the consumption communities cognitively and emotionally. Of the many options at their disposal, music has remained the most powerful tool for advertisers on record, as it already evokes memory, creates feelings, and builds an indelible relationship between the consumer and the brand. Throughout the years, Indian advertising has conjured some of the most famous jingles and scores immortalizing themselves in the consumer's memory. "Washing Powder Nirma" now connotes cleaning at home, while "Vicco Turmeric- Nahi Cosmetic" put the product in both beauty and medicinal tradition. The next act showcased music assisting brand positioning when the Airtel Signature Tune, composed by A.R. Rahman went worldwide. Jingles are everywhere, and yet the main reason for their effectiveness is not very clear, especially in the Indian market. While a lot of research has been done on the visual aspect of advertising, very little has been done on the auditory part, even though it is often the chief cause of brand recognition. This research is targeted at completing the void by identifying the dual role of jingles as mnemonic and affective devices.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The research paper on How Jingles in Advertising Affect Retention and Recall of the Product by Asad Shakil and Danish Ahmed Siddiqui investigates the way in which jingles affect consumer memory,

paying particular attention to the role of music and lyrics. Involving a survey of 100 people in Karachi, it was found that the musical part within jingles has a much stronger positive effect on the retention and recall of products, whereas lyrics scored a much weaker and statistically less significant effect. "Jingles are among the most effective tools in advertising because they create a strong emotional and auditory association with the product" (Shakil & Siddiqui, 2019, p. 24). The authors of the study propose that the musical element in the jingle be highlighted by advertisers and that they ensure a good fit between music and the brand identity so as to maximize its memorability and consumer engagement. Although the paper sheds strong light on advertising effectiveness, it falls short due to the limited nature of its sample set and a heavy dependency on self-reported data, thereby calling for much wider and experimental research. (Shakil & Siddiqui, 2018)

The research paper on Study of the Effectiveness of Advertising Jingles by Pooja Jain and Utkarsh Jain, suggests the intensity to which consumer behavior, brand awareness, and brand intention are affected by the jingles, focusing mainly on demographic factors shaping their effectiveness. The study was conducted in Indore, India, with 100 respondents from varying age groups, income levels, occupations, and educational backgrounds being studied using a structured questionnaire, with all data being subjected to reliability analysis and ANOVA. The findings from the study reflect that jingles are most effective when it comes to attracting consumer attention, positioning and creating brand image, making awareness about a product, reminding consumers about a product, and aiding in purchase decisions. As noted by Jain and Jain (2016), "being the musical tunes jingles are the most memorable and catchy element of any advertisement." Approximately 78% of respondents admitted to being influenced by jingles while purchasing. More significantly, the income variable is the most crucial in terms of how jingles are perceived, as respondents in different income groups differ greatly in their sensitivity toward and recognition of the ability of jingles to persuade and position a brand in consumers' minds.

Age and educational qualifications also showed some differences: younger respondents and less academically educated groups would tend to respond more positively to jingles whereas gender and occupation would not hold any major differences for perception. Thus, the findings endorse jingles as a very strong means of promotion, primarily for recall purposes and in the formation of an identity for a brand, but they also strongly advise marketers to use jingles rather specifically about demographics, particularly income groups, to increase their conversion. The authors conclude that jingles continued to serve an utmost role in advertising formulas and stood as such for the very present-day time, yet they strongly recommend future research with a large and heterogeneous sample population and experimental approaches aimed at studying the long-term recall potency of jingles for different consumer population segments. (Jain & Jain, 2019) The research paper on The Value of Using Popular Music and Performers on Brand and Message Recall in Television Advertising Jingles by Ahmed Taher and Heba Y. El Badawy explores the relationship between the use of popular music and well-known performers in advertising that is transmitted in the form of jingle and consumers recall of both brand names and advertising messages. They carried out 300 interviews to evaluate the recall both aided and unaided day-after five television jingles.

The results of their study reveal that just the use of a popular performer led to the brand and message recall of 2.5 times more than what it was in a "base case" (probably a jingle without a popular performer or popular music). When a popular performer and popular music are combined, brand and message recall are increased by about six times over the base case.

The writers point out that the disbursement for the popular music license or for the hiring of a popular artist can be covered by the much higher recall, which is a key indicator in the effectiveness of advertising. They show the real situation to help strategists decide whether to put money into these more expensive creative works. (Taher & Badawy, 2022)

The objectives of the present study are:

- To determine whether music and jingles are relevant in brand recall in Indian advertising.
- To achieve an insight into jingles on consumer emotion and connection by means of in-depth interviews.

3. METHODOLOGY:

This section describes how the research was carried out to meet its objectives and maintain reliability. Since the study set out to explore both how well people remember brands through jingles (the cognitive side) and the emotional connections for this reason, a mixed-method approach was used combining surveys to gather measurable results with in-depth interviews to explore individual experiences. The following sections detail the research design, target population and sampling approach, sample size, sampling techniques, and data collection methods.

- **Research Design**

The current research adheres to a mixed-method research paradigm containing both quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehend what is the role and influence of music and jingles in Indian advertising on brand recall among consumers. The quantitative parameter includes a structured survey assessment of brand recall and recognition and popular Indian jingles, while the qualitative method involves interviewing consumer participants to solicit emotional, nostalgic, and cultural associations.

- **Target Population**

The target audience for this study includes Indian consumers from various age groups, genders, income levels, and locations who have seen advertisements on television, radio, or digital platforms. This diverse group was chosen to reflect the wide range of people who experience Indian advertising.

- **Sample Size**

The sample size taken for the quantitative survey was a total of N = 100 respondents to have an adequate grasp of representativeness and reliability in analysis. 10 respondents for the qualitative study were selected to have a deeper insight into the perceptions and emotional behaviors of the population toward jingles.

- **Sampling Technique**

Sampling techniques are dependent on varying methods of data collection. The study followed convenience sampling for the quantitative survey. Contrarily, purposive sampling employed in the personal interview to identify those interviewees who have a familiar knowledge and their insights would be meaningful on huge Indian jingles like "Washing Powder Nirma," "Vicco Turmeric-Nahi Cosmetic," and "MDH Masala-Asli Masale Sach Sach."

- **Data Collection Methods**

The process of data collection was conducted by structured questionnaires and semi-structured personal interviews. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions in the form of Likert scale questions targeted at accumulating data on demographics, brand recall, emotional attachment, and consumer perception of jingles. Through the music and jingles played in the headphones, the various participants were asked to identify brands associated with the selected jingles and rate their level of agreement with statements. Each data was analyzed by identifying common themes such as nostalgia, emotion, or brand familiarity that occur in the participants' responses.

4. DATA ANALYSIS:

4.1 Quantitative Findings:

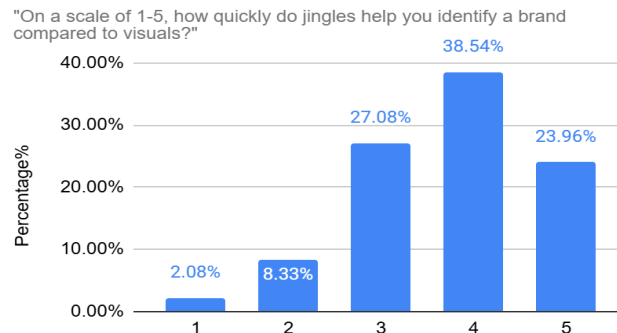
Variable	Category	Percentage
Age	18-22	56.2%
Gender	Female	68.4%
Qualification	Postgraduate	52.6%

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants

The demographic information of the people sampled shows that the respondents were quite young, with the majority age group being 18-22 age (56.2%). The greater part of the participants was comprised of females (68.4%), which indicated more female participation in the survey. Postgraduate students comprised 52.6 on education implying that the sample is well-educated. Quite a large percentage was that of students (59.4%), which is not inconsistent with the general age distribution. Moreover, the city

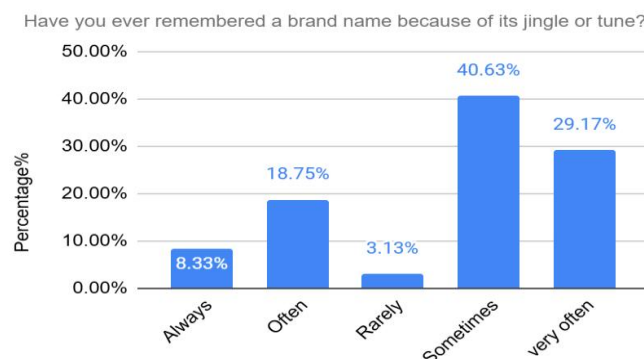
of Kolkata became the most represented (37.5%), which demonstrates a high level of regional representation in the study.

4.2 Jingles help you identify a brand compared to visuals



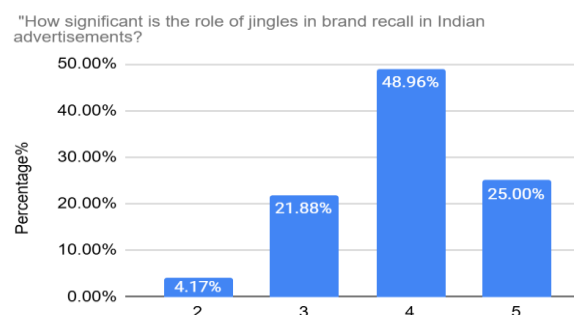
The current statistics indicate that 2.08 percent ($n = 2$) of the respondents chose option 1 whereas 8.33 percent ($n = 8$) chose option 2. The proportion, 27.08% ($n = 26$), of respondents who chose option 3 was the highest, and the proportion, 38.54% ($n = 37$) of those who chose option 4 was the highest. Also, 23.96% ($n = 23$) of the respondents chose the 5th option. This points to a definite indication of more agreement tendency, which is that majority of the respondents were aware of the importance of the measured variable with a few selections in the lower categories.

4.3 Remembering a brand name because of its jingle or tune



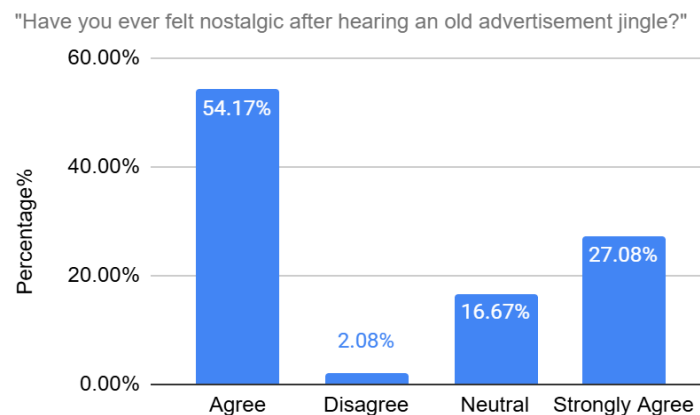
The information reveals that 8.33% ($n = 4$) of the respondents chose the answer Always, which demonstrates that a small percentage of people always remember the brands with the help of jingles. The greater part, 18.75% ($n = 9$), responded Often, indicating that they frequently recall because of musical cues. In the meantime, 3.13 percent ($n=2$) answered Rarely, and 40.63 percent ($n=20$) answered Sometimes indicating occasional recall because of being influenced by jingles. Also, 29.17% ($n = 14$) were selected Very Often, which is another indication of the high influence of jingles as an audio memory cue to a section of the participants.

4.4 The role of jingles in brand recall in Indian advertisements



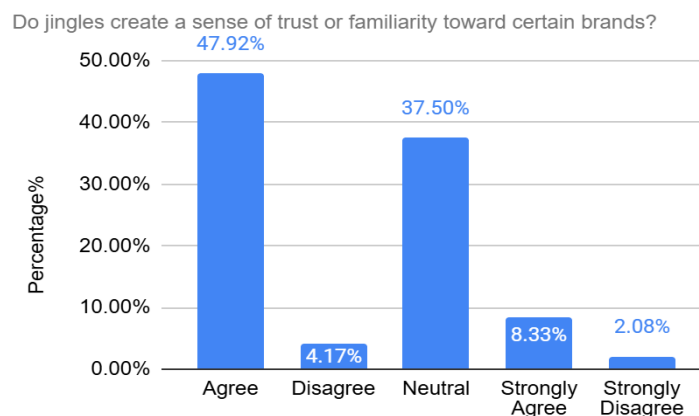
The data reveals that the respondents consider jingles as a brand memory element of Indian adverts. A very low rating of 2 (4.17% n = 2) was given to the role as low (2), meaning that there was very little disagreement about whether they were effective or not. In the meantime, 21.88% (n = 11) chose 3, which demonstrates a moderate level of recognition of the effect of jingles. Higher percentage 48.96% (n = 24) selected 4 indicating that they were aware of their importance. Also, 25.00% (n = 12) gave it the highest score at the highest rating of 5, indicating that a significant number of the participants considered jingles to be very influential in brand recall. This gives a distinct positive bias of the respondents where jingles are effective in assisting consumers remember brands in Indian advertisements.

4.5 Nostalgic after hearing an old advertisement jingle



The information depicts that a significant number of respondents feel nostalgic when listening to old jingles used in advertisements. The most appropriate answers were 54.17% (n = 26) who answered agree, and 27.08% (n = 13) strongly agree, which implies that the nostalgic effect is strong. In the meantime, 16.67% (n = 8) were Neutral, moderately uncertain, and the rest disagreed (2.08). This shows the fact that the old jingles are very strong to produce the nostalgic effect on the consumers.

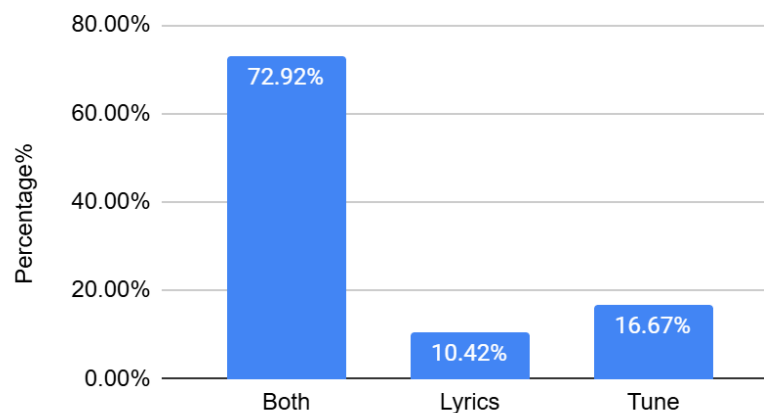
4.6 Jingles create a sense of trust or familiarity toward certain brands



The data shows that almost half of the respondents—47.92% (n = 23) said they “Agree” and 8.33% (n = 4) chose “Strongly Agree”—feel a positive connection. At the same time, 37.50% (n = 18) were “Neutral,” which suggests some people aren’t sure. Only a few disagreed, with 4.17% (n = 2) picking “Disagree” and 2.08% (n = 1) going with “Strongly Disagree.” This points to jingles having a real impact on how much people trust and feel familiar with brands.

4.7 Makes a jingle more memorable — its tune or its lyrics

In your opinion, which makes a jingle more memorable — its tune or its lyrics?



The data will demonstrate most of them, 72.92% (n= 35), express the view that the tune and lyrics make it easier to remember. In the meantime, 16.67% (n = 8) chose Tune and 10.42% (n = 5) chose Lyrics on their own. This points out that the melody and words combination are best used to produce long term brand recall in form of jingles. In general, it underlines the need to combine the two aspects to have the greatest effect.

4.8 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS:

To respond to the second objective, which is to determine consumer connection and emotional reactions to jingles, the qualitative data were gathered with 10 face-to-face, one-on-one interviews with participants aged between 21 and 25, as majority of them were postgraduate students in Bengaluru. Thematic analysis was applied to discover significant repeated patterns in the interviews. Five major themes emerged.

4.9 THEME 1: INSTANT RECALL OF ICONIC JINGLES

In all interviews, the respondents were able to recall Indian iconic jingles instantly and without any trouble. Two thirds of the participants (seven out of ten) mentioned the time on their own willingly (without being questioned directly), that it was Washing Powder Nirma. Automatic access to long-term memory was reflected in their body language, which was bright smiles, enlarged eyes, and leaning forward.

Sample Participant Quotes:

- At the thought of Nirma, the song just comes into my head.
- I do not even have to think, it is already there.

4.10 THEME 2: NOSTALGIA AND EMOTIONAL WARMTH:

One of the overall emotional reactions during the interviews was nostalgia. People tended to smile gently when remembering the jingles they used as a child or to stop and think. Jingles were defined as a reminder of family TV time, festive seasons and childhood recollection of watching advertisements in school days.

Sample Participant Quotes:

- I have the sense that it is like reliving childhood.
- Warmness there is, it reminds me of a happy flashback.

4.11 THEME 3: TUNE AS THE PRIMARY MEMORY TRIGGER

The first and strongest element that the participants always recollected was the melody. A lot of them had involuntary reaction finger tapping, nodding, smiling then remembered about the lyrics.

Sample Participant Quotes:

- People remember the tune before they remember the lyrics.
- The music is like the memory is turned on.

4.12 THEME 4: FAMOUS MUSIC VS. COMPLETE LYRICAL SLOGANS

The subjects distinguished short signature tunes and complete lyrical jingles. Original music such as the Airtel songs were popular because they were easily identifiable, particularly when used in short advertisements. By comparison, lyrical jingles like Nirma were linked to greater effectiveness (in terms of emotional appeal) and long-term memory.

Sample Participant Quotes:

- Airtel tune is a household name.
- Nirma is going to remain longer as it narrates a story.

4.13 THEME 5: FACTORS THAT DRIVE JINGLE EFFECTIVENESS

Interviewees singled out several factors that render jingles catchy and emotionally stimulating:

- Tunes that are easy to remember and repeat
- Simple lyrics with a rhythmic flow
- Use of regional languages that people connect with

Sample Participant Quotes:

- A catchy, simple jingle, you know; it sticks.
- The local language makes it more relatable.

4.14 SUMMARY OF QUALITATIVE THEMES, DESCRIPTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

Theme	Description	Key Observation
Instant Recall of Iconic Jingles	People could instantly recall iconic jingles, even without any hints, showing just how deeply these tunes are stored in memory.	Faces lit up with smiles, eyes widened, and some leaned forward, mentioning “Washing Powder Nirma” or humming and tapping along.
Nostalgia and Emotional Warmth	Hearing these jingles brought back memories of childhood, family gatherings, and a sense of emotional warmth.	Participants often paused, smiled softly, and their voices changed as they said things like “feels like childhood again” or “happy flashback.”
Tune as the Primary Memory Trigger	The melody was the main reason people remembered the brand, with lyrics coming second in importance.	Many started tapping their fingers, nodding, or humming, and said, “the tune comes first.”
Famous Music vs. Complete Lyrical Slogans.	Famous music led to instant recognition, while longer lyrical jingles created a deeper emotional and story-like connection.	People used expressive gestures, talked about storytelling jingles like Nirma, and quickly recognized short tunes like Airtel.
Factors that drive Jingle Effectiveness.	Participants pointed out what makes a jingle stick in your mind and heart.	They mentioned catchy tunes, simple words, local languages, familiar voices, and smart ad placement as key ingredients.

5. MAJOR FINDINGS:

- Jingles Major Impact on Brand Recall: Respondents always identified brands with jingles (38.54%-43.75% of higher levels of agreement were chosen). It was verified through interviews that iconic jingles such as that of Nirma and Airtel were accurately remembered instantly with or without humming or tapping, which are indicative of a high level of cognitive activation.
- Emotional involvement and Nostalgia: Jingles cause nostalgia and happiness, which are reported by 54.17 and 78.13 out of 100 respondents, respectively. Interviews were characterized by smiles, pensive moments, and pleasant expressions, which indicated affective relationships enhancing brand loyalty in the long-term.
- Tunes as Primary Memory Trigger: Tunes create more recall compared to lyrics with 72.92% rating both as contributing. The qualitative data indicated that the participants remembered the tunes first followed by the lyrics. Signature tunes were instantly recognizable and complete lyrical jingles provided more emotional satisfaction.

6. LIMITATION, AND FUTURE RESEARCH:

This paper uncovered some meaningful insights, but there are limits to what can be claimed. Most of the people in this study were young postgraduate students in cities like Bengaluru and Kolkata, so the results may not capture the full range of population. This study also relied on observations of facial expressions and body language to gauge emotion during interviews, and that always carries a bit of subjectivity. There is a lot to take this research further. Including a more diverse mix of ages, regions, and languages would deepen the picture. Comparing classic jingles with today's digital-first sound branding could reveal how things are shifting. Some researchers might even study physiological responses like heart rate or brain activity to capture how people react in the moment. It would also be useful to test jingles across different languages, product categories, and media channels (TV, radio, streaming) to see how audio branding is evolving across India.

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Cultivating the Illusion of Equality: Media portrayals of Domestic equality and the Hidden Emotional Labour of Women in Indian Households

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Abstract: *This study critically examines if and how the media promotes the illusion of domestic equality by using tokenism and minimal male participation, which is voluntary, while masking the emotional and cognitive load carried by women by default. Ten Indian television and digital video advertisements, released across the span of 10 years from 2015 to 2025, are selected to investigate the depictions of gendered labor in household chores across diverse product categories. Through a qualitative thematic analysis supported by cultivation theory, the study examines how repeated portrayals of tokenistic domestic equality normalizes voluntary and superficial participation and gives the illusion of equally shared domestic work. The findings indicate that advertisements, while appearing progressive on the surface, often romanticize minimal male participation and use product-driven solutions to commercialize equality. This research contributes to discourse on gendered labour in Indian households and advocates for realistic and responsible portrayals which promote domestic equity in advertising.*

Keywords - Gendered labour, Emotional labour, Media representation, Tokenism, Cultivation Theory

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Background

Gender equality has become a dominant topic of discourse with increasing support from contemporary society to hold both men and men in the same calibre in all aspects of life. However, the domestic aspect of life is remarkably imbalanced. Studies show that about 95% of Indian women are involved in unpaid domestic labour compared to 54% of men. This difference in participating highlights gender disparity in domestic expectations and participation among the two genders (Deb, 2021). Indian advertisements portray men involved in household chores such as cleaning, cooking, washing dishes, doing the laundry and in some instances taking care of the kids. All these narratives are spun out of symbolic expressions of involvement and sporadic efforts passed for progress worthy of celebration. This idealisation amounts to tokenism as they create a facade of equality while building narratives around unity and joint domestic duty (Nandi et al. 2019; Haupt, 2021). This study examines how Indian television and digital ads from 2015-2025 depict domestic equality and highlights the prominent use of tokenistic approach in framing progressive narratives. It utilizes a qualitative approach based on Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1988). Thematic analysis of ten chosen advertisements investigates the emotional and cognitive burden behind domestic chores that are omitted by the media. This study aims to advocate for realistic, responsible and genuine media representatives and narratives on domestic equity

1.2 Research Objectives:

- To analyse how Indian television and digital advertisements (2015-2025) represent domestic equality in relation to gendered labour.
- To examine if and how these advertisements use tokenism and minimal male participation to romanticize equality while masking the emotional and cognitive load on women.
- To explore the gap between media representations of domestic equality and reality through thematic analysis and interpretation through Cultivation Theory.

1.3 Research Questions:

- How do Indian advertisements portray domestic equality?
- In what ways do these advertisements use tokenism and symbolic male participation to romanticize domestic roles?
- How does repeated exposure to such advertising content influence and shape public perception of gender labour studied through cultivation theory?

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Women share the major part of unpaid care giving and household management which takes a significant toll on their emotional and physical well-being. It reduces their life satisfaction and happiness while also resulting in less to no time for leisure or paid work. (Sinha, Sedai, Rahut, & Sonobe, 2024)

The portrayal of gendered labour is found to reinforce stereotypes around genders. Modern narratives that allow surface level approach towards equality. Still women are shown performing domestic chores with grace, bliss and satisfaction while men are portrayed with pride, progressive mentality and generosity. (Sinha, Sedai, Rahut, & Sonobe, 2024)

Haupt, Böhm, and Wöhler (2023) investigated the gendered division of cognitive household labour by discussing the different mental dimensions of household labour that disproportionately fall upon women. These dimensions, which are largely invisible and unacknowledged, are very different from the physical labour and exhaustion. (Haupt, Böhm, & Wöhler, 2023)

Allison P. Daminger (2019) positions cognitive labour as a distinct yet invisible form of domestic work. The façade of shared chores stops at visible efforts and remains on the surface while the gender norms and conditioning make their way deep into the “mental map” of women pushing them to be responsible for the larger picture. (Damingier, 2019)

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

3.1 Methodology:

This study uses a qualitative research methodology consisting of textual content analysis of advertisements. The data for analysis was selected through purposive sampling and ten Indian advertisements from 2015-2025 that contain portrayals of domestic equality were identified. The advertisements represented sectors such as household cleaning, food and beverages, consumer technology and personal care. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data collected. Coding was created to reveal patterns in responses across a total of five pre-determined themes: gendered labour, domestic labour, emotional labour, tokenism and media representation. Cultivation Theory served as the theoretical framework in defining how habitual viewing of media

3.2 Theoretical framework

Cultivation Theory, developed by George Gerbner and colleagues in the 1960s, provides the contextual frameworks for this research. Cultivation theory states that with repeated exposure to media content overtime will shape the way the viewer or audience perceives, thinks and understands social reality. This process is known as “media cultivation”. (Gerbner, 1988; Gerbner & Gross, 1976). In this study, Cultivation Theory explains how a perceived normal for “equality in household duties” is cultivated through Indian advertisements repeatedly romanticising minimal male participation in

domestic work. In addition, the emotional, cognitive and day-to-day workload borne by women escapes the public consciousness.

4. DATA ANALYSIS:

4.1 Data Analysis:

The ten advertisements selected for the thematic analysis are listed below.

Sl. No.	Brand & Year	Advertisement Name & Campaign Title
1	NESCAFÉ (2023)	NESCAFÉ Classic Cold Coffee – <i>Jo Banaye, Special Ban Jaye</i>
2	Wonderchef (2019)	<i>Dear Man, Hold The Pan</i> Campaign
3	Badshah Masala (2021)	<i>Men Can Cook</i> Campaign
4	Layers (2023)	#DontShareTheLoad, #DoYourPart Campaign
5	Wonderchef (2024)	Wonderchef Kitchen Robot – <i>Chef Magic</i>
6	Vim (2022)	Vim Black for Men – <i>Easy to Clean, More to Brag</i>
7	Ariel (2020)	Ariel – <i>Share The Load for Equal Sleep</i>
8	Lloyd (2023)	Lloyd Washing Machine – <i>Khayaal Jo Ghar Ko Ghar Banaye</i>
9	Lloyd (2016)	Lloyd Unisex Washing Machine
10	Vim (2022)	Vim Liquid – <i>Making Dishwashing Easy</i>

Table 1. List of the advertisements selected for the thematic analysis

NESCAFÉ Classic Cold Coffee, “Jo banaye, special ban jaye” Campaign (2023): The Nescafe cold coffee advertisement suggests that families should share their domestic responsibilities. But the woman in the advertisement, the mother, is evidently aware that there is a need to clean-up, she planned and organised the cleaning activity, she had to persuade the family members to do their part and also decide if their excuses are valid or invalid. From the perspective of gendered labour, the stereotype and burden remain on the woman. It is unchanged. What should have been collective efforts from all four family members to uphold the responsibility of seeing through domestic chores is framed as the woman's responsibility. The woman in the ad plays the role of a disciplinarian, motivator and is also shown confronting resistance from family members with humour, wit and patience.

Wonderchef “Dear Man Hold The Pan” Campaign (2019): The Wonderchef “Dear Man Hold The Pan” advertisement employs a documentary style interview to assess the perception of gender equality in household chores. At first glance, the advertisement is understood as progressive. Men who confidently assure they're familiar with cooking are unable to name basic kitchen ingredients such as toor dal and curry leaves. All responses are met with laughter from the anchor, reinforcing the comic framing of men's incompetence in the domestic domain rather than treating it as a serious reflection of men's unequal participation in household chores. Women are framed as the custodians of knowledge, expertise and experience in food preparation, while men provide infrequent assistance. There is no genuine accountability and responsibility towards fair division of domestic labour. It is merely the peripheral participation of men against the centralised, systemic and endless participation of women.

Badshah Masala “Men Can Cook” Campaign (2021): The Badshah Masala “Men Can Cook” advertisement utilizes a family-centric humorous approach to promote the idea of men learning to cook. The mother persuades son to learn cooking. She uses a jingle to highlight the brand's product - Badshah

Masala range. Cooking is introduced to the son as an amusing cultural change. The advertisement reinforces the belief that women are default caregivers and carriers of culinary knowledge.

Layers “#DontShareTheLoad #DoYourPart” Campaign (2023): This Layer’s advertisement “Do Your Part” shows men performing numerous household chores. It stands out from other Indian advertisements in one aspect as it reframes domestic work as duty instead of “favours”. This advertisement critiques the idea that women are natural caregivers and domestic managers and thus illustrates the routine nature of household chores instead of the participatory framing of male involvement. However, no particular aspect of emotional and cognitive labour is portrayed. The advertisement challenges tokenism by urging men to not “share the load” but to “do their part”.

Wonderchef Kitchen Robot Chef Magic Advertisement (2024): The Wonderchef kitchen robot: Chef Magic advertisement is set in an arranged marriage setting where the family is gathered along with the bride and groom to talk about the probability of marriage. The bride asks the groom if he knows cooking. The groom proudly accepts that he does and takes her to show and demonstrate the product which automates cooking, reducing the burden in the kitchen significantly. They share a romantic moment as he subtly lets her know that he doesn't mind her inability to cook because the machine can replace that task. It is important to note that the man in this setting outsourced his share of the work to a machine and does not experience the emotional and cognitive burden that comes with it. Therefore, the same kitchen setting involving the male does not display the messiness and struggles of a woman in the kitchen performing cooking every day. Despite this, the male is shown as competent, caring and understanding by mere ownership of an appliance.

Vim Black For Men Campaign - Easy To Clean More To Brag (2022): The Vim Black for Men advertisement features a gym environment where a man is seen boasting about how he assists with household chores at home. An older man with a fit outlook is then seen appearing with a load of dishes and introducing the product which has black packaging to attract men. He directly states that washing with Vim Black is easy and suggests he should do it in the morning, afternoon and night. The ad further has the tagline “Easy to clean, more to brag”. The advertisement promotes the same idea as discussed through other selected advertisements above. Women are natural experts of domestic management and men have to be encouraged and need incentives or benefits out of performing household chores and only then will there be any interest. No emotional or cognitive load is discussed and dishwashing is framed as a medium to obtain pride.

Ariel Share The Load For Equal Sleep Campaign (2020): Ariel’s “Share The Load for Equal Sleep” portrays the emotional and mental burden in women carrying out domestic tasks all day every day in a direct fashion. A family of three consisting of a mother, father and a daughter is featured with the daughter observing the domestic chores being carried out by the mother largely with no help from the father. This goes on and one day the daughter takes the father to find the mother sitting and sleeping in front of the laundry machine. He wakes her up and starts doing the laundry himself. The phrase “71% women don't get sleep because of household chores” is highlighted in the end. Although it highlights the imbalance among the genders, it also supports the idea of change being the result of a shock. It is a mere turning point where he realises where he's been lacking and how inconsiderate he was of her health. Emotional labour is portrayed in an invisible manner until the woman gives out and is exhausted. Only then the man is able to identify the rooted hassles she has been facing. This advertisement strays from the rest by shedding light on the hidden struggles.

Lloyd Washing Machine Khayaal Jo Ghar Ko Ghar Banaye (2023): The Lloyd Khayaal Jo Ghar Banaye advertisement features a couple in which the woman is sad about the stained kurti which she was anticipating wearing the next day. The husband observes this and the next day the wife is met with a neatly pressed stainless kurti. Laundry is presented as an action resulting from affection the man has for his wife, not as a natural and systemic duty or responsibility. The woman is understood as the primary manager of the household while the man's selective involvement is received with affection and praise. Reliance of technology or outsourcing as we discussed in the kitchen robot advertisement is passed for equal participation.

Lloyd Unisex Washing Machine (2016): The Lloyd Unisex Washing Machine advertisement happens in an appliance store when a sales man approaches a couple about washing machines and the husband snarkily asks the sales representative to approach his wife because that's her department. This remark

is countered by the wife with the question “Do you have unisex washing machines?” Both men in the scene are surprised and the husband informs his wife that there is no such thing. She then insists on such a machine as that must be the reason why the husband never touched the machine (because it's a ladies' machine). The sales person suggests the Lloyd brand and talks about how easy the task is. She then encourages her husband to use it too as it is very easy to use even for him. Laundry - a domestic task is rested within the domain of the woman and directly spoken about in the same fashion in a public setting which shows how rooted and normalised the concept is. The woman had to wittily encourage the husband to participate and even then, it is a mere reluctant nod from the husband. Therefore, no direct confrontation is shown about the imbalance in domestic task distribution.

Vim Liquid- Making dishwashing easy (2022): Vim Liquid “Making Dishwashing Easy” advertisement unfolds in an arranged marriage meeting the groom is being praised as an “Independent man” and adds that he can help with cooking after marriage, it is “no big deal”. The woman smirks and informs him that she shall help him in dishwashing then. She then adds she's sometimes late from work and that he should be more independent enough to handle household tasks himself. Gendered labour is observed and even when the woman is suggesting independence as something that applies to domestic settings too, she is also seen stating that he should be able to handle it in her absence. It lacks the seriousness that can push for systemic changes in society and break stereotypes attached to genders and norms about how a husband and wife should share their lives. This is an excellent example of how the media ends up reinforcing stereotypes even in attempts to do the opposite.

4.2 Ad-wise Thematic Analysis of Media Representation

Ad / Campaign	Gendered Labour	Domestic Work	Emotional Labour	Tokenism	Media Representation	Interpretation on Insight
NESCAFÉ – Jo Banaye, Special Ban Jaye (2023)	Woman anticipates, initiatives and distributes household work	Cleaning framed as a woman's responsibility	She is required to motivate or push family members to help	Participation as a choice for men	Romantic, humorous, sarcastic tones, family bonding	Reinforces stereotype of women carrying mental load while men show resistance in aiding
Wonderchef – Dear Man, Hold The Pan (2019)	Basic kitchen roles not familiar to men	Cooking treated as a primary female activity	Emotional pressure to justify lack of skill	Sporadic male effort praised	Street interview style progressive framing	Highlights gap between progressive claims and real capability to share domestic labour

Badshah Masala – Men Can Cook (2021)	Mother encourages son to learn kitchen work	Cooking framed as a new concept for men	Women shown as trainers or motivators	Male involvement persuaded with humour	Light-hearted promotional jingle	Presents cooking as optional rather than primary responsibility
Layers – #DontShareTheLoad #DoYourPart (2023)	Push for genuine equal responsibility	Domestic chores shown clearly	Sheds light on silent burden of women	Rejects the concept of “helping”	Direct and assertive tone	Most progressive representation encouraging responsibility not favor
Wonderchef Robot Chef Magic (2024)	Labour outsourced from technology, not taken up by men	Appliance automates work	Emotional relief sold through a product	Man gets credit for the efforts of a machine	Man buying a machine romanticised as equality	Uses convenience to hide real mental and physical struggles
Vim Black for Men – More to Brag (2022)	Men doing chores positioned as unusual	Dishwashing framed as heroic	Ego and validation become core narrative	Rewarding men for minimal effort	Masculinity branding marketing angle	Encourages brag-culture instead of pushing for domestic equality
Ariel – Share The Load / Equal Sleep (2020)	Woman performing majority of the domestic tasks	Physical tasks shown extensively	Direct expressions of exhaustion and sleep deprivation	Man helps only after a crisis or shock moment	Realistic emotional messaging	Exposes inequality but still emphasises change that follows only after burnout
Lloyd – Khayaal Jo Ghar Ko Ghar Banaye (2023)	Husband participates once to please wife	Laundry presented as romantic gesture	Emotional reassurance central	Single act is romanticized	Sentimental tone	Labour framed as a gift to gain approval rather than

						routine responsibilit y
Lloyd – Unisex Washing Machine (2016)	Laundry assumed as a women’s job	Husband not involved or interested	Woman forces awarenes s	Participati on dependent on easy usability of product	Sarcasm- based humour	Marketing equality through convenience, not systemic mindset change
Vim Liquid – Making Dishwashing Easy (2022)	Man offers to “help” after marriage	Dishwashin g negotiated as favour	Woman explains mental load of balancing work	Effort treated as compromis e	Cute romantic and modern tone	Equality positioned as a personal adjustment, not structural expectation

Table 2. Provides a schematic overview of the ten advertisements reviewed during this research. Each advertisement was analysed using the narrative-based cues identified in the five themes to determine how each advertiser used imagery and language to depict gendered labour in regard to their advertisements. The thematic framework developed as part of this project provides a way of comparing how gendered labour is portrayed by Indian advertisers.

4.3 Summary of Findings:

Employing Cultivation Theory, this research exposes the possible development of distorted perceptions of equal division of domestic responsibilities between both genders through prolonged exposure of the romanticisation of men's involvement in the household through advertising. Such type of media conditioning creates an illusion, where a minimal amount of work done by a male may be viewed as male empowerment, however, the reality is that women continue to experience a male-dominated and unequal division of domestic responsibility. The overall findings of this research show that, although there may be an increased number of men seen performing household duties through media sources, the physical and emotional burden of household duties are still portrayed heavily on women. Male participation is painted voluntary rather than expected, occasional rather than sustained and celebrated rather than normalized. Therefore, the cultural narratives perpetuated through media serve as a way of presenting a view of equality, while not addressing several aspects such as accountability, responsibility, expectations, emotions and cognitive efforts related to domestic responsibilities. Further, the study highlights a strong need for more authentic portrayals that showed not only the completion of tasks in the household but also emotional responsibility and mental labour.

The results of this study highlighted the very large discrepancy between the equality rhetoric promoted by media advertising and the actual domestic equality that is the need of the hour for every woman in Indian households, especially in dual-earner households. Even with the claim of progress through advertising, the narrative still reflects the same traditional and patriarchal gender roles within Indian households. There is a need for imagery that shows domestic work as a collective responsibility that should be based on mutual respect.

5. CONCLUSION:

5.1 Conclusion:

This study critically examined the media representation of domestic equality in household environments through thematic analysis of ten advertisements. The findings indicate a significant disparity in the portrayals of media and genuine domestic equality. Although several advertisements deal with pushing for equality in household chores, many use a light-hearted, humorous, romantic and unserious approach. Minimal involvement by men is celebrated and framed to be something that is exceptional and to be proud of. These reflections account to tokenism and reinforce stereotypes instead of breaking them. Women's emotional, cognitive and physical burden that is disproportionate is barely discussed and subtly normalised. Progress in advertising materials by the employment of breaking stereotype kind of narrative is only tapping into the problem on the surface level and doing more harm than good. Women are positioned to organise and manage the household by anticipating needs of the home and its members, cater to their requests on demand, make sure everyone is fed, maintain an adequate supply of essentials and when found too exhausted to perform by themselves, are forced to demand help out of their reluctant family members. Unequal gender dynamics remain the reality as one gender enjoys occasional and optional involvement while the other is expected to be solely responsible for domestic welfare.

Grounding the findings in Cultivation Theory, it is evident that repeated exposure to appreciation of minimal male participation slowly becomes the reality of women as they perceive it as aspirational and romantic in nature. Advertisements that claim to put efforts into pushing for better gender equality in domestic environments do not exercise the full potential of the media to influence positive systemic changes in mindset that will free women from the pre-existing cultural burden of being the household expert. Ultimately, all the findings of the research points towards a need for genuine and authentic representations that envelope all aspects of domestic work. A serious or authoritative tone should be used to form narratives around the division of household tasks instead of humour, sarcasm or happy family bonding depictions in which the men are applauded for involvement.

5.2 Recommendations:

- Media and advertisement agencies should refrain from romanticising tokenistic male participation and root for continuous and routine involvement for the sake of individual duty
- Advertisements have to move beyond physical tasks and talk more about the extremely exhausting emotional and mental efforts.
- Domestic chores should be sold as a “life skill” and men performing household tasks without any intentions, incentives or validation should be normalised.
- Society should move away from gendered labour and understand that contemporary households are dual-earner households that exhaust both the woman and the man equally. Therefore, resting should not be held optional for one gender.
- Open conversations about mental and emotional exhaustion that comes with domestic management and the continuous routine nature of it should be encouraged.

5.3 Scope for Future Research:

- Explore and understand the perspectives of women and men about domestic labour and the internal and external barriers that influence participation.
- Investigate the influence of tokenistic advertisements in children and adolescents and how it shapes their sense of self.
- Move beyond advertisements and into films, OTT content, series, digital short films and influencer reels that might influence gender norms.

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Advertisements:

1. NESCAFÉ Classic Cold Coffee | Jo banaye, special ban jaye Campaign (2023)
2. Dear Man Hold The Pan Campaign (2019)
3. Badshah Masala _ Men can Cook Campaign (2021)
4. Layers #DontShareTheLoad #DoYourPart Campaign (2023)
5. Wonderchef Kitchen Robot Chef Magic (2024)
6. Vim Black For Men Campaign - Easy To Clean More To Brag (2022)
7. Ariel Share The Load For Equal Sleep Campaign (2020)
8. Lloyd Washing Machine Khayaal Jo Ghar Ko Ghar Banaye (2023)
9. Lloyd Unisex Washing Machine (2016)
10. Vim Liquid | Making dishwashing easy (2022)

Portrayal of Muslim Women in Indian Advertisements and Online Campaigns (2015 to 2025)

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Abstract: This study analyses the representation of Muslim women in television advertisements and online brand video campaigns to see how they are portrayed. The study covers a period of ten years (2015-2025) analysing 10 advertisements from Indian and global brands targeting the Indian market. The analysis includes advertisements from sectors like fashion, food, beauty, and business. This study uses a mixed-methods approach. It includes a content analysis of the ten advertisements and campaign videos for the qualitative approach and for the quantitative approach a survey was conducted among the general public and Muslim women to assess how Muslim women are portrayed in the advertisements and how Muslim women view these advertisements. This study highlights the disparity between media representation and public perception.

Keywords - Advertisement, Representation, Muslim Women, Empowerment, Stereotypes

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Background of the Study:

The role of women in Indian advertisements has never been static. Initially women were depicted only in a domestic setup, the curve widened slowly into other sectors, yet all these steps carried their own limitations. With the beginning of a new era and globalisation of brands, multinational companies and satellite channels, businesses saw women also as consumers. Even with these evolutions, the advertising industry did not alter their roles much. Women were depicted in new styles of clothes, different jobs but at the core the message still remained the same - the roles were stereotypical (Salem et al., 2019). A huge ripple in the industry came in 2015 with Ariel's #ShareTheLoad campaign. Detergent advertisements often portrayed women responsible for laundry. This campaign questioned society on why ensuring clean laundry is a woman's duty. The advertisement shows a father apologising to his daughter for not being a part of household chores and gearing up to help. This advertisement stood as a beacon to the advertising industry to create content that can transform society while holding commercial and responsible values.

Another alarming milestone was established by Tanishq's "Ekatvam" advertisement. It showcases an interfaith baby-shower but the advertisement became the center of controversy. It is an example of how charged the Indian atmosphere is when it comes to faith, representation and identity (De Run et al., 2010). For Muslim women, this event marked how something that is very normal could be easily politicised and become controversial.

In 2021, Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) commissioned the GenderNext study which studies the gender based stereotypes portrayed in Indian advertisements. Following the GenderNext study in 2022, the ASCI released formal guidelines for gender representations. For the first time in the run the advertising agencies had guidelines to follow for something other than misleading

advertisements and false claims. This was a revolutionary step as it put pressure on the brands to think whether their advertisements reinforce stereotypes or was it progressive and inclusive.

At the international standing conversations on portrayal already started walking this direction. In 2017, UN Women convened the Unstereotype Alliance to curb reductive portrayals and to integrate inclusivity with great responsibility (Bahrainwala & O'Connor, 2019). This created a podium for Indian advertisers as well but the revolutions were practiced with caution. Till date, representations are heavily influenced by the Indian audience based on culture and religion. Tension and chaos emerge in the advertising industry as a result of inclusion, diversity and progression. On one hand a push for empowerment is felt where women are shown in the roles of decision-makers, professionals and equals. On the other hand, women are depicted for the sake of inclusion, a thing of beauty or simply shown in conventional and safe roles. For Muslim women this tension is sharper. When they are portrayed in advertisements, their presence is still weighed down by cultural and religious elements. They appear in veils, in a festival setting or as indicators of modesty and homeliness. Muslim women are still stereotyped. There have been very few portrayals that depicted them as complex characters with potential and influence (Hussin et al., 2015; Utami & Kurniawan, 2019). The purpose of this study is to see how audience view Muslim women in advertisements and to ask deeper questions like if advertisers hide within the familiarity of symbols and reinforce stereotypes, if audience see empowerment where advertisers see controversies, how audiences respond to unconventional storytelling, if women see themselves as tokens or do they resonate with these portrayals.

This study positions itself at the intersection of religious, political and cultural identities, representation and consumer culture. Fundamentally the questions boil down to the duality and marginalising in advertising when it comes to the representation of Muslim women: what kind of stories feature them and what areas are still considered as taboo.

1.2 Research Objectives:

- To analyse the portrayal of Muslim women in Indian television advertisements and online brand video campaigns within 2015-2025.
- To appraise the perception of general audiences in relation to concepts of empowerment, oppression and exoticisation portrayed in these advertisements.
- To examine the attitudes of Muslim women regarding the chosen advertisements with attention to the influence of these representations shaping social-identity and self-image.

1.3 Significance:

Representations of women in relation to gender roles with religion as a factor integrated into it is not prevalent. When it comes to representation of Muslim women in advertisements, the cultural identities are either celebrated, distorted and sometimes misunderstood. This study showcases the conflicts in inclusivity. From a wider perspective, this study will help advertisers and regulators in understanding and modifying advertisements to not be controversial or misdirected.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A research on Muslim representation in television advertising studied women participants from Malaysia regarding the representations shown in these advertisements featuring the Muslim culture. Many women related to the Islamic ways shown in the advertisements including the women wearing modest clothes and a hijab while fitting into the modern lifestyle. The brands brought cultural messages on screen to make a connection with the modern Muslim women (Hussin et al., 2015). The findings of a Palestinian study suggest that there is a negative inclination towards the advertisements and the brands that feature women in a sexualized context. This factor alters the perception of women to buy from or use the services of these brands. One of the key findings is that the advertisements must be culturally contextualized to not affect the sentiments of the population (Salem et al., 2019).

Another research paper from 2010 studied how religiosity affects the perception of advertisements in Malaysia. Several women related products like female contraceptives, footwear, underwear and feminine hygiene were found indecent or controversial by the sample population used in this study. The

ideas depicted were found as morally corrupting for the minds of the younger generation (De Run et al., 2010).

Research on Nike's Pro Hijab Campaign is well received by the Muslim women athletes as well as the public as the campaign was inclusive and empowering but this campaign was criticised for using religious symbols to gain monetary benefits (Bahrainwala & O'Connor, 2019).

A study conducted in Israel and Germany showcased that consumers had a negative effect on advertisements featuring Muslim women models. They were undesirable or less desirable due to their attires and hijab but in the case of male models in the absence of religious markers the advertisements were well received. The study shows that there is a disparity in acceptance and inclusivity even in this century due to high prejudice levels (Rößner et al., 2021b). Social media platforms have helped Muslim women reshape their portrayals as empowered, classy, and independent since brands collaborate with both veiled and non-veiled Muslim women. This change in attitude is observed by the public as well (Hassan & Harun, 2016).

A research paper from 2019 analyses 10 shampoo television commercials from Indonesia, the prevalent opinion among the target sample is that the Muslim women portrayed in these advertisements bear purity, freshness, peace, elegance and beauty. Instead of sexualizing the hair or the hijab these advertisements stood as a symbol of modesty and inner beauty (Utami, 2019).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

3.1 Methodology:

This study follows a mixed-methods approach with the research design combining analysis of the advertisements that feature Muslim women and a survey that analyses the perception of the general audience as well as the Muslim women participants. Phase one is qualitative analysis of ten advertisements and campaign videos from 2015-2025 that were targeted at the Indian market. They were sourced from YouTube and examined for visual and narrative aspects in regards to Muslim women. These elements include the clothing style, body language, hijab styles, significance of the Muslim women characters to the advertisement, and their nature of portrayal and recurring themes. Phase two of the research is an online survey administered to the general audience and Muslim women to document their perception of advertisements featuring Muslim women. The collected data is analysed comparatively to distinguish varied ideologies. The sample size of the study comprises 130 respondents attained through convenience and snowball sampling. All the respondents voluntarily participated in the study with consent and anonymity ensured. The responses of the survey are collected in Likert scale format. The analysed data from the qualitative and quantitative methods is employed to find connections between recurring and dominant concepts in the media portrayal.

3.2 Theoretical Framework:

Framing theory supports this study as media messages exert an influence on how audiences perceive concepts by selecting, highlighting and neglecting certain aspects (Entman, 1993). The visual elements in the advertisements get embedded in the audience and create an effect on how everything on the screen is perceived, including the people. This concept applies to Muslim women as well. Advertisers use familiar cultural or religious cues to gain the attention of target groups. According to Hussin, Yusoff, and Yusof (2015), women see these advertisements and start to think and identify themselves to the realities of the frames. The research of Salem et al. (2019) is an example of how the media can normalise the experience of an entire religious group through narratives because female viewers oriented their purchase decisions on their self-identity towards that particular character.

Framing can have both positive and negative effects. For example De Run, Butt, and Fam (2010) found that audiences reacted violently to religious and cultural cues being represented badly, creating backlash towards the brand, product and advertisement but Nike's Pro Hijab campaign won support as it was respectful and empowering. A tokenistic way of inclusion weakened the impact of the brand whereas celebrating inclusion strengthened the value of the brand (Rößner et al., 2021b). This statement is of immense relevance to the Indian context because conversations around identity, religion and gender remain sensitive and politicized. Framing theory is selected for this study because it

examines the representation of the Muslim women and the receptivity of the audience and Muslim women to the advertisements can be analysed.

3.3 Research Gap:

The existing literature focuses on Muslim population dominated countries like Malaysia, Palestine and Indonesia. There is a significant gap in the literature in how Muslim women are represented in the Indian advertising industry. Most studies studies portrayals not their influence on the audience behaviour. Existing literature also lacks an in-depth sense of how the Muslim women themselves perceive these representations.

4. ANALYSIS:

4.1 Content Analysis:

a. H&M - "Close the Loop" 2015 : In this advertisement, the model Mariah Idrissi is featured. She identifies as Muslim and in the advertisement, she appears for a few seconds wearing a hijab with modern apparels. The framing of Mariah represents herself as one among many other communities. It genuinely shows inclusion and lists Muslim women also as a customer base for high-end fashion choices that do not restrict them to orthodoxical modesty. However, this framing is not very relevant to the Indian context as hijab is not usually paired with coat and trousers. In conclusion, in the Indian context it limits the frame to aestheticism but aiming for empowerment.

b. Nike: What Will They Say About You? 2017: The advertisement stands out because it breaks the stereotypes of domesticity. Nike advertisement is not set in a tokenistic format nor is it exotic. It features a product made for, desired by, and advertised for the community. There is no grandeur in the framing. In Indian context, it represents the grit Muslim women have to pursue what they want without barriers.

c. Tanishq - "Ekatvam" 2020: Ekatvam paints a beautiful celebration as its narrative. The frame of the narrative is empowering because though the women follow modest dressing, wear hijab and are grounded in tradition the advertisement glows with balance of how such maternal affection is exhibited towards someone not from the community. Usually in a stereotypical way, interfaith bonds are considered transgressive but in this advertisement Muslim women are seen embracing it.

d. Manyavar - Eid celebration 2021: The Manyavar advertisement features Muslim women in traditional outfits. The outfits are ornate. Normally, women serve food for male members. This advertisement depicts a reverse scenario, men serving women. In this situation the women are not the only caregivers, male members are also accountable for it. This advertisement portrays an empowerment frame promoting partnership and negotiation in gender roles.

e. McDonald's India - Ramzan 2022: In this advertisement a family is seen in the McDonald's dining together with their family. A Muslim woman in a public setting alters the narrative and emotional arc of a stranger and her family creating impact. All these emotions and signals position her in an empowered frame.

f. The Julahaa Sarees - Eid 2023: The muslim woman in this advertisement is a nurse taking care of a newborn. Every frame shows her concern and love for the newborn's health, impressing the grandmother and receiving the saree as a gift. The frames show how careful she is with her work by visual representation creating a sense of respect bringing in understanding and trust which is needed between interfaith communities, promoting empowerment.

g. McDonald's India - Ramzan 2023: This advertisement tells the reality of the youth population. It shows individuals that identify with Islam in a workplace environment. The frame shown represents reality, naturally. It is relatable for the Indian audience because the women are presented wearing formal clothes in a working environment.

h. Apis - Ramadan 2023: This advertisement happens in a semi-urban setting where food gifting happens between two houses. In the entire advertisement, a hijab wearing woman is shown very briefly. Drawing from framing theory, the advertisement normalised the presence of Muslim women with no significant inclusion to create an impact. She becomes purely peripheral.

i. SMART Bazaar - Eid 2024: This advertisement features Muslim women from various age groups and economic backgrounds. During Eid, a house worker who is an old Muslim woman is leaving for her hometown. So the employer, an adult young Muslim woman and her family express sadness. They

exchange gifts - employer gifts money, and the house worker shares the identity of the household, a secret recipe. This empowers the Muslim women community by showing them in a respected light, making independent choices, and taking control of everyday life. Every character in the frame is equipped with agency and significance.

j. Blinkit - Eid 2025: The advertisement includes an older and a younger woman both wearing modest and rich clothes. The women do not have dialogue except for, “please come eat”. This implies the women will be serving the dishes as the men eat. It is rooted in the community norms but without agency. Hence, the advertisement reinforces that women are needed for the celebration but men drive the narratives and significance.

Brand / Advertisement	Type of Framing	Visual & Narrative Cues	Narrative Agency & Meaning
H&M – Close the Loop (2015)	Exotic, Not relatable to Indian audience	Pairing hijab with high end Western wear	Brief presence, No agency One among the many represented
Nike – What Will They Say About You? (2017)	Highly Empowerment	Hijab paired with athletic wear	High narrative agency, the models were the central figure to the storytelling
Tanishq – Ekatvam (2020)	Empowerment centered portrayal	Hijab paired with elegance in a festive setting	High narrative agency, the mother- in-law character brings connection and emotional depth
Manyavar – Eid 2021	Stereotypical	Festive traditional attire with hijabs	Moderate agency, Respect and care is reciprocated
McDonald’s India – Ramzan 2022	Normalised	Casual everyday setting	High agency, The mother figure drives the emotional and celebratory outcomes
Julahaa Sarees – Eid 2023	Normalised	Professional attire with hijab	High agency, Story revolves around the depth of her character
McDonald’s India – Ramzan 2023	Normalised	Office wear, No hijab, affinity towards Islam through dialogue	High agency Creates visibility, Wider representation
Apis – Ramadan 2023	Tokenistic	Woman in black hijab	No agency She did not have a role or a voice
SMART Bazaar – Eid 2024	Empowerment	Hijab wearing women	Moderate agency The models deliver emotional depth
Blinkit – Eid 2025	Stereotypical	Hijab wearing women	No agency There is no role or voice for the character.

Table 1:Summary of the content analysis of advertisements.

4.2 Survey Analysis:

a. Age of Participants: A total of 130 respondents participated in study. Out of which 33.8% (n=44) belonged to the 23-27 category. 27.7% (n=36) of the sample was from the 18-22 category which was

followed by 16.2% (n=21) from the 28-32 category. The average participation was from the age group falling below 28 years of age.

b. Gender of the Participants: The gender demographics of the sample is relatively equal. The 130 respondents included approximately a half (52.31%) of males and approximately half (47.69%) of females. Within the 62 female respondents, 16 people identified themselves as Muslim. This group of respondents will be separately examined to analyse the distinct views and lived experiences of Muslim women within our sample.

c. Frequency of Encountering Advertisements with Muslim Women: In the general sample, "Occasionally" (67), "Sometimes" (36) were chosen by the respondents which clearly indicated that Muslim women are seen by the society in advertisements but not as regularly. Among the Muslim women respondents the disparity is striking with "Occasionally" by 7 respondents and "Never" by 6 respondents implying limited representation.

d. Empowered depiction of Muslim women: A large population of the general audience 35.38% (n=46) responded to the question as "Neutral". This means that many respondents are unsure of their opinion. However, the muslim women responded Agree and disagree on empowerment equally with the same rate of 31.25% (n=5).

e. Depiction of stereotyped portrayal: The majority of the general audience respondents aligned with the media portraying stereotypes. 79.31% (n=74) chose "Agree" and "Strongly Agree". Half of the respondents (n=6) indicated that they strongly agree and another 37.5% (n=6) agree. Very few expressed neutrality or disagreement.

f. Depiction of Suppressed portrayal: Muslim women (n=11) agree and strongly agree with suppressed portrayal. 66 respondents of the general audience also expressed that Muslim women are portrayed as suppressed.

g. Inclusion for decorative purposes: Both categories of respondents agree that women are exoticised in advertisements. The general audience (n=75) selected "Strongly agree" or "Agree". Muslim women showed even more affinity with (n=10) respondents "Strongly Agree".

h. Influence of media representations in the perception of Muslim women in reality: The respondents in the general public (n=75) agreed or strongly agreed that how Muslim women are portrayed in the media has a very strong influence on how society views all Muslims. For the respondents from the Muslim community, the agreement was even stronger, with the majority (n=10) of Muslim respondents selecting the response of Strongly Agree.

i. Tokenistic approach of the brands: From the general audience's perspective, most of the respondents (n=71) strongly agree or agree with the concept of brands making deliberate efforts to include Muslims. In the Muslim women category (n=10) also identify with tokenistic representation.

j. Oversimplification of the Lives of Muslim Women: When it comes to how the public views whether the lives of Muslim women are oversimplified in advertisements, the overwhelming majority of those surveyed almost 50% (n=64) thought the ads create a false sense of unity among all Muslim women. Among the Muslim women sample (n=7) agreed or strongly agreed while an equal number disagreed or strongly disagreed.

k. Reflection of real life experiences of Muslim women in advertisements: When it comes to the representations of Muslim women in advertisements mirroring the real lives of Muslim women in India, the overall audience had a significantly mixed view. A total of 36.92% (n=47) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The Muslim women participants (n=12) indicated stronger disagreement to the statement.

l. Impact on social identity: The opinions of the general public were quite unified and they clearly stated that ads depicting Muslim women have a big impact on society's view of Muslim women. A significant percentage of 78.46% (n=89) of the participants gave their strong approval. On the other hand, the Muslim female respondents recognized the influence of such representations too, but their responses were more diverse. A total of 70.59% (n=12) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement.

4.3 Findings:

The research points clearly to the gap between the advertisers' representational intention and the audiences' perception that were experienced. The statistics portray a situation where present-day representations oscillate between liberating empowerment narratives and stubborn stereotypes, thus creating a divided audience response.

Increased visibility but not empowerment: Brands have become more inclusive in their advertisements and campaigns but this inclusion stops at being merely an inclusion and is not considered empowerment. The general audience do not see empowerment though Muslim women are featured in advertisements.

Narrative storytelling in advertisements is stereotypical: The general audience and Muslim women agree that frames are set in stereotypical ways. The women are often shown wearing hijabs or veils, doing domestic chores, or as the caregivers.

Empowerment has restrictions: Empowerment is seen more with respect to open and candid narratives. Subtle cues are not well received. Inclusion with agency supports empowerment. There are progressive global advertisements but they lack connection towards the Muslim women in India hence the connection with the general audience is also not guaranteed.

Tokenism is visible: The general audience and the Muslim women both agree that brands use Muslim women to showcase diversity. There is no meaning attached to the representation apart from their presence onscreen.

Exoticization is still used as a tool in framing: Visual cues in the advertisements convey more than what meets the eye. How the Muslim women are represented in terms of character is more important than their attire and makeup. Beauty is predominantly seen as something the women offer to the frame.

Advertisements influence social perceptions: In the social construct, Muslim women and the general audience agree that their representations in media affect real life experiences. What is expected out of the women is heavily framed by advertisements and the influence bleeds into the workplace, schools and other social aspects. The respondents feel that there is a divide between reality and media portrayal. The narratives in the advertisements do not reflect the experiences of the Muslim women.

Oversimplifying the lives of Muslim women: The diversity of characters portrayed by the Muslim women in the advertisements are very similar in nature. They are shown working at home, wearing a hijab, in caregiving roles. There is no significant improvement in the representation of lifestyle and ideologies.

5. CONCLUSION:

The study analysed how Muslim women are represented in the advertisements and online campaign videos. With the use of a mixed-methods approach, the research provided proof that visibility of Muslim women has improved over the years but why they are represented in a certain way has not evolved. Though advertisers are trying to incorporate Muslim women into the frames, it is perceived as tokenistic and glamorous. To shift advertisements from relaying Muslim women as cultural tokens, advertisers have to provide them with storylines that have complex characters set in various environments. Media portrayal will only become acceptable and relatable if the depiction and storyline is drawn from reality.

Limitations:

- The study has covered only well-known advertisements and brands.
- Individuals in the study were predominantly under 28. They might be more modernised compared to other age groups.
- Muslim respondents for the study are significantly small, hence the probability of generalising is low.
- The study does not include triangulation of view points. Including professionals and experts from the advertisement industry will help in giving a balanced standpoint.

Scope for Future Research:

- The study can be expanded to analysis of advertisements from various digital platforms.
- A longitudinal approach will be helpful in assessing the shift in the portrayal of Muslim women.
- Future studies can include detailed interviews from Muslim women to analyse their standpoints.
- Integrating opinions of brand strategists, advertisers and creative directors can give valuable insights to assess why the frames are set this way and factors inhibiting agency.

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From Gendered Marketing to Gender-Inclusive Campaigns: Social Implications and Perspective

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Abstract: Advertising has long occupied a dual role: it is simultaneously a commercial tool designed to sell products and a cultural instrument that reflects, reinforces, and at times reshapes societal norms. Women were consistently shown as caregivers, homemakers, nurturers, and beauty objects, while men were framed as decision-makers, authority figures, and embodiments of strength or rationality. This divide deeply rooted in both cultural expectations and marketing strategies normalized inequality by presenting it as part of everyday life. However, in the last decade, the Indian advertising landscape has undergone a dramatic transformation. Influenced by globalization, feminist movements, LGBTQ+ activism, digital discourse, and generational shifts, brands have begun to challenge established gender expectations through gender-inclusive campaigns. These campaigns introduce alternative narratives that foreground visibility, dignity, shared responsibilities, and identity acceptance. Yet, the transition from gendered marketing to inclusive advertising has not been smooth; it exists within a tense cultural and political environment in which representation often becomes a battleground. This research paper presents a comprehensive qualitative analysis of this shift, investigating four high-impact Indian advertisements: Ariel's Share the Load, Starbucks' It Starts with Your Name, Dabur Fem's Karva Chauth, and Tanishq's Ekatvam. These campaigns were selected because they occupy distinct positions along a spectrum of inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, backlash intensity, and social influence. This study provides a framework for future advertisers and researchers, demonstrating how brands can meaningfully engage with gender issues while navigating India's evolving cultural terrain.

Key Words: Gendered Marketing, Gender- Inclusive Campaigns, Gender Stereotype, Social Implication, Consumer Perception, Diversity and Equality.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Advertising plays as a powerful cultural institution that shapes not only consumers behaviour but also societal understanding of the identities, roles, and relationships. Through symbolism and emotional appeal, advertisements normalize certain values and expectations particularly in relation to gender. Historically, Indian advertising has reflected patriarchal structures, portraying women largely within domestic and emotional roles while positioning men in public, professional, decision - making spaces. Such representations, repeatedly circulated which has eventually become as 'normal' reinforcing the gender hierarchies a process that is understood under the concept of Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986). In the 21st century, economic liberalization, increased female workforce participation, global media exposure, and social movements advocating gender and LGBTQ+ inclusion have made more rigid depictions. Gender Inclusive advertising emerged the rise of socially conscious consumers and participatory digital platforms, where audience consciously shape the narratives. While some campaigns like Ariel's (Share the load) have resonated positively while others like Dabur Fem's Karva Chauth and Tanishq's Ekatvam faced backlash due to sociopolitical insensitivities. This study examines why inclusive campaigns have succeed or fail by analyzing how advertising interprets gender

narratives and how advertisers construct meaning through symbolism and tone. It places advertising as a social actor and argues that gender – inclusive advertisements in India depends on representational authenticity, cultural sensitivity and narrative accessibility.

2. OBJECTIVES:

- To examine the portrayal of roles, identities these campaigns challenge the gender stereotypes within the Indian sociocultural context
- To identify the social implications these campaigns create such as encouraging conversation on equalities, supporting marginalized identities or reinforcing backlash and understand their influence on public discourse.
- To evaluate these campaigns contribute to redefining gender roles in advertising and how they reflect the evolving expectations placed on brands in contemporary India

3. SCOPE OF RESEARCH:

- Analyses four Indian advertising campaigns Ariel, Starbucks, Dabur Fem, and Tanishq to understand gender and inclusivity representation.
- Examines narrative structures, symbolic elements, emotional appeal, and cultural framing in each advertisement.
- Applies Social Cognitive Theory and Agenda-Setting Theory to interpret audience meaning-making and media influence.
- Studies audience reactions, including acceptance, resistance, and backlash influenced by sociopolitical factors.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH:

- Demonstrates how advertising acts as a cultural force that can challenge or reinforce gender norms in society.
- Highlights the potential of gender-inclusive campaigns to influence attitudes and promote social awareness.
- Provides insights into why certain inclusive ads gain acceptance while others face criticism or political backlash.
- Offers guidance for advertisers on creating culturally sensitive, authentic, and socially responsible campaigns.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The literature surrounding gender representation, media influence, and inclusive advertising spans several academic fields, including sociology, gender studies, communication theory, marketing, and cultural studies. This section synthesizes key theories and empirical findings relevant to the analysis of gender-inclusive advertising in India.

Gender Representation and Stereotyping in Media:

Decades of scholarship confirm that advertising has historically perpetuated strict gender roles. Goffman's foundational work (1979) analysed how women were often positioned in submissive, decorative, or dependent roles, while men were depicted as authoritative and dominant. These symbolic cues such as body language, gaze, spatial positioning, and tone reinforce broader social hierarchies. [Goffman (1979)]

Later studies expanded this analysis to examine:

- Objectification of women in beauty and fashion advertising
- Infantilization and sexualization of female characters
- Hyper-masculine portrayals emphasizing aggression, dominance, and stoicism
- Binary framings of gender that ignore non-conforming and LGBTQ+ identities

In the Indian context, scholars such as Munshi (2010) and Das (2011) observed similar patterns, noting how domestic labour, emotional caregiving, and marital devotion were traditionally coded as feminine

attributes. This literature underscores how advertising plays a significant role in shaping everyday gender expectations.

Social Cognitive Theory and Behavioural Modelling

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) asserts that individuals learn social behaviours by observing models in their environment. Advertising, therefore, becomes a key behavioural script. When ads depict men sharing domestic responsibilities or respecting transgender identities, viewers may internalize these behaviours as desirable and socially accepted.

Studies show that exposure to counter-stereotypical images can:

- Reduce gender bias
- Increase empathy
- Create cognitive dissonance with entrenched norms, enabling re-evaluation
- Encourage new behaviours through imitation

Ariel's *Share the Load* campaign is frequently cited as a real-world example of modelling that produced measurable shifts in attitudes toward domestic labour.

Agenda-Setting Theory and Public Discourse

Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) posits that media do not tell people what to think but what to think about. Advertising, when widely circulated, can bring socially sensitive topics such as trans identity, queer relationships, or interfaith harmony into public conversation.

Campaigns like Starbucks' *It Starts with Your Name* illustrate how even a simple narrative can generate widespread discussion around transgender rights.

Similarly:

- Dabur Fem's ad sparked discourse on LGBTQ+ inclusion in religious spaces.
- Tanishq's ad prompted national debate about interfaith marriage and religious tolerance.

This literature shows that advertising can unintentionally become a political event when messages intersect with volatile cultural narratives.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

The theoretical framework guiding this study draws from two major mass communication theory Social Cognitive Theory that explains how advertising influences individuals and societies at both micro and macro levels. This theory also provides analytical lens through which the four case studies can be interpreted, enabling a deeper understanding of how and why inclusive advertising in India generates behavioural outcomes, emotional resonance, or backlash.

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986): Learning Through Observation

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) asserts that individuals acquire behaviours, attitudes, and social norms through observational learning. Media, including advertising, serves as a powerful source of behavioural modelling because it presents characters, narratives, and emotional cues that viewers internalize and replicate (Bandura, 1986).

SCT identifies four key processes relevant to advertising analysis:

a. Attention

Audiences selectively attend to visual cues such as characters, emotional expressions, settings, and tone. Advertisements with relatable situations such as household chores, parent-child dynamics, or familial tension capture attention more effectively.

b. Retention

Narratives that evoke emotion (guilt, pride, hope, belonging) become more memorable. Campaigns like Ariel's *Share the Load* build emotional resonance by presenting heartfelt father-son or husband-wife conversations, making the message memorable.

c. Reproduction

Viewers may then attempt to reproduce the behaviour. In this case, men contributing to housework is an observable and replicable action.

d. Motivation

If the behaviour is socially rewarded or morally framed, audiences are more likely to adopt it. Ariel frames sharing chores as a morally superior and emotionally fulfilling choice, increasing motivation for change.

Why SCT is crucial for analysing inclusive ads in India

In India, where gender roles are deeply learned and socially enforced, advertisements become cultural scripts that either reinforce or challenge these expectations.

- **Ariel** provides a positive model by showing men participating in housework counteracting generational conditioning.
- **Starbucks** models empathy through a father publicly affirming his transgender daughter's chosen name.
- **Dabur Fem** models LGBTQ+ affection within a culturally significant ritual (Karva Chauth).
- **Tanishq** models interfaith harmony and women-centred care across communities.
- SCT helps explain why certain ads particularly Ariel and Starbucks succeed:
They present adoptable behaviours grounded in everyday life.
They evoke emotions that reward the inclusive model.
They avoid attacking tradition directly, instead improving it.

By comparing and drawing similarities between Dabur Fem and Tanishq, present models that require ideological change, not just behavioural change. They confront viewers' deep-rooted beliefs regarding religion, ritual purity, and interfaith relationships. In this regard, SCT helps illustrate why backlash emerges: When ads model behaviours that challenge identity-defining norms, audiences resist imitation because the perceived social cost is high.

7. RESEARCH GAP:

Although gender-inclusive advertising has gained significant scholarly attention globally, research on its dynamics within the Indian context remains limited and fragmented. Existing studies primarily focus on gender stereotyping, women's representation, or LGBTQ+ visibility in isolation. However, very few studies examine how multiple identity dimensions gender, sexuality, religion, and culture intersect within advertising and shape public reception. A major gap also lies in understanding how brands navigate ideological resistance, digital outrage cycles, and polarized media ecosystems factors that greatly influence the lifespan and impact of inclusive campaigns. Although some scholarship touches upon political backlash, it rarely connects these dynamics to advertising theory or sociocultural behaviour. Furthermore, few studies adopt a dual theoretical lens combining Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and Agenda-Setting Theory to analyze both individual behavioural modelling and broader discourse formation. This combined approach remains largely unexplored in the Indian advertising landscape.

Given these gaps, there is a clear need for research that:

- **Integrates narrative analysis with sociopolitical context** to understand how inclusive advertising operates within India's cultural environment.
- **Examines backlash, acceptance, and discourse patterns** across different types of inclusive campaigns.
- **Compares diverse representations** domestic labour equality, transgender identity, queer couples in rituals, and interfaith families within a single analytical framework.
- **Explores how inclusive ads trigger both behavioural influence and national debate**, considering India's unique political and cultural climate.

This study addresses these gaps by providing a **multi-layered qualitative analysis** of four high-impact Indian campaigns, offering new insights into representation, cultural sensitivity, backlash dynamics, and the social implications of gender-inclusive advertising.

8. METHODOLOGY (Explain what multi-layered is)

This research adopts a qualitative, multi-layered methodology as it combines case study methodology research, content analysis, thematic analysis, and sociocultural critique.

8.1. Research Design

A **multiple case-study design** was chosen because it allows in-depth exploration of:

- narrative construction
- representational politics

- audience reception
- cultural and political implications

The four selected ad campaigns illustrate a complete spectrum of inclusive messaging in India, ranging from widely celebrated to heavily criticized.

8.2. Case Selection Criteria

The four advertisements were selected based on the following:

- **Social influence** (viral, widely discussed, or academically cited)
- **Representation diversity** (gender roles, LGBTQ+, interfaith, domestic labour)
- **Contrast in public reception** (from accolades to state-level backlash)
- **Cultural sensitivity level** (ritual, religion, gender identity, family norms)

Thus, the selected cases represent ideal contrasts for comparative analysis.

8.3. Data Sources:

Primary Data

- Full video advertisements
- Official brand statements
- Hashtags, tweets, Instagram comments, YouTube discussions

Secondary Data

- News coverage (NDTV, Indian Express, Hindustan Times)
- Marketing case studies (WARC, Campaign Asia)
- Academic research articles on gender representation
- Industry reports (Stereotype Alliance, Kantar-ASCI)
- Scholarly work on backlash, identity politics, and representation

8.4. Analytical Approach:

(a) Qualitative Content Analysis

Each advertisement was analysed using:

- visual semiotics
- narrative structure
- symbolic cues (costumes, rituals, gesture, camera angle)
- representational accuracy

(b) Thematic Coding

Four cross-cutting themes were identified:

1. Representation Accuracy
2. Cultural Sensitivity
3. Social Impact
4. Backlash Level

These themes are later used to build a comparative analysis table.

(c) Sociocultural Interpretation

Advertisements were interpreted through:

- gender studies
- intersectionality
- political communication
- Indian cultural anthropology

This layered methodology ensures that each case is understood from multiple perspectives: visual, cultural, political, and psychological.

9. CASE STUDY ANALYSIS:

CASE STUDY 1: Ariel “Share the Load” Domestic Labour Equality

Overview: Ariel’s Share the Load (2015–2023) is one of India’s most influential purpose-driven campaigns. Moving beyond product-focused messaging, it confronts a longstanding cultural norm: the unequal burden of domestic labour on women. The campaign’s success stems from its emotional depth, relatability, and moral positioning. Unlike shock-value ads, Ariel’s narrative is gentle yet transformative.



Fig.1

Narrative Construction

Key plot elements:

- A father observes his daughter juggling work, childcare, and housework.
- He realizes his own complicity in teaching the next generation that household chores are “women’s work.”
- He writes a reflective message apologizing to his daughter and vowing to change.

Why this works:

- It attacks the *root* of gender inequality social conditioning.
- It uses family as a site of transformation instead of conflict.
- It does not shame men; it invites them to participate.

The choice of a father figure is strategically brilliant. Fathers represent generational authority—when they change, tradition itself appears to evolve.

Symbolic Representation:

Symbols include:

- laundry baskets, washing machines → metaphors for shared responsibility
- father’s apology → intergenerational healing
- dim lighting → emotional warmth
- slow pacing → reflective tone

These symbols allow viewers to emotionally connect with the injustice being depicted without feeling attacked or judged.

Social Cognitive Analysis:

Ariel offers a **behavioural model** that viewers can replicate:

- Share housework
- Apologize for past conditioning
- Reimagine gender-neutral domestic roles

This is *low-risk* behaviour for viewers, unlike changing religious ritual or interfaith marriage norms.

Public Reception

Ariel achieved:

- overwhelmingly positive reception
- increased sales
- recognition as a socially responsible brand

Because domestic roles affect nearly all Indian families, the ad felt personal and universal.

CASE STUDY 2: Starbucks “It Starts with Your Name” Transgender Identity & Affirmation

Overview: Starbucks India’s 2023 campaign “*It Starts with Your Name*” is one of the most socially significant representations of transgender identity in mainstream Indian advertising. In a country where transgender persons frequently encounter stigma, family rejection, misgendering, and deadnaming, this advertisement offered a gentle, emotional, and empathetic alternative framework grounded in acceptance. Central to the narrative is the idea that names are fundamental to identity. By recognizing someone’s chosen name, one affirms their gender, humanity, and dignity. The ad cleverly situates this recognition not in an activist context but in an everyday environment a Starbucks café where writing a customer’s name on a cup becomes a symbolic act of validation.



Fig 2.

Narrative Construction:

The storyline follows a young transgender woman meeting her father in a café. Their relationship is strained; the father repeatedly calls her by her deadname, signaling his discomfort with her transition. Her emotional discomfort is visible yet contained. She remains respectful but tense.

The emotional turning point comes when:

- The father approaches the counter
- Gives the barista her chosen name
- And publicly affirms her identity

This small gesture becomes an enormous act of recognition.

Symbolic Elements

a. The Starbucks Cup

Starbucks is globally associated with writing names on cups. Using this cultural ritual as a metaphor for gender affirmation is tactically brilliant. It turns a mundane act into a moment of transformation.

b. The Father's Gesture

His recognition symbolizes:

- familial acceptance
- generational learning
- reconciliation
- moral courage

c. The Setting

A public café normalizes transgender presence in everyday spaces countering narratives that limit them to stereotypes or marginalized roles.

Social Cognitive Theory Interpretation

The ad models **empathetic behaviour**:

- Listen
- Learn
- Affirm someone's identity

Viewers see a parent confront their discomfort and choose acceptance. The behaviour is **replicable**, **non-threatening**, and **emotionally rewarding**, enabling observational learning (Bandura, 1986).

Unlike ads that challenge deep religious beliefs, this ad challenges relational behaviour something audiences can change immediately.

Public Reception

- Youth and progressive groups strongly praised the ad.
- LGBTQ+ advocacy groups celebrated it as authentic and respectful.
- Conservative sections accused Starbucks of "pushing Western values."

However, backlash was moderate compared to Dabur and Tanishq because the ad did not challenge ritual, religion, or political identity it focused on human connection.

CASE STUDY 3: Dabur Fem Karva Chauth LGBTQ+ Representation in Religious Ritual Overview

Dabur Fem's 2021 Karva Chauth advertisement depicted a same-sex couple celebrating a traditionally heterosexual Hindu festival. The ad was groundbreaking because it challenged *two* cultural norms simultaneously:

- The heteronormative definition of marriage
- The gendered ritual of wives fasting for their husbands

This intersection made the ad extremely progressive but also socio-politically vulnerable.



Fig.3

Narrative Construction

The ad shows:

- Two women preparing for Karva Chauth
- Playful, intimate conversation
- One woman fasting for her partner
- Family acceptance implied through casual interactions

The tone is warm, domestic, and celebratory mirroring typical Karva Chauth ads but with a queer couple at the center.

Symbolism & Representation

a. The Sargi Ritual

Showing a same-sex couple engaging in a traditionally gendered fast reframes the ritual as:

- gender-neutral
- love-based, not male-centric

b. Domestic Harmony

The ad portrays queer relationships as ordinary and loving a sharp contrast to sensationalist portrayals in Indian media.

c. Red Sarees, Mehendi, Household Decor

These culturally loaded symbols normalize queer identities within tradition, not outside it.

Why Backlash Occurred

The backlash was driven less by homophobia alone and more by the perception that:

- a sacred heterosexual ritual was being “altered”
- LGBTQ+ identities were being positioned within Hindu traditions
- a brand was “misusing culture” for profit

Political actors escalated the issue, demanding an apology and withdrawal, demonstrating agenda-setting in reverse: instead of broadening discussion, pressure suppressed it.

Social Cognitive Theory Interpretation

Modelling queer love within a religious ritual challenges behaviour at a deeper psychological level than modelling shared laundry or parental acceptance.

This requires:

- normative restructuring
- reinterpretation of religious meaning
- confrontation of personal identity

Thus, behavioural adoption is harder, making defensive responses more likely.

Public Reception

- Progressive groups condemned forced withdrawal
- Conservative groups praised state intervention
- LGBTQ+ individuals expressed disappointment but appreciated visibility

Dabur's apology was seen as a symbolic setback for corporate allyship.

CASE STUDY 4: Tanishq "Ekatvam" — Interfaith Harmony & Women-Centred Rituality Overview

Tanishq's "Ekatvam" advertisement (2020) depicted an interfaith baby shower hosted by a Muslim family for their Hindu daughter-in-law. The ad, seeking to celebrate harmony ("oneness"), instead became a cultural flashpoint. India's political context where interfaith marriage is heavily scrutinized greatly shaped the ad's reception.



Fig. 4.

Narrative Construction

The story shows:

- A pregnant Hindu woman living with her Muslim in-laws
- A baby shower organized by the Muslim family
- The mother-in-law saying: "This ceremony is not part of our tradition but giving happiness is."

The message is simple: love transcends religious boundaries.

Symbolism

a. Soft Lighting and Warm Family Space

Invites emotional comfort rather than ideological confrontation.

b. Hindu Woman in Traditional Attire

Maintains cultural authenticity, preventing portrayal as assimilation.

c. Muslim Household Setting

Portrays minority representation with dignity.

d. Baby Shower

Symbolizes generational continuity and feminine agency.

Why Backlash Occurred

Right-wing groups accused the ad of promoting "love jihad," a conspiracy theory framing interfaith marriages as covert conversion plots.

Backlash stemmed from:

- political agenda
- identity threat perception
- fear of minority representation in mainstream media
- communal polarization

The ad's intentions were overshadowed by political reinterpretation.

Social Cognitive Theory Interpretation

The ad models interfaith harmony, yet this is a behaviour requiring ideological transformation, not simple behavioural imitation. This makes viewers resistant if they perceive:

- community boundaries are being crossed
- identity purity is being challenged
- tradition is being redefined

Thus, SCT predicts backlash when representational change conflicts with group identity.

Public Reception

- Liberal and urban audiences defended the ad
- Conservative audiences criticized it harshly
- Industry leaders expressed fear about shrinking artistic freedom

Tanishq's withdrawal became symbolic of a larger cultural struggle.

10. THEMATIC COMPARATIVE TABLE

Theme	Ariel	Starbucks	Dabur Fem	Tanishq
Representation Accuracy	Very High	Very High	High	Very High
Cultural Sensitivity	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
Social Impact	Strong, measurable	Strong symbolic	Moderate suppressed	Very high (debate-driven)
Backlash Level	Low	Moderate	High	Very High

Table 1. Thematic comparative of the above brands

11. DISCUSSION:

A cross-case analysis of the four advertisements, Ariel *Share the Load*, Starbucks *It Starts With Your Name*, Dabur Fem *Karva Chauth*, and Tanishq *Ekatvam*, reveals distinct patterns about inclusivity, cultural pressure points, and the ways advertising serves as a catalyst for social change within India's rapidly evolving sociopolitical environment. This discussion synthesizes how representational authenticity, cultural sensitivity, narrative framing, and political context shape audience reception and backlash intensity.

11.1. Inclusivity Is Most Effective When Rooted in Everyday Behaviour

A central finding is that campaigns grounded in ordinary, replicable actions elicit stronger acceptance. Ariel and Starbucks both situate their inclusive messages in accessible, emotionally relatable scenarios:

- A father re-evaluating sexist social conditioning
- A daughter receiving affirmation of her chosen name

These everyday interactions allow audiences to empathize without feeling attacked. The call to action is personal and manageable; viewers can easily imagine making similar changes in their own lives. This aligns with Social Cognitive Theory, in which behaviours are more likely to be adopted when they are practical, familiar, and carry low social risk (Bandura, 1986).

11.2. Cultural Sensitivity Is Crucial in a Politically Polarized Landscape

The analysis shows that ads intersecting with religion or interfaith relationships face heightened vulnerability. In India's current climate where religion, nationalism, and cultural identity are politically charged advertisers must navigate cultural sensitivities without compromising representational authenticity.

- Dabur's ad challenged heteronormativity within a Hindu ritual frame.
- Tanishq's ad challenged communal boundaries within a politically sensitive context.

Both campaigns touched identity pillars that large segments of society consider non-negotiable. Backlash is not simply emotional it is politically mobilized, amplified by organized ideological groups and hyperactive social media ecosystems. Ariel and Starbucks, though still addressing sensitive gender themes, operate outside the lines of ritual or religion. Their cultural interventions challenge social conditioning, not cultural identity. This seems to be a safer zone for progressive messaging in the Indian context.

11.3. Backlash Is Often Politically Manufactured, Not Organic

The public reception analysis suggests that controversy surrounding Dabur and Tanishq was not spontaneous mass disagreement but rather manufactured outrage. Small groups leveraged political

narratives, using phrases like “love jihad” or “cultural corruption” to stoke fear and mobilize online harassment. Agenda-Setting Theory helps explain how these orchestrated attacks shifted public discourse from representation to ideological conflict, redirecting attention from the ads’ intended message to broader cultural anxieties (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Ariel and Starbucks also faced criticism, but backlash was neither as organized nor as politically charged. This suggests that the target of backlash is less the brand itself and more the symbolic system the ad is perceived to disrupt.

11.4. Audience Generational Differences Shape Reception

Younger audiences (Gen Z and Millennials) respond positively to inclusive narratives. They show higher tolerance, stronger support for LGBTQ+ representation, and greater preference for brands demonstrating social responsibility.

Older or more conservative demographics tend to favor traditional values and react negatively to narratives challenging ritual or religious norms. This generational divide influences:

- purchase behaviour
- online discourse
- brand loyalty
- pressure on brands to take or avoid social positions

Inclusive advertising resonates most strongly with the demographics driving India’s digital economy.

11.5. Emotional Framing Determines Narrative Success

Across all four campaigns, emotional strategy is a critical factor:

- **Ariel** uses guilt and empathy to motivate behaviour change.
- **Starbucks** uses reconciliation and dignity to humanize identity recognition.
- **Dabur** uses intimacy and domesticity to normalize queer romance.
- **Tanishq** uses warmth and interfaith care to promote social harmony.

Ads that succeed create emotional universality viewers relate emotionally before considering ideology.

Ads that fail are often those in which viewers process ideology before empathy.

This explains why Tanishq despite being emotionally beautiful was quickly reframed through a political lens before audiences had time to emotionally engage.

12. CONCLUSION:

This paper showcases how gender-inclusive advertising in India holds transformative potential but operates within a dynamically shifting sociocultural environment where identity, tradition, and politics intersect. The four analyzed campaigns reveal the dual nature of inclusivity in advertising: it can both empower marginalized identities and provoke conservative backlash. Ariel and Starbucks demonstrate the success of ads that challenge stereotypes through familiar, emotionally relatable settings. Their narratives rely on empathy, behavioural modelling, and universal themes fatherhood, family, responsibility, dignity. Ultimately, the shift from gendered to gender-inclusive advertising is not merely a marketing evolution but a cultural one. Advertisers have the power to normalize new identities, challenge harmful expectations, and open dialogue about equality. Yet this power must be exercised with sensitivity, authenticity, and cultural awareness. Inclusive advertising is not simply about “representation”, it is about crafting culturally intelligent narratives that humanize, normalize, and empower without alienating or antagonizing audiences.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Ordinary behaviors are safer vehicles for inclusive messaging

Ads encouraging small daily actions, sharing chores, affirming a chosen name—encounter less resistance than campaigns challenging ritual or religion.

Emotional universality protects progressive narratives

When empathy precedes ideology, inclusive messaging is more successful.

Cultural sensitivity determines public reaction

Ritual and religion remain highly sensitive arenas for representation and require careful framing.

Backlash often originates from organized groups

Opposition is frequently amplified by political actors, not organic public sentiment.

13. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH:

- The study is limited to four selected advertising campaigns and does not cover the full range of gender-inclusive ads in India.
- Analysis is interpretive and qualitative, which may not capture the diversity of audience perceptions across demographics.
- Audience responses are based on secondary data and available discourse rather than primary large-scale surveys.
- Sociopolitical reactions to advertisements can evolve over time, limiting the study's ability to capture long-term shifts.

14. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

- **Regional Differences in Reception**
India is culturally heterogeneous. Future studies should examine how audiences in different states interpret inclusive advertising differently based on local traditions, socio-economic backgrounds, and political dynamics.
- **Longitudinal Impact on Behaviour**
Do inclusive advertisements lead to lasting behavioural change? Longitudinal studies could track domestic labour distribution or acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities over time among viewers.
- **Intersection of social media Algorithms & Outrage Cycles**
Understanding how algorithmic amplification intensifies backlash can help brands prepare crisis responses

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From Fomo to checkout: Evaluating the impact of fear of missing out on impulsive buying patterns in young adults

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Abstract: *The rapid rise of social media and digital marketing has intensified the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), making it a significant driver of consumer behaviour, particularly among younger, digitally active individuals. This study investigates how FOMO influences purchasing decisions, impulsivity, and post-purchase emotions, with a focus on the role of social media platforms, influencer marketing, and urgency-based promotional strategies. Data were collected from 204 respondents through a structured survey, analyzing demographic characteristics, social media usage, and FOMO-related buying tendencies using descriptive statistics, graphs, and pie charts. Findings indicate that a majority of participants frequently experience FOMO, which leads to quick, unplanned, and sometimes unnecessary purchases. Social comparison and influencer endorsements emerged as major triggers, while limited-time offers, scarcity alerts, and exclusive deals significantly heightened purchase urgency. Emotional consequences such as regret, guilt, and dissatisfaction were also reported, highlighting the psychological impact of FOMO-driven consumption. The research is grounded in Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) and Social Comparison Theory (SCT), providing a framework to explain why individuals engage with content that exposes them to FOMO and how social observation intensifies impulsive behaviour. Despite limitations such as sample size, demographic concentration, and reliance on self-reported data, the study offers valuable insights for marketers to design ethical strategies that balance sales effectiveness with consumer well-being. The findings also provide a foundation for future research on moderating factors, longitudinal effects, and the long-term relationship between FOMO, consumer behaviour, and brand loyalty.*

Key Words: *Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Impulse Buying, Consumer Behavior, Influencer Marketing, Purchase decision.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

In today's digital era, the rapid growth of social media has transformed consumer interaction and purchasing behavior, particularly among young consumers. Continuous exposure to curated lifestyles, influencer-driven content, and trending products has intensified the experience of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). FOMO refers to the anxiety that others may be enjoying rewarding experiences or opportunities that one is missing, and this feeling is heightened by the real-time nature of digital platforms. As a result, FOMO has become a key psychological factor influencing impulsive buying behavior. Impulse buying involves unplanned and spontaneous purchasing decisions, which are now increasingly shaped by online stimuli rather than physical store environments. Influencer marketing, social media trends, and targeted advertisements create emotional excitement and urgency, encouraging consumers to act quickly. Marketing strategies such as limited-time offers, flash sales, countdown timers, and scarcity cues further intensify FOMO by presenting opportunities as exclusive or fleeting. These tactics often push consumers to make purchases without carefully evaluating necessity or

affordability. Young consumers, who are highly active on social media and more vulnerable to social comparison, are especially affected by FOMO-driven impulse buying. While such purchases may provide temporary satisfaction, they can also lead to regret, overspending, and reduced financial control. This study aims to examine the relationship between FOMO and impulse buying among young consumers, focusing on the influence of influencer marketing and scarcity-based promotional strategies, and to provide insights for more ethical and responsible digital marketing practices.

2. OBJECTIVES:

- To analyze the relationship between FOMO and impulse buying behavior among consumers.
- To examine the effect of FOMO on the impulsive buying patterns of young consumers.
- To assess how influencer marketing and limited-time offers intensify FOMO and influence youth's purchasing decisions.

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to understand how the FOMO affects impulse buying behavior, especially among young consumers who actively engage with social media and digital shopping platforms. It explores the psychological connection between FOMO and impulsive purchasing, focusing on how marketing tactics, such as influencer endorsements, social media trends, and limited-time promotions, amplify FOMO and influence buying decisions. The research is confined to young consumers within a specific geographic area (to be defined, e.g., city, state, or country) and uses primary data gathered through structured questionnaires. It specifically examines online and social media-driven purchases, excluding traditional in-store impulse buys. The study does not cover clinical psychological diagnoses, long-term behavioral addiction, or post-purchase satisfaction, but rather immediate behavioral reactions triggered by FOMO. The results aim to offer valuable insights for marketers, retailers, and policymakers on ethical digital marketing and the susceptibility of young consumers in highly stimulating online settings.

4. SIGNIFICANCE:

This study is highly relevant in today's digital marketplace, where young consumers are increasingly shaped by social media, influencers, and time-sensitive marketing tactics. By investigating how the FOMO influences impulsive buying behavior, the research offers critical insights into the psychological processes driving contemporary consumer choices. The findings will aid marketers and brands in understanding the ethical limits of leveraging FOMO in promotional strategies, encouraging the development of more responsible campaigns that avoid exploiting consumer vulnerabilities. For policymakers and consumer protection organizations, the study underscores the importance of raising awareness and safeguarding against manipulative digital marketing practices. From an academic perspective, the research enriches consumer behavior literature by linking psychological concepts like FOMO with actual purchasing behaviors. Additionally, it provides a valuable foundation for future research on youth consumption trends, online shopping behavior, and the effects of influencer marketing.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Recent literature shows that impulse buying and FOMO-driven consumption are increasingly shaped by emotional, psychological, and contextual mechanisms within digital and social commerce environments. Across platforms such as TikTok Shop, livestreaming commerce, blind-box retailing, influencer marketing, and even ICO investments, studies consistently demonstrate that stimuli like scarcity cues, time pressure, suspense, social influence, and influencer credibility activate internal states such as emotional arousal, curiosity, FOMO, brand passion, and perceived value, which in turn drive impulsive or compulsive purchasing. Research highlights that these effects are heterogeneous and moderated by individual differences including financial capacity, age, price consciousness, materialism, and susceptibility to obsessive brand passion. Importantly, while hedonic motivations and emotional engagement intensify impulse buying under urgency and uncertainty, utilitarian motives and financial competence can dampen such behavior. Several studies also uncover the darker side of these

mechanisms, linking FOMO and obsessive passion to post-purchase regret, anxiety, debt, and reduced sensitivity to quality signals, raising ethical and welfare concerns. Methodological advances, such as validated livestreaming experience scales and integrative reviews, call for more longitudinal, cross-cultural, and theory-driven research. Overall, the literature converges on the need for responsible marketing practices that balance commercial effectiveness with consumer well-being in increasingly immersive and psychologically persuasive digital marketplaces.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) explains that individuals actively choose media platforms to fulfill needs such as entertainment, information, and social interaction. In this study, UGT helps explain why consumers heavily engage with social media and how these platforms become key sources of FOMO triggers. Continuous exposure to influencer content, product promotions, and limited-time offers on platforms like Instagram and YouTube creates pressure to act quickly. As a result, UGT aligns with this research by explaining how media usage leads to FOMO-driven impulsive buying and post-purchase emotional responses.

Social Comparison Theory (SCT) explains that individuals evaluate themselves by comparing their lives and possessions with others. On social media, such comparisons are intensified due to curated content, influencer lifestyles, and visible peer consumption. In this study, SCT helps explain how exposure to others' purchases and experiences increases feelings of inadequacy and FOMO, leading to quick and impulsive buying decisions. The theory also explains post-purchase emotions such as regret and disappointment, as consumers compare their satisfaction with others. Thus, SCT supports understanding FOMO-driven purchases and changes in brand loyalty influenced by social comparison.

7. RESEARCH GAP:

Although impulse buying on digital platforms has been widely studied, limited research specifically examines FOMO as a central psychological driver of impulsive purchasing among young consumers. Existing studies often analyze factors such as scarcity, time pressure, influencer marketing, and emotional triggers in isolation, without integrating FOMO as a unifying mechanism. Moreover, the interaction between FOMO and digital marketing tactics like influencer endorsements, limited-time offers, and suspense-based promotions remains underexplored. Current literature also shows a narrow geographic focus, with most studies conducted in countries such as China, Vietnam, Indonesia, and the U.S., while Indian youth remain largely understudied despite their growing digital engagement. Additionally, the emotional, ethical, and long-term behavioral consequences of FOMO-driven consumption receive insufficient attention. These gaps highlight the need for a comprehensive, youth-focused study that integrates FOMO with digital marketing influences to better understand impulsive buying behavior.

8. METHODOLOGY:

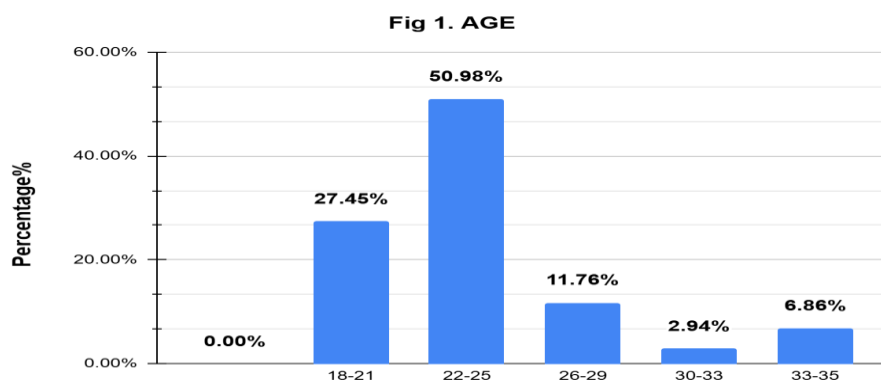
This study employs a quantitative research design using a structured online survey to examine the impact of FOMO on consumer behaviour, particularly in relation to social media engagement, influencer influence, and urgency-based marketing. Data were collected from 204 respondents, primarily aged 18–35, with most holding at least a Bachelor's degree, using convenience sampling. The questionnaire included multiple-choice and Likert-scale items on social media usage, impulsive buying, responses to scarcity and limited-time offers, and post-purchase emotions such as regret and satisfaction. Respondents could select multiple social media platforms to reflect real usage patterns. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and graphical representations, and interpreted within the framework of Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) and Social Comparison Theory (SCT). Limitations include reliance on self-reported data, potential response biases, a cross-sectional design, and limited generalizability due to non-random sampling.

9. DATA ANALYSIS:

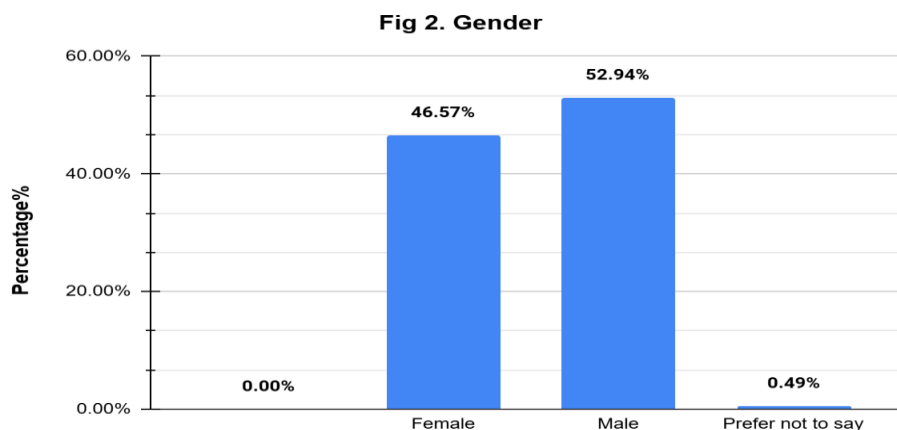
In the research paper "From FOMO to Checkout: Evaluating the Impact of Fear of Missing Out on Impulsive Buying Patterns in Young Adults," the data analysis examines respondents'

demographics, social media usage, and FOMO-driven purchasing behavior. The analysis focuses on how social comparison, influencer influence, scarcity cues, and urgency-based marketing contribute to impulsive and unplanned buying decisions. Descriptive statistics and graphical tools such as pie charts and bar graphs are used to identify key trends and patterns. Responses to Likert-scale and multiple-choice questions highlight the prevalence of FOMO, its impact on decision-making, and the associated psychological outcomes. The findings are interpreted through the lenses of Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) and Social Comparison Theory (SCT), offering insight into how media use and peer influence drive impulsive consumption. Overall, this section provides a behavioral and emotional understanding of FOMO, supporting later discussions on marketing practices, ethics, and consumer well-being.

9.1 In Fig 1, the age distribution of the 205 participants shows that the majority of respondents fall within the 22–25 age group, representing 50.98% of the sample. This indicates that more than half of the participants belong to early adulthood, which is typically the demographic most active on social media. The second largest group consists of respondents aged 18–21, accounting for 27.45%, highlighting strong participation from late adolescents as well. A smaller portion of the sample, 11.76%, belongs to the 26–29 age category. The remaining responses show limited representation from older age brackets, with 6.86% of participants aged 33–35 and only 2.94% falling within the 30–33 age group. Overall, the data suggests that the survey predominantly captured insights from younger individuals aged 18–25, who are generally more susceptible to digital trends and FOMO-driven behaviors.

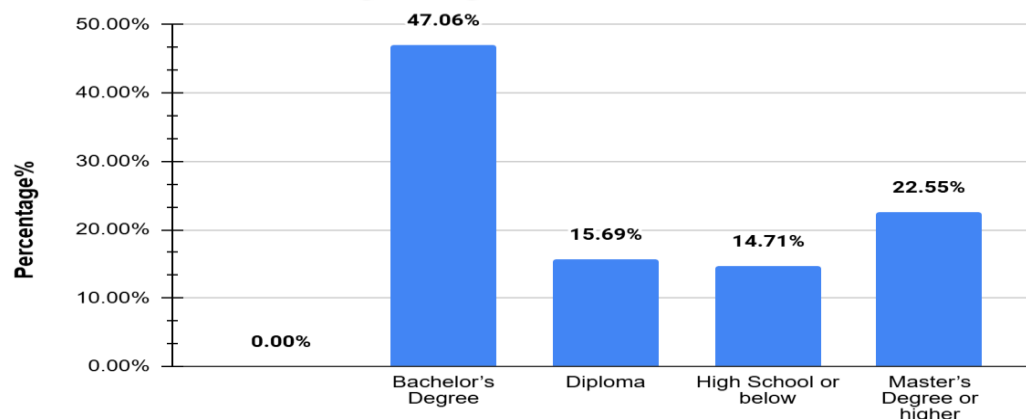


9.2 In Fig 2, the gender distribution of the 204 participants shows a balanced sample. Male respondents form the largest group, accounting for 108 participants (52.94%). Female respondents constitute 96 participants (46.57%), representing nearly half of the total sample. A very small portion of respondents (0.49%) selected the option “Prefer not to say.” The close proportions of male and female participants indicate that the survey reflects perspectives from both genders almost equally, allowing for more balanced insights into FOMO-related behaviors.



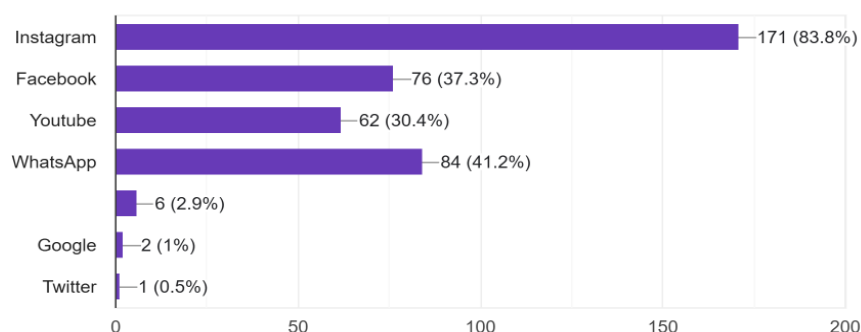
9.3 In Fig 3, the educational background of the respondents shows that the majority hold a Bachelor's degree, representing 47.06% of the sample. This is followed by Master's degree holders, who make up 22.55% of the participants, indicating a strong presence of individuals with higher academic qualifications. Additionally, 15.69% of respondents reported having a Diploma, while 14.71% have completed High School or below. Overall, the data suggests that most respondents possess at least an undergraduate-level education, which may contribute to higher awareness, digital engagement, and susceptibility to online influences such as FOMO.

Fig 3. Highest Education



9.4 In Fig 4, since respondents were allowed to select more than one option, the total percentage exceeds 100%, indicating that participants actively use multiple social media platforms. The analysis shows that Instagram is the most frequently used platform, selected by 171 respondents (83.8%), highlighting its strong dominance among the participants. WhatsApp is the second most used platform with 84 selections (41.2%), followed closely by Facebook, chosen by 76 respondents (37.3%), suggesting that communication and social networking apps remain widely preferred. YouTube was selected by 62 participants (30.4%), indicating moderate engagement with video-based content. A small group of respondents (9 participants) chose the "Others" category, mentioning platforms such as Twitter and Google, which shows minimal usage compared to the major platforms. Overall, the data suggests that participants rely primarily on visually engaging and communication-oriented platforms, with Instagram leading significantly.

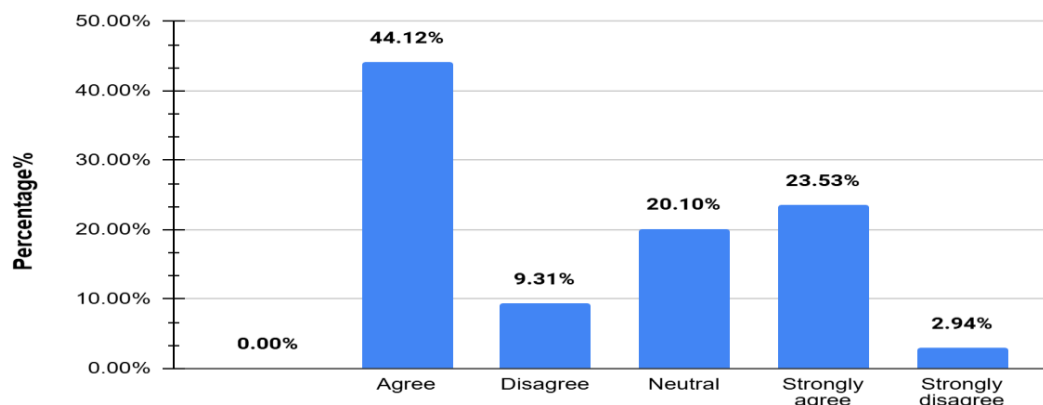
Which social media platforms do you use most frequently? (You may select more than one)
204 responses



9.5 In Fig 5, the responses to the statement "*I worry that I might miss out on good products if I don't buy them immediately*" show a strong tendency toward FOMO-driven urgency among participants. A significant proportion of respondents selected Agree (44.12%), indicating that nearly half of the

participants frequently experience the fear of losing out on desirable products. Additionally, 23.53% chose Strongly Agree, further reinforcing this pattern of heightened purchase anxiety. About 20.10% of respondents remained Neutral, suggesting uncertainty or inconsistency in experiencing such feelings. Meanwhile, 9.31% selected Disagree, showing that only a small portion do not perceive immediate purchase pressure. A very small minority chose Strongly Disagree (2.94%), reflecting minimal resistance to FOMO. Overall, the data indicates that a majority of respondents are emotionally affected by the fear of missing out, which significantly influences their impulsive buying tendency.

Fig 5. I worry that I might miss out on good products if I don't buy them immediately.



10. MAJOR FINDINGS:

- 1. High FOMO prevalence: Over 56% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they make unplanned or impulsive purchases to avoid missing out on products.
- 2. Social comparison impact: Around 57.4% of participants reported feeling the urge to buy products when they see others purchasing or enjoying them.
- 3. Influencer influence: 59.3% of respondents trust influencer recommendations enough to consider buying products immediately.
- 4. Effect of scarcity and urgency: Limited-time offers, exclusive deals, and low-stock alerts prompted 62–74% of respondents to make faster or impulsive purchases.
- 5. Trend-driven purchases: 68.6% of respondents reported feeling excited and buying products quickly when they see trendy or viral items on social media.

11. CONCLUSION:

The study demonstrates that the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a significant factor influencing consumer behaviour, particularly among young, digitally active individuals. Survey findings indicate that FOMO drives impulsive and unplanned purchases, with social comparison, influencer recommendations, and trend-driven content acting as major triggers. Scarcity and urgency-based marketing tactics, such as limited-time offers, low-stock alerts, and exclusive deals, further amplify impulsive buying tendencies. The research also shows that FOMO leads to quick decision-making without proper evaluation of alternatives, reflecting the strong psychological influence of social media and peer observation. These findings align with Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) and Social Comparison Theory (SCT), highlighting how consumers seek social validation, information, and entertainment, which in turn makes them vulnerable to FOMO-driven purchasing. While the majority of participants are highly susceptible to FOMO, the study also identifies a smaller segment of consumers who remain rational and less influenced by social pressure. Overall, the research emphasizes the ethical considerations for marketers, suggesting the need for strategies that balance commercial objectives with consumer well-being. Future research can explore moderating factors, long-term effects of FOMO on brand loyalty, and the psychological consequences of repeated impulsive purchases, providing a more comprehensive understanding of FOMO-driven consumer behaviour.

12. LIMITATIONS:

This study, while providing valuable insights into FOMO-driven consumer behaviour, has several limitations. The research relies on self-reported survey data, which may be subject to response biases, and the cross-sectional design captures behaviour at a single point in time, limiting the ability to observe changes over time. The use of convenience sampling and a sample concentrated in the 18–35 age group also limits generalizability to the broader population. Additionally, the study does not account for moderating factors such as income, product type, or cultural differences, which may influence susceptibility to FOMO. Future research could address these limitations by employing larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs to track behavioural changes over time, and experimental or mixed-method approaches to explore causal relationships between social media exposure, scarcity tactics, influencer marketing, and FOMO-driven purchasing. Researchers could also examine the long-term psychological and financial effects of FOMO and explore strategies for marketers to balance sales effectiveness with consumer well-being.

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Analysing The Classical Aesthetics & Alienation in Select K Vishwanath Films

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Abstract: *This research paper presents a detailed critical study of classical aesthetics and alienation in the cinema of K. Vishwanath, a seminal auteur of Indian and Telugu cinema whose films consistently foreground Indian classical art forms as central narrative and philosophical forces. Focusing on Sagara Sangamam (1983) and Swarna Kamalam (1988), the study examines how Vishwanath employs the aesthetic grammar of Indian classical dance, music, gesture, spatial composition, and visual rhythm to articulate the conflict between artistic idealism and social reality. Drawing upon Indian aesthetic theory, particularly Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra and Rasa Theory, alongside philosophical discussions of alienation and artistic identity, the paper analyses the psychological, emotional, and cultural struggles faced by artist protagonists negotiating personal ambition, inherited tradition, and the pressures of a modernising society. Through close textual and comparative analysis, the research demonstrates how Vishwanath's cinematic idiom—manifested through mise-en-scène, choreography, performance, sound design, and silence—functions not merely as a narrative device but as a sustained philosophical inquiry into the isolated self shaped by devotion to classical art. The study argues that in Vishwanath's cinema, classical aesthetics are not nostalgic ornaments but lived ethical practices that both enable self-realisation and produce social and emotional alienation. By reading Sagara Sangamam and Swarna Kamalam as companion texts, the paper highlights the evolution of Vishwanath's engagement with gender, mentorship, sacrifice, and reconciliation, ultimately positioning his work as a significant cinematic intervention that reaffirms the relevance of classical aesthetics in expressing artistic identity and the human condition within Indian cinema.*

Key Words: K. Vishwanath, Classical Aesthetics, Alienation, Rasa theory, Artistic identity

1. INTRODUCTION:

Cinema has evolved into one of the most influential artistic and cultural forms of the modern world, distinguished by its ability to synthesise narrative, visual imagery, performance, sound, rhythm, and symbolism into a unified expressive medium. Unlike purely literary or theatrical forms, cinema operates simultaneously on sensory, emotional, and intellectual levels, allowing it to engage audiences in complex reflections on identity, morality, history, and social change. Over time, cinema has transcended its initial status as popular entertainment to become a significant cultural text that records collective memory, negotiates ideological conflict, and articulates philosophical inquiry. As a result, film studies increasingly examines cinema not only as an industrial product but as an aesthetic and cultural practice embedded within specific historical and social contexts. Indian cinema represents one of the most expansive and heterogeneous film cultures in the world. Rather than functioning as a monolithic national cinema, it consists of multiple regional industries shaped by linguistic diversity, cultural specificity, and local performance traditions. Hindi cinema enjoys the widest global visibility, but regional cinemas such as Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali, and Marathi constitute the

experiential foundation of Indian cinematic culture. These industries have historically drawn upon mythology, folk traditions, classical music and dance, melodrama, and social realism, producing narrative forms that reflect indigenous cultural values while responding to changing political, economic, and technological conditions.

Within this pluralistic landscape, Telugu cinema occupies a distinctive position. Known for its emotional intensity, performative richness, and engagement with cultural heritage, Telugu cinema has long incorporated music and dance as central narrative elements. Mythological and devotional films, social dramas, and family-centred narratives have shaped its aesthetic identity. However, the late twentieth century, particularly the 1980s, witnessed growing tensions between tradition and modernity due to urbanisation, commercial pressures, and Western cultural influence. Classical performing arts increasingly risked marginalisation within popular culture, creating a context in which films engaging seriously with tradition acquired heightened cultural significance. This historical moment forms the background against which K. Vishwanath's cinema must be understood. K. Vishwanath emerges as a pivotal figure within Telugu cinema for his sustained and philosophically rigorous engagement with Indian classical aesthetics. Unlike mainstream filmmakers who often deploy song-and-dance sequences as decorative spectacle or narrative interruption, Vishwanath integrates classical music and dance into the very structure of storytelling. In his films, artistic practice is inseparable from character psychology, ethical conflict, and narrative progression. Dance and music function as modes of self-expression, moral reasoning, and spiritual inquiry, allowing characters to articulate emotions and values that remain unspoken in dialogue.

2. OBJECTIVES:

- To analyse the representation of classical dance as a cultural and narrative device
- To examine the construction of artistic identity in the protagonist
- To draw parallels between the narratives and visual strategies used by K Vishwanath
- To evaluate the role of music in dance segments reinforcing the artists' journey

3. SCOPE OF RESEARCH:

- Analyses four Indian advertising campaigns Ariel, Starbucks, Dabur Fem, and Tanishq to understand gender and inclusivity representation.
- Examines narrative structures, symbolic elements, emotional appeal, and cultural framing in each advertisement.
- Applies Social Cognitive Theory and Agenda-Setting Theory to interpret audience meaning-making and media influence.
- Studies audience reactions, including acceptance, resistance, and backlash influenced by sociopolitical factors.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH:

The significance of this study is limited to a focused textual and aesthetic analysis of these two films. While Vishwanath's oeuvre is extensive, Sagara Sangamam and Swarna Kamalam represent the most coherent and contrasting articulations of his engagement with classical dance and artistic identity. By concentrating on these works, the study aims to explore how classical aesthetics function as narrative structures, emotional frameworks, and ethical systems rather than merely as cultural motifs.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

1. Jeyasutha, S., & Kavitha, B. K. (2022). Anti-caste aesthetics and Dalit interventions in Indian cinema. *Litcrit: International Journal of Literary Criticism*, 48(1).

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373139231_Dalit_Cinema_The_Elevated_Alternative_Cinema_of_India

Dalits and elites belong to two different points of one pyramid, Dalits at the extreme bottom, and elites, the self-appointed groups claiming an upper, caste status, at the top of the socially unequal caste system. Cinema is a contemporary art form that upper, caste filmmakers' control. Popular cinema has never

adequately represented the Dalits, Adivasi (tribes) communities in cinema history and has deprecated and ignored the Dalit, Adivasi and other marginalized groups, who somehow were depicted as servants, sub-characters, and Adivasis dancing in the background. Notably, the South Indian film *Jai Bhim* (Tamil, 2021) has authentically led the alternative cinema movement in India. Before this, many Dalit artists have created a new path conveying on values of fraternity and equality. These alternative cinema makers belonging to the marginalised community come up from the regional cinema industries and attempt to represent Dalit, Adivasi more accurately in popular cinema and eliminate the misrepresentation of these communities. Similarly, prior to the Black cinema movement in America, the Hollywood cinema industry never adequately represented the Black community but created subsequently an alternative cinema movement to accurately represent black African Americans without a prejudicial perspective. Nowadays, Black cinema has become a significant part of Hollywood; many black artists are superstars and tremendously popular worldwide. Explicitly, south Indian cinema makers create space to make Dalit cinema, Adivasi, and other deprived groups portray their class, culture, and caste on the silver screen.

2. Sooraj, S. S., & Krishna, K. R. K. (2025). The politics and aesthetics of male homosexuality in Malayalam cinema: Contextualizing the film *Ka Bodyscapes*. *Journal of the History of Sexuality*.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379510629_The_Politics_and_Aesthetics_of_Male_Homosexuality_in_Malayalam_Cinema_Contextualizing_the_Film_Ka_Bodyscapes_2016

Focusing on the Malayalam film *Ka Bodyscapes* (2016), this article attempts to historically trace and critically engage with the representations of gay sexuality in Malayalam cinema from the South Indian state of Kerala. It interrogates how *Ka Bodyscapes* brought to the forefront hitherto unexplored visual dynamics of the gay male body and homoeroticism on screen while troubling the heterosexual dynamics of the Malayalam film industry. By situating this film within the history of representation of male homosexuality in Malayalam cinema and the changing regimes of queer politics and feminist interventions in Kerala in the last decade, the article argues how the film's radical visual representation of gay sexuality at the intersection of caste and religion problematizes the heterosexual family/state, thereby challenging the patriarchal masculinity that marginalizes women and sexual minorities in Kerala.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Thematic analysis is employed as a supporting methodological tool to organise and interpret recurring patterns of meaning across the two films. Rather than isolating themes mechanically, this study identifies how motifs such as alienation, artistic discipline, mentorship, sacrifice, reconciliation, and cultural inheritance emerge through narrative progression, performance style, music, and visual composition. Attention is paid to how these themes evolve across scenes and how they intersect with aesthetic form. Thematic analysis thus functions as a structuring device that connects close textual reading with broader philosophical interpretation, ensuring analytical coherence while allowing for comparative insight. By juxtaposing the two films, the study highlights the evolution and complexity of Vishwanath's cinematic vision rather than treating his work as ideologically uniform. The methodology acknowledges certain limitations. The study does not include audience reception analysis or empirical data on viewership, nor does it engage extensively with production economics or industrial factors. Its focus remains firmly on textual and aesthetic interpretation. However, these limitations are consistent with the study's aim of conducting an in-depth aesthetic and philosophical analysis rather than a sociological survey. Overall, the methodology provides a structured and theoretically grounded approach to examining how classical aesthetics and alienation operate within the selected films. By combining close textual analysis with aesthetic theory and comparative interpretation, the study seeks to produce a nuanced understanding of K. Vishwanath's cinema as a site where art, identity, and human experience intersect.

7. RESEARCH GAP:

While K. Vishwanath's films have been widely celebrated for their aesthetic richness and their role in preserving classical art forms, existing scholarship tends to focus either on his broader contribution to Telugu parallel cinema or on thematic elements such as social reform, disability, or

gender. However, there is limited critical inquiry that specifically examines how classical aesthetics function as a narrative and ideological framework in *Sagara Sangamam* and *Swarna Kamalam*, particularly in relation to the motif of alienation experienced by artists within modern socio-cultural contexts. Although both films portray the tension between tradition and modernity, scholarly work rarely interrogates how Vishwanath uses classical dance, music, and visual composition to articulate forms of emotional, cultural, and existential displacement. This gap becomes more apparent considering that the films occupy different temporal and artistic phases of the director's career, yet no comparative analysis exists that studies how aesthetic strategies evolve across these texts to express similar anxieties. Hence, there is a need for a focused study that connects classical aesthetics, artistic identity, and alienation within these two films to offer a deeper understanding of Vishwanath's cinematic philosophy.

8. METHODOLOGY:

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research methodology grounded in film studies, cultural analysis, and aesthetic theory. The primary objective of the methodology is to examine how classical aesthetics function as narrative, emotional, and philosophical structures within the selected films. Rather than employing quantitative measures or audience-based surveys, the research prioritises close textual analysis, interpretive reading, and theoretical contextualisation in order to understand the deeper aesthetic and ideological mechanisms operating in the cinema of K. Vishwanath.

Qualitative methodology is particularly appropriate for this study because the research questions are concerned with meaning, experience, representation, and emotional effect rather than statistical generalisation. Classical aesthetics, alienation, and artistic identity are abstract concepts that manifest through visual composition, performance, music, and narrative structure. These elements require interpretive engagement rather than empirical measurement. The films are therefore treated as cultural texts that encode philosophical ideas through aesthetic form.

The study is based on purposive sampling. Two films—*Sagara Sangamam* (1983) and *Swarna Kamalam* (1988)—have been deliberately selected because they represent the most refined and contrasting articulations of K. Vishwanath's engagement with classical dance and artistic identity. Both films foreground Indian classical dance as a central narrative element, yet they differ significantly in tone, gender perspective, narrative resolution, and treatment of alienation. This makes them ideal for comparative analysis. The selection is not intended to be representative of Vishwanath's entire oeuvre, but rather to provide depth and specificity in analysing how classical aesthetics operate within his cinema.

9. FILM-WISE ANALYSIS – COMPARATIVE STUDY:

9.1 Classical Aesthetics as Narrative Structure:

In both *Sagara Sangamam* and *Swarna Kamalam*, classical aesthetics form the structural backbone of the narrative. Dance and music are not inserted as performative interludes but are embedded into the progression of character, conflict, and resolution. In *Sagara Sangamam*, classical dance represents an absolute ideal. The protagonist Balu's life is organised entirely around his devotion to art, and the narrative unfolds as a series of confrontations between his aesthetic integrity and a society unwilling to accommodate it. The film's pacing mirrors the discipline of classical dance, alternating between moments of intense rhythmic movement and prolonged stillness, thereby aligning narrative rhythm with aesthetic form. *Swarna Kamalam*, by contrast, employs classical aesthetics as a gradual organising principle rather than an absolute starting point. Meenakshi initially exists outside the disciplined structure of classical dance, viewing it as an oppressive inheritance rather than a source of meaning. As the narrative progresses, the film increasingly adopts the symmetry, order, and emotional clarity associated with classical aesthetics. This shift is reflected in the visual composition and choreography, which become progressively refined. Thus, while *Sagara Sangamam* begins with aesthetic immersion and moves toward dissolution, *Swarna Kamalam* begins with aesthetic resistance and moves toward integration.



9.2 Artistic Conflict & Alienation:

Alienation constitutes the central thematic concern linking the two films, though it manifests differently in each. In *Sagara Sangamam*, alienation is external and social. Balu's uncompromising adherence to classical ideals isolates him from institutions, audiences, and personal relationships. He is marginalised economically, misunderstood emotionally, and physically deteriorated by neglect. His alienation is reinforced visually through solitary framing, empty performance spaces, and decaying environments that contrast sharply with the purity of his art. Society's failure to recognise his talent transforms artistic devotion into suffering.

In *Swarna Kamalam*, alienation is primarily internal and psychological. Meenakshi's estrangement stems from her emotional distance from classical tradition and her resentment toward the sacrifices demanded by artistic discipline. Unlike Balu, she is not rejected by society but by her own reluctance to engage with inherited cultural responsibility. Her alienation is expressed through casual body language, fragmented movement, and an initial disinterest in formal training. As she gradually reconnects with classical aesthetics, this alienation diminishes, suggesting that reconciliation with tradition can restore emotional balance.



9.3 Gender & Identity:

Gender plays a crucial role in shaping artistic identity and experiences of alienation in the two films. *Sagara Sangamam* presents a male artist whose suffering is framed as tragic and heroic. Balu's physical decline and eventual death elevate his artistic commitment to a sacrificial ideal, aligning masculinity with endurance and self-denial. His identity is inseparable from his role as an artist, leaving little space for alternative forms of fulfilment. *Swarna Kamalam* offers a contrasting gendered perspective. Meenakshi's journey emphasises choice, transformation, and agency. While she initially resists discipline, her eventual embrace of classical dance is framed as empowerment rather than obligation. Her artistic identity develops alongside emotional maturity and relational harmony. Vishwanath thus reconfigures artistic devotion through a female subjectivity that allows for integration rather than annihilation, suggesting a more inclusive and adaptive vision of classical art.



9.4 Resolution:

The resolution of each film encapsulates its philosophical stance. *Sagara Sangamam* concludes with transcendence through legacy, suggesting that individual suffering attains meaning only through artistic continuity. *Swarna Kamalam* resolves through personal integration, affirming life, relationship, and self-realisation. Together, the films present a balanced vision of classical art as both demanding sacrifice and offering fulfilment.



9.5 Musical Score

Music and dance serve as primary vehicles for emotional expression in both films. Ilaiyaraaja's compositions articulate psychological states that dialogue alone cannot convey. In *Sagara Sangamam*, music often intensifies emotional isolation, using silence and minimalism to reflect despair. Dance sequences externalise inner turmoil, transforming suffering into aesthetic expression. In *Swarna Kamalam*, music facilitates emotional connection and growth. Melodic progression parallels Meenakshi's internal transformation, and dance becomes a language of reconciliation rather than struggle. The comparative use of music and movement reveals Vishwanath's nuanced understanding of aesthetics as emotional mediation.



10. THEMATIC PARAMETERS:

Parameter	Analytical Focus	Relevance to Themes
Framing	Balance, symmetry, spatial arrangement of characters and objects	Visual metaphor for harmony or alienation
Space & Setting	Symbolic use of performance spaces (stage, river, temple)	Cultural identity and psychological state
Body Language & Gesture	Facial expressions, dance poses, gaze direction	Convey <i>bhava</i> and emotional intensity
Music & Silence	Background music, diegetic sounds, pauses	Sound as emotional rhythm; silence as alienation

11. DISCUSSION:

This study examined how classical aesthetics and alienation function as interconnected thematic and philosophical concerns in the cinema of K. Vishwanath, with specific reference to *Sagara Sangamam* and *Swarna Kamalam*. Using a qualitative and comparative framework grounded in Indian aesthetic theory, the research demonstrates that classical dance and music in Vishwanath's films operate not as decorative elements but as ethical and narrative systems that shape character psychology and cinematic meaning. One of the key findings of this study is that classical aesthetics structure narrative form. In both films, dance and music organise emotional rhythm and narrative progression. *Sagara Sangamam* aligns its tragic arc with the discipline and austerity of classical practice, presenting art as an absolute ideal that demands sacrifice. In contrast, *Swarna Kamalam* employs a gradual aesthetic refinement that mirrors the heroine's internal transformation, suggesting that classical art can be integrated into everyday life without annihilating personal fulfilment.

Alienation emerges as a central consequence of artistic devotion, though it manifests differently across the two films. In *Sagara Sangamam*, alienation is external and irreversible, as Balu's uncompromising artistic integrity isolates him socially and emotionally. The film critiques societal indifference toward classical art and exposes the human cost of cultural neglect. In *Swarna Kamalam*, alienation is internal and transitional. Meenakshi's estrangement from tradition stems from emotional resistance rather than rejection, and her eventual reconciliation with classical dance restores balance rather than demanding sacrifice. Gender plays a crucial role in shaping artistic identity. Balu's journey constructs artistic devotion through masculine endurance and martyrdom, culminating in transcendence through legacy. Meenakshi's trajectory, however, foregrounds choice, agency, and emotional growth, offering a more sustainable and inclusive model of artistic engagement. This contrast indicates an evolution in Vishwanath's cinematic philosophy. Mentorship and music further reinforce this vision. The absence of timely mentorship in *Sagara Sangamam* intensifies alienation, while its presence in *Swarna Kamalam* enables continuity and renewal. Ilaiyaraaja's music functions as a co-authorial voice, articulating emotional states through raga, rhythm, and silence. In conclusion, Vishwanath's cinema affirms that while classical art may generate alienation, it also preserves cultural memory and offers profound insight into artistic identity and the human condition.

12. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, K. Vishwanath's cinema offers a philosophically rich engagement with classical aesthetics as a living ethical practice rather than a nostalgic cultural form. Through *Sagara Sangamam* and *Swarna Kamalam*, Vishwanath demonstrates how devotion to classical art shapes identity, produces alienation, and enables transformation. By integrating Indian aesthetic theory with cinematic form, his films reaffirm the relevance of classical traditions in articulating modern artistic dilemmas. Ultimately,

Vishwanath's work underscores the enduring capacity of cinema to preserve cultural memory while critically reflecting on the human condition within a changing social landscape.

13. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH:

- The study is limited to four selected advertising campaigns and does not cover the full range of gender-inclusive ads in India.
- Analysis is interpretive and qualitative, which may not capture the diversity of audience perceptions across demographics.
- Audience responses are based on secondary data and available discourse rather than primary large-scale surveys.
- Sociopolitical reactions to advertisements can evolve over time, limiting the study's ability to capture long-term shifts.

14. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- **Audience Reception and Interpretation**
Future studies can incorporate audience reception analysis through interviews, focus groups, and surveys to understand how different viewer groups interpret classical aesthetics, artistic struggle, and alienation in K. Vishwanath's films, especially in the context of contemporary viewing cultures and streaming platforms.
- **Broader Auteur and Filmography Study**
Further research may extend the analytical framework to a larger body of K. Vishwanath's films or include other Indian filmmakers who foreground classical arts, enabling a wider comparative auteur-based evaluation of aesthetic philosophy and narrative treatment.
- **Socio-Cultural and Industrial Context Analysis**
Further work can examine production contexts, cultural institutions, patronage systems, and policy environments that influence the representation of classical arts in cinema, offering an industry-oriented perspective.
- **Cross-Cultural Comparative Frameworks**
The topic can be expanded through comparative studies with international art-house and performance-centered cinema to position Vishwanath's aesthetic approach within global cinematic traditions dealing with art, identity, and isolation.

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Storytelling Through Celebrity Endorsements: A Case Study of BTS in Samsung's 'Galaxy Z Flip 4' Campaign

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Abstract: *Celebrity endorsements have become a major feature of contemporary advertising, particularly within digital platforms where visual storytelling and lifestyle-based presentation are widely used. As brands compete for attention in fast-moving media environments, they increasingly rely on short narrative moments, coordinated aesthetics and recognisable public figures to shape how products are perceived. The current research explores the campaign of Samsung's Galaxy Z Flip 4 which includes BTS as the endorsers and aims to analyze the relationship between the meaning created by the promotional materials and the narrative cues, the visual design and the presence of famous endorsers. These items were chosen since they exemplify the main aspects of the campaign and provide various formats for the investigation of the product presentation. A qualitative content analysis was carried out to identify patterns related to storytelling techniques, creative decisions and the portrayal of both BTS and the device. The approach emphasised careful description of what appears in the visuals, scenes and expressions across the three formats to understand how this campaign tried to appeal to audiences while covering the celebrity and the product through a storytelling style. The purpose of the study is to add to existing discussions about how celebrity-based advertising constructs a product's identity through mood, colour, tone and small lifestyle cues rather than detailed explanation. It also contributes to literature on digital advertising and pop-culture branding by examining a campaign that brings together coordinated visual themes, relaxed portrayals of endorsers and a smartphone positioned as part of everyday style. This research provides an understanding of the modern promotional content's blending of the celebrity's presence with promotion of the product.*

Key Words: *Celebrity Endorsement, Storytelling, Advertising, BTS, Samsung*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Advertising has changed a great deal over the past few decades. Much of this shift happened as digital media slowly became part of everyday routines. Earlier forms of advertising were mostly limited to television commercials, newspaper columns and radio spots. These formats left very little room for flexible or experimental communication because each message had to fit into tight time limits or narrow print spaces. As a result, advertisers relied heavily on straightforward explanations or repetitive slogans to get their point across. One of the approaches that grew rapidly in this environment is storytelling. Instead of explaining a product feature by feature, many advertisements now show small scenes, simple actions or everyday moments. The product is presented in the midst of a situation that people will immediately identify. Celebrity endorsement is another important factor in advertising of the present day. Most of the audience members are familiar with the stars either through their music, performances or public appearances. The mere presence of a celebrity in the ad gives it a certain meaning or tone that is hard to resist. In recent years, pop culture — especially global pop culture — has become a major

influence on branding. Jin (2018) explains that global fandoms stay highly active online, sharing posts, reacting to content and spreading information quickly. K-pop is one of the clearest examples of this trend. BTS, in particular, has gained a large following from many countries. The Galaxy Z Flip 4 campaign featuring BTS has been widely circulated, but the materials have not been examined closely in academic work. Without studying the content directly, it becomes difficult to understand how the campaign communicates ideas about the device and how it builds its lifestyle-focused identity. This study addresses this gap by analysing the advertisement film, the photoshoot series and the short videos from the campaign.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Phillips and McQuarrie (2010) explored how advertising gradually adopted more visual and expressive styles once digital spaces became part of daily life. Their work looks at how people respond to images, quick cuts and mood-based scenes rather than long explanations. They describe how viewers piece together meaning even when the narrative structure is loose, noting that people rely on small cues—movement, gesture, tone—to interpret what an advertisement is trying to communicate. **Escalas and Bettman (2005)** studied narrative processing in consumer psychology and discussed how even very small traces of a story influence the way people view an advertisement. They found that individuals often insert their own experiences into the gaps left by minimal storytelling. This happens even when the story is incomplete. Their research comes from experiments where participants reacted more favourably to messages that made them imagine a setting or moment, rather than simply reading about a product. **Jin and Phua (2014)** studied online fan communities and the way they participate in spreading content. Unlike passive audiences, fan groups often share, remix, caption and reinterpret branded material on their own. Jin and Phua explain that this behaviour strengthens the sense of belonging within the fan community itself. They also found that fans respond not only to the product but also to how the product relates to the celebrity they support. **Oh and Lee (2019)** investigated the role of culture in digital media and that was part of the issue, how the artists can influence not only music but also beauty, fashion, and online aesthetics trends through their works. Their research describes how certain pop culture figures unintentionally become reference points for young people's style choices. According to their findings, social media amplifies these influences because fans constantly post images, edits and commentary. The authors highlight that visual elements—colours, lighting, gestures—carry as much cultural meaning as lyrics or choreography. **Shankar and Balasubramanian (2009)** explore smartphone marketing and the shift in branding from using heavy technical descriptions. Their research explains that the transition of smartphones from luxury items to everyday objects made lifestyle advertising more prevalent. The authors observe that the public is more inclined to respond to brief scenarios portraying use of the mobile phone than to lengthy text or specifications. The authors also mention that the evaluation of smartphones takes into account the position of being held, lying on a table, or in a casual use state. **Kim and Kim (2021)** investigated the impact of design and color on the perception of smartphones by younger customers. Their research indicates that, for a considerable part of the users, a device's design conveys something about the person's taste, identity, and even social confidence. According to the authors, color is usually the first thing that people notice when they are using a device. Bright or unique color options can give a device a more expressive character. Digital audiences have been studied in terms of their responses to online advertising by **Campbell and Grimm (2019)**. It was revealed that the netizens moving across their timelines or feeds usually do not pay attention to anything that smells heavy or obtrusive. The advertisers came up with the ideas of simpler visuals, slower pacing and ads that matched the online browsing rhythm. Furthermore, the authors state the importance of familiar music in capturing the audience's attention; a song that activates recognition leads to a longer pause by the viewer. **Park (2019)** studies Samsung's general advertising style and notes that the brand often uses soft colours, minimal sets and visually coordinated scenes. According to Park, Samsung frequently presents its smartphones as part of a modern lifestyle rather than as technology-centred objects. The researcher points out that Samsung tends to pair its phones with calm lighting, gentle movement and understated styling.

The objectives of the present study are:

- To identify the storytelling techniques and creative elements used in Samsung's Galaxy Z Flip 4 campaign featuring BTS.
- To examine how BTS's celebrity image is presented and used within the campaign materials.
- To understand how the campaign shows the Galaxy Z Flip 4 by highlighting specific features, qualities and product characteristics.

3. METHODOLOGY:

A qualitative research design was chosen because the study is based on interpreting the content of the materials. It is not about numbers or measuring reactions. Instead, the goal is to describe how storytelling, celebrity presentation and product features appear across different parts of the campaign. Content analysis was used in a simple, descriptive way. This approach made it possible to break down the materials and look for elements that relate to the three research objectives. The study used three main campaign materials. The first was the main advertisement film, which showed BTS members interacting with the phone. The second was the Bora Purple photoshoot series released by Samsung. These images focused on the design of the phone and the group's styling. The third set included three short videos posted on X (formerly Twitter) where BTS members talk briefly about how they use the Galaxy Z Flip 4. These materials were chosen because they cover the main parts of the Galaxy Z Flip 4 promotional content released during the Galaxy Unpacked 2022 period.

3.1 Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis was done in several steps. Each material was viewed or examined multiple times, and notes were written after each round. The focus was on what could be seen or heard directly in the content without adding assumptions. The notes were grouped according to the three objectives of the study.

For Objective 1, the analysis looked at storytelling techniques and creative elements. This included things like colours, settings, small scenes, expressions, music and the general mood of the materials. The goal was to see how the campaign used these elements to create a certain style. For Objective 2, the study paid attention to how BTS appeared in the campaign. This meant looking at their styling, the way they were shown in the visuals, how they spoke in the short clips and any traits that seemed to come through in their scenes. This helped in understanding how the celebrity image was used. For Objective 3, the analysis examined how the Galaxy Z Flip 4 was shown. This included the features that were highlighted, how often the phone appeared, what actions were shown with the phone and how the design was presented. The aim was to see how the product was positioned within the campaign.

To organise the findings clearly, nine tables were created. Each objective has three tables: one for the advertisement film, one for the photoshoot series and one for the short videos. This made it easier to compare how each material presented similar elements. The steps of the analysis were simple. The materials were watched or viewed slowly. Notes were written in plain language. These notes were then sorted based on the objectives. After this, the information was placed into the nine tables. The tables helped in keeping the findings clear and separate, which is useful for a study with multiple materials.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Table 1.1: Storytelling and Creative Elements – Advertisement Film

Category	Observation
Short scenes	The ad uses short, quick transitions between moments.
Everyday actions	The members appear in casual, natural activities.
Mood through music	"Yet To Come" plays softly, setting a gentle tone.
Colour theme	Bora Purple appears throughout the video.

Table 1.2: Storytelling and Creative Elements – Photoshoot Series

Category	Observation
Calm visual tone	Soft lighting and clean backgrounds create a relaxed mood.
Consistent colour	Purple tones remain steady across images.
Simple posing	Members maintain comfortable, minimal posing.
Natural placement of phone	The phone blends smoothly into the frame.

Table 1.3: Storytelling and Creative Elements – Twitter Videos

Category	Observation
Personal tone	Each member speaks directly about their own usage.
Short explanations	Clips are brief and easy to follow.
Matching visuals	Purple-themed backgrounds maintain consistency.
Soft music	Light music keeps the tone gentle.

Table 2.1: Presentation of Celebrity Image – Advertisement Film

Category	Observation
Familiar presence	Members appear calm and relatable.
Light expressions	Expressions remain friendly and natural.
Casual use	They handle the phone with ease.
Short appearances	Each member appears briefly but repeatedly.

Table 2.2: Presentation of Celebrity Image – Photoshoot Series

Category	Observation
Gentle expressions	Soft, understated expressions appear across photos.
Calm styling	Simple outfits and relaxed posing.
Everyday placement	The phone fits into the setting naturally.
Subtle personality	Each member shows mild personal expression.

Table 2.3: Presentation of Celebrity Image – Twitter Videos

Category	Observation
Direct communication	Members speak directly to viewers.
Personal examples	They share daily ways they use the phone.
Relaxed gestures	Gestures appear casual and unrehearsed.
Friendly tone	Videos feel warm and conversational.

Table 3.1: Product Representation – Advertisement Film

Category	Observation
Folding action	The open-close motion is repeated.
Quick demonstrations	Short clips show simple uses of the phone.
Colour emphasis	Bora Purple stands out visually.
Design focus	Close shots highlight the size and shape.

Table 3.2: Product Representation – Photoshoot Series

Category	Observation
Colour match	The phone's colour matches outfits and backgrounds.
Accessory appeal	The phone appears as part of the styling.
Shape visibility	Both folded and unfolded forms appear.
Soft placement	The phone blends into the composition.

Table 3.3: Product Representation – Twitter Videos

Category	Observation
Real examples	Members describe daily uses.
Visible design	The phone is clearly shown in their hands.
Simple explanation	Clips mention use, not technical details.
Calm setting	Minimal backgrounds keep focus on the device.

5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

5.1 Summary of the Study:

This study examined how Samsung's Galaxy Z Flip 4 campaign featuring BTS used visuals, storytelling patterns and relaxed celebrity presence to communicate the identity of the phone. Instead of measuring audience responses, the study focused on the content itself, looking closely at the advertisement film, the Bora Purple photoshoot series and the three short videos in which individual BTS members spoke about their use of the device. The analysis was performed very carefully, it consisted of viewing and coding cues like expressions, actions, colours, angles, and verbal lines in a simple way, this process was repeated several times. Overall, the study found that the campaign depends heavily on coordinated visuals, soft tones, and a strong lifestyle orientation. Instead of explaining the phone repeatedly, the materials rely on calm scenes, colour consistency and the relaxed presence of BTS to build a sense of familiarity around the device.

5.2 Major Findings:

5.2.1 Findings for Objective 1: Storytelling and Creative Elements:

Across all three materials, the campaign uses a form of storytelling built around short moments rather than long plotlines. The advertisement film moves quickly from one scene to another, showing the phone in use without calling attention to technical features. The use of BTS's "Yet To Come" as background music adds emotional softness and gives the ad a sense of continuity. The Bora Purple

theme holds everything together visually, becoming a central part of the campaign's personality. In the photoshoot, the tone shifts towards something quieter. The scenes are built around soft lighting, minimal backdrops and calm expressions. There is no explicit narrative, but the repetition of colours, poses and styling creates a sense of consistency. The short videos add a more personal layer. Each member speaks directly to the camera and talks about the phone in a simple, direct way. The storytelling in these videos comes from the members sharing small, ordinary habits. This makes the product feel approachable rather than distant. Across all materials, the campaign stays away from technical language. The visual tone and small actions do the work of communicating mood and identity. The storytelling is minimal but deliberate, using atmosphere instead of plot to shape the viewer's impression.

5.2.2 Findings for Objective 2: Presentation of BTS:

BTS are presented in a very natural and approachable way throughout the campaign. Unlike many celebrity-driven campaigns that use dramatic poses or heavily stylised scenes, these materials show the members in relaxed settings. Their expressions are soft, their styling is simple, and their gestures appear unforced. In the advertisement film, each member appears briefly but consistently. Their presence adds warmth to the scenes without overshadowing the phone. They appear as themselves rather than as exaggerated celebrity figures. This choice keeps the overall tone grounded. The photoshoot presents a subtle version of each member's personality. The gentle lighting and simple outfits help maintain a calm feel. The members are neither exaggerated nor overly styled, which makes the photos relatable and aesthetically pleasing. The short videos reveal the most personality. Because the members speak about how they personally use the phone, the clips feel close to everyday life. When RM talked about uploading a photo on one of the social media platforms and Jimin explained his everyday use of the gadget, it was really like they were talking about their very own devices. The whole presentation of the endorsement seemed so real and it was through this that the viewer's acceptance of the bond between the BTS and the product became more manageable.

5.2.3 Findings for Objective 3: Representation of the Galaxy Z Flip 4:

The phone is shown primarily through its design, colour and ease of use. The advertisement film repeats the folding action several times, using the motion as a visual highlight. The Bora Purple colour also stands out, becoming a recognisable feature of the device. In the photoshoot, the phone appears almost like an accessory. The matching colours and simple backgrounds help the device blend into the scene. Rather than being shown as a piece of technology, it is treated as a part of the members' style or personal expression. The short videos present the most practical side of the phone. Each member mentions a small detail, such as the convenience of taking photos or how compact the phone feels in daily use. These examples are brief but effective because they come from personal habits rather than promotional lines. Across all formats, the phone is integrated naturally rather than displayed aggressively. The focus remains on how it fits into everyday life, visually and practically. This supports Samsung's broader strategy of framing the Galaxy Z Flip series as a lifestyle product rather than a purely technical device.

6. SUGGESTIONS:

Based on this analysis, the successful and appealing parts of a global celebrity endorsement can be understood. Samsung created a campaign that is consistent in tone, visual identity and mood. The Bora Purple colour theme serves as the main link across all materials, tying the advertisement film, photoshoot series and short videos into one cohesive message. The use of BTS is central to the campaign's impact. Their relaxed presence, natural expressions and simple messaging help create a sense of warmth and approachability. The campaign does not rely on long explanations of the phone's technical abilities. Instead, it uses small scenes, everyday gestures and soft visuals to build an image of the Galaxy Z Flip 4 as a product connected to personal expression, convenience and style. The foldable design is shown clearly through repeated shots, and the colour theme reinforces the phone's identity. Overall, the campaign leans heavily on lifestyle cues rather than specifications. This approach helps position the phone within a youth-centred digital culture where visuals, tone and personality often matter more than technical detail.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

This study focused only on the materials released publicly during the Galaxy Unpacked 2022 period. Some additional promotional content may exist, but it was not included. The analysis is interpretive, and a different researcher might notice other cues or emphasise different aspects. The study also does not measure how audiences reacted to the campaign. It does not evaluate effectiveness, recall or purchase intentions. These would require other methods such as surveys, interviews or experiments. Additionally, the study does not compare this campaign with earlier or later Samsung campaigns, or with campaigns featuring other celebrities. It also does not examine regional variations. The findings therefore remain limited to the three selected materials.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

Future studies could explore how audiences interpret celebrity endorsements from global groups like BTS. Since BTS has fans in many countries, it would be valuable to see whether different groups respond to the same campaign differently. Another possibility is to analyze Samsung's BTS collaboration vis-a-vis its other celebrity partnerships or to assess Samsung's strategy against the campaigns of rival brands. Moreover, the examination of the impact of lifestyle-oriented smartphone advertising over the long run would be beneficial. Follow-up research could explore whether these visual choices affect how people remember the product weeks or months later. Surveys of the audience, whether they are BTS fans or the general public can be done to ascertain the exact factors that impact viewers of the marketing materials. Since this study looked only at content, future research may include audience studies, interviews or online comment analysis. These methods could show whether viewers actually connect the meanings suggested in the campaign with their own perceptions of the phone.

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Integrating QR Codes in Print Advertising: A Study of Print and Digital Media Convergence

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ABSTRACT: *In today's world, communication has become a powerful tool to connect people through both traditional and digital ways. Advertisers wish to make print ads such as newspapers, magazines, posters, and brochures, more engaging and interesting. One of the easiest way to do this is by using QR codes. This research will explore how QR codes help can print ads connect with online content. When people scan a QR code, they can instantly open a website, watch a video, check a brand's social media, or access a special offer. This creates a smooth connection between the print world and the digital world. The study will look at how QR codes help these two mediums work together and how this influences the effectiveness of print advertisements. It will also examine how people actually respond to QR codes. Whether they notice it, whether they choose to scan it, and if scanning the code makes them more interested in the ad. The research will follow a quantitative approach and aims to understand whether QR codes can make print ads more engaging and meaningful at a time when communication is shifting online.*

KEY WORDS: *QR Codes, Print Advertising, Digital Engagement, Consumer Engagement, Interactive Advertising, Media Convergence.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

In today's world, the way people share and receive information is constantly changing. Digital platforms like websites, social media, and mobile apps exist alongside traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, posters, and brochures. Advertisers are therefore looking for simple and creative ways to connect print and digital media. One tool that helps bridge this gap is the QR code, which links printed content to online platforms. Earlier, print advertisements were one-way, allowing people only to read the message. Today, audiences expect interaction, quick information, and easy access to brands. QR codes make print ads more engaging, but audience response to them is still unclear. This study uses a quantitative method to understand audience behaviour.

2. OBJECTIVES:

- To investigate the effectiveness of QR codes in Print Ads.
- To study the role of QR codes in print advertisements on increasing audience engagement.
- To study the impact of QR codes in print advertisements on brand loyalty.

3. SIGNIFICANCE:

This study is important for both businesses and consumers because it shows how QR codes in print ads can increase engagement and influence choices. QR codes help connect print media with the digital world, making ads more interactive. Print ads may not always get enough attention, but adding a QR code gives readers an easy way to learn more about a product and even make a purchase. QR

codes also save time by giving instant access to information without typing long links. Overall, this study helps advertisers, improves the consumer experience, and explains how print and digital media can work together effectively.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

In the research document named "The Expectations of Quick Response (QR) Codes in Print Media: An Empirical Data Research Anthology" written by Ali Probst, a thorough summary of previously published papers and primary data about QR codes in marketing is given. Probst looks into the features, advantages, and disadvantages of QR codes, and at the same time, he talks about the future of the connection between print and digital media. According to a survey conducted among 44 college students, one of the findings of the study is that even though the awareness of QR codes is quite high, the actual usage of it is very low due to such factors as technological barriers and lack of clear incentives. (Probst, 2012)

The research paper titled "Motive and Attitude to Use QR Code as an Advertising and Publicity Media: An Empirical Study" by Seohee Kang & Hwayeol Choi investigates how different smartphone users' lifestyles (e.g., success-oriented, social-oriented, family-oriented, impulse-driven, and careful purchasers) influence their motivations for using QR codes in advertising. The authors find that these lifestyle types significantly shape users' motives for scanning QR codes and their overall attitude toward QR-based marketing. Their findings suggest that advertisers can tailor QR-code campaigns to different consumer segments to increase effectiveness. (Kang and Choi, 2019)

The research paper titled "The Curious Versus the Overwhelmed: Factors Influencing QR Codes Scan Intention" by Shintaro Okazaki, Angeles Navarro, Prokriti Mukherji & Kirk Plangger investigates how curiosity, visual design complexity, and perceived fit influence consumers' intentions to scan QR codes in advertisements. The study finds that highly curious individuals are more likely to engage with complex visual ads, while less curious users may feel overwhelmed unless there is a strong alignment between the QR code and the brand. The paper highlights that balancing visual complexity with meaningful brand integration is key to maximizing QR-code engagement. (Okazaki, Navarro, Mukherjee and Plangger, 2019)

The research paper titled "Effectiveness of Pull-Based Print Advertising with QR Codes: Role of Consumer Involvement and Advertisement Appeal" by Rohit Trivedi, Thorsten Teichert & Dirk Hardeck examines how the presence of QR codes in print ads interacts with consumers' involvement level (high vs. low) and ad appeal (emotional vs. informational) to influence different stages of the decision-making process. They find that QR codes paired with emotional appeals work best for low-involvement products to drive purchase intention, while informational appeals are more effective with high-involvement products. The study also warns against using QR codes indiscriminately. Marketers should carefully design print campaigns based on the product and ad context. (Trivedi, Teichert and Hardeck, 2019)

The research paper titled "QR Code Utilisation in Print Publication by Readers" by Athma B Nath , Titto Varghese investigates how readers use QR codes embedded in print media and whether their usage differs by gender. It finds that overall awareness of QR-code technology is high, and there is no significant gender difference in how often men and women use it. The most common uses are for accessing additional information and entertainment, while less frequent uses include signing up for subscriptions, using discount offers, or facilitating reading assistance. The study suggests that QR codes add depth to print content by linking to richer or multimedia content, which encourages more interactive reading. (Nath, 2020)

The report titled "Analyzing QR Code Engagement & Effectiveness in Print Ads" by MRI-Simmons provides an in-depth analysis of over 85,000 magazine ads to understand how QR codes are actually used and scanned by readers. It shows that QR usage in print expanded massively and QR coded ads in magazines increased nearly 550% from 2019 to 2021. The report breaks down which magazine genres and product categories see the most note taking and scan based actions, and compares the performance of ads with and without QR codes to assess their real impact. It offers practical insights into which types of ads and creatives drive the highest engagement. (Simmons, 2022)

5. RESEARCH GAP:

- Many studies have examined digital marketing and print advertising separately, but very few explore how these two connect.
- The previous research papers focused either on online engagement or the effectiveness of print ads, without considering both at the same time.
- There is limited understanding of how QR codes influence audience interaction or contribute to brand loyalty.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

This study is based on theories that will help explain how QR codes in print advertisements create a link between traditional and digital media. The main theories used in this framework are Media Convergence Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory.

Media Convergence Theory explains how different types of media now work together instead of staying separate. Earlier, print media only allowed reading, while digital media offered videos, websites, and updates. Today, print and digital media support each other. QR codes show this change by connecting printed ads to digital content, allowing users to move easily between physical and digital spaces (Jenkins, 2006).

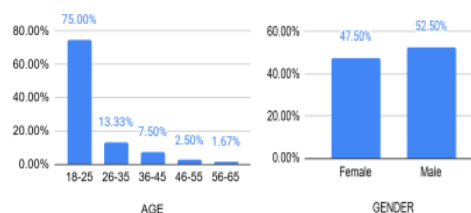
Uses and Gratifications Theory focuses on how audiences actively choose media based on their needs. In QR code advertising, people scan codes only if they see clear value. If the purpose is unclear or untrustworthy, they may ignore it (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973).

7. METHODOLOGY:

This study used a quantitative approach to find out how QR codes in print ads affect the way people engage with the ads and how they help connect print and digital media. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The survey was given to people aged 18 to 60 and above who read print advertisements and use smartphones. It asked about their demographics, awareness of QR codes, how they used QR Code linked content, and their opinions and loyalty towards the brand. After collecting the responses, the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression. The results showed that QR codes increased engagement and improved how people saw the brand. All ethical guidelines were followed, including informed consent, anonymity, and voluntary participation.

8. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE:



(Fig.1.1) (Fig.1.2)

The present data shows that the 18-25 age group are the majority of respondents, representing 75% (n=90) of the sample. This is followed by the 26-35 age group at 13.33% (n=16) and the 36-45 age group at 7.50% (n=9). Meanwhile, the 46-55 and 56-65 age groups account for only 2.50% (n=3) and 1.67% (n=2) of respondents, respectively. This shows that the sample is heavily concentrated among younger individuals, particularly those aged 18-25, with participation decreasing significantly in older age groups. (Fig.1.1) The present data shows that male respondents are slightly larger portion of the sample, representing 52.50% (n=63), while female respondents account for 47.50% (n=57). This indicates a relatively balanced gender distribution, with only a modest difference between male and female participation. (Fig.1.2)

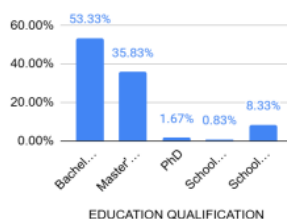


Fig. 1.3

The present data shows that the majority of respondents hold a Bachelor's degree, representing 53.33% (n=64) of the sample. This is followed by people with a Master's degree at 35.83% (n=43). A small proportion of respondents have completed 12th grade at 8.33% (n=10), while only 1.67% (n=2) hold a PhD degree. The least represented category is 10th grade education, accounting for 0.83% (n=1). This indicates that the respondent group mainly consists of individuals with higher education qualifications, particularly at the bachelor's and master's levels. (Fig. 1.3)

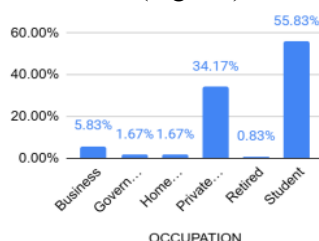


Fig.1.4

The data shows that the majority of respondents are students, accounting for 55.83% (n=67) of the sample. Followed by private employees, who represent 34.17% (n=41). A smaller proportion of respondents are engaged in business at 5.83% (n=7), while government employees and homemakers each make up 1.67% (n=2). The least represented group is retired individuals, comprising only 0.83% (n=1). This indicates that the respondent pool is mainly of students, with private employees forming the next significant group, while other occupations show minimal representation. (Fig. 1.4)

NEWSPAPERS OR MAGAZINES ARE READ BY:

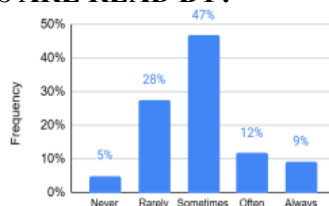


Fig. 2.1

The present data shows that a majority of respondents, 46.67% (n=56), read newspapers or magazines sometimes, indicating a moderate level of engagement with print media. This is followed by 27.50% (n=33) who read them rarely and 11.67% (n=14) who read them often. A smaller portion, 9.17% (n=11), reported always reading newspapers or magazines, while only 5.00% (n=6) stated that they never do. This suggests that while interest in newspapers and magazines persists, consistent daily readership remains limited. (Fig.2.1)

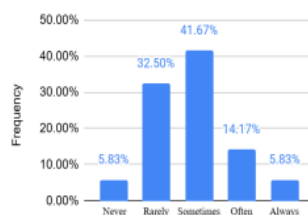


Fig. 2.2

The present data shows that most respondents, 41.67% (n=50), read printed newspapers or magazines sometimes, reflecting a moderate but occasional interest in print media. This is followed by 32.50% (n=39) who read them rarely and 14.17% (n=17) who do so often. A smaller proportion of respondents, 5.83% (n=7), reported always reading printed newspapers or magazines, and an equal 5.83% (n=7) stated that they never do. This indicates that while print media continues to attract a segment of readers, regular and consistent readership appears to be relatively low. (Fig.2.2).

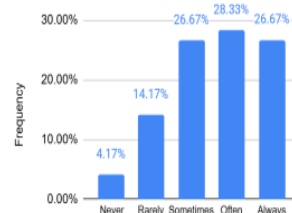


Fig.2.3

The present data shows that most respondents notice advertisements in print media either often (28.33%, n=34) or always (26.67%, n=32), suggesting that print advertisements successfully capture readers' attention. An equal proportion of 26.67% (n=32) reported noticing them sometimes, while 14.17% (n=17) said they rarely do. Only 4.17% (n=5) of respondents stated that they never notice advertisements while reading. This indicates that the majority of readers are generally aware of and attentive to advertisements in print media. (Fig.2.3)

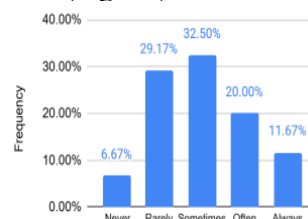


Fig.2.4

The present data shows that a majority of respondents, 32.50% (n=39), sometimes prefer reading news or articles in print form rather than online, indicating a mixed level of preference toward traditional media. This is followed by 29.17% (n=35) who rarely prefer print, and 20.00% (n=24) who often do. A smaller share, 11.67% (n=14), always prefer print media, while 6.67% (n=8) reported never preferring it. This suggests that while digital news consumption dominates, a sizable portion of readers still appreciate the tactile experience of printed content. (Fig.2.4)

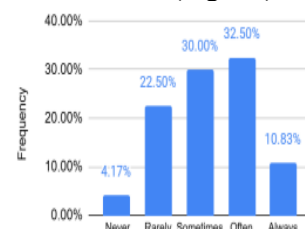


Fig.2.5

The present data shows that most respondents, 32.50% (n=39), often discover new brands or products through print advertisements, indicating that print media still plays a meaningful role in brand discovery. This is closely followed by 30.00% (n=36) who sometimes find new products this way. Meanwhile, 22.50% (n=27) reported rarely discovering brands through print ads, and 10.83% (n=13) said they always do. Only a small portion, 4.17% (n=5), stated that they never come across new brands via print advertisements. This suggests that print ads continue to be a relevant medium for consumer awareness, though not the dominant source for most readers. (Fig.2.5)

QR CODE EFFECTIVENESS:

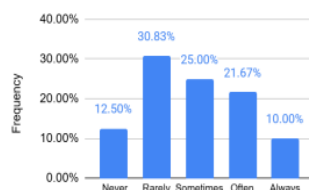


Fig.3.1

The present data shows that most respondents, 30.83% (n=37), rarely notice QR codes in print advertisements such as magazines, newspapers, posters, or brochures. This is followed by 25.00% (n=30) who sometimes notice them and 21.67% (n=26) who often do. A smaller portion, 10.00% (n=12), reported always noticing QR codes, while 12.50% (n=15) stated that they never do. This indicates that although QR codes are increasingly used in print advertising, many readers still overlook or infrequently engage with them. (Fig.3.1)



Fig.3.2

The present data shows that most respondents, 35.00% (n=42), sometimes find QR codes in print advertisements catchy, indicating a moderate level of engagement with this feature. This is followed by 26.67% (n=32) who rarely find them appealing and 12.50% (n=15) who often do. A smaller portion, 10.83% (n=13), reported that QR codes always capture their attention, while 15.00% (n=18) stated that they never do. This suggests that although QR codes are noticed by many readers, their ability to consistently attract attention remains limited. (Fig.3.2)

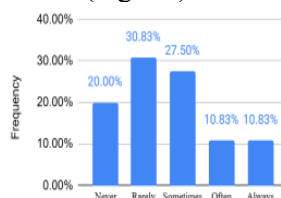


Fig 3.3

The present data shows that majority of the respondents, 30.83% (n=37), rarely scan QR codes from print advertisements to find more information. This is followed by 27.50% (n=33) who sometimes do it and 10.83% (n=13) who often do it. An equal proportion of 10.83% (n=13) reported always scanning QR codes, while 20.00% (n=24) stated that they never do it. This indicates that although QR codes provide an easy way to access additional details, many readers hesitate the usage of it in print advertisements. (Fig.3.3)



Fig.3.4

The present data shows that majority respondents, 29.17% (n=35), sometimes find that QR codes in print ads help them access exclusive offers, discounts, or promotions. This is followed by 25.83% (n=31) who rarely experience such benefits and 17.50% (n=21) who often do. A small share, 8.33% (n=10), reported always accessing promotions by QR codes, while 19.17% (n=23) said that they never

do. Overall, the data shows that QR codes have a moderate impact in linking readers to promotional content, though their consistent effectiveness remains limited. (Fig.3.4)

QR CODES AND AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT:



Fig. 4.1

The present data shows that most respondents, 28.33% (n=34), sometimes feel that QR codes in print advertisements make the ads more engaging. This is followed by 21.67% (n=26) who rarely feel this way and 20.83% (n=25) who often do. A smaller proportion, 14.17% (n=17), stated that QR codes always make print ads more engaging while 15.00% (n=18) stated that they never find QR Codes engaging. This indicates a mixed perception among readers, with many acknowledging the interactive potential of QR codes but not viewing them as consistently engaging features. (Fig.4.1)



Fig.4.2

The present data shows that most respondents, 33.33% (n=40), sometimes interact with a brand's online content after scanning a QR code from a print ad. This is followed by 22.50% (n=27) who rarely do it, and 21.67% (n=26) who often engage with online content after scanning. A smaller portion, 6.67% (n=8), reported always interacting, while 15.83% (n=19) stated that they never do it. This indicates that QR codes in print ads do encourage some degree of digital engagement, but consistent follow through to online brand interaction remains moderate. (Fig.4.2)



Fig.4.3

The present data shows that most respondents, 35.00% (n=42), sometimes experience increased interest in a product or service after seeing a QR code in print ads. This is followed by 20.83% (n=25) who rarely feel more interested and 19.17% (n=23) who often do it. A small group, 9.17% (n=11), reported that QR codes always highlight their interest, while 15.83% (n=19) stated they never experience an increase in interest. This suggests that while QR codes can raise curiosity about products and services for some readers, they are not a consistent about increased interest for most people. (Fig.4.3)

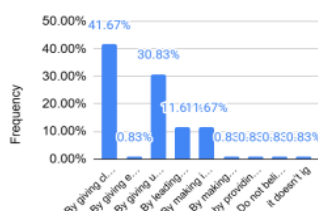


Fig.4.4

The present data shows that majority of the respondents, 41.67% (n=50), feel QR codes in print ads encourage interaction with brands by providing clear information. This is followed by 30.83% (n=37) who are motivated by useful offers, and 11.67% (n=14) each who find entertainment or attractive design as reasons for engaging. Very few respondents indicated curiosity or the ability to access additional value beyond print, at 0.83% (n=1) each. An equally small proportion expressed doubt about QR codes motivating interaction. This suggests that clarity is the primary factor driving engagement with QR codes in print advertisements. (Fig.4.4)

QR CODES AND BRAND LOYALTY:

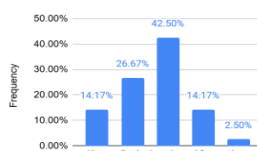


Fig.5.1

The present data shows that most respondents, 42.50% (n=51), sometimes feel that QR codes in print ads influence their decision to repurchase from a brand. This is followed by 26.67% (n=32) who rarely experience such influence and 14.17% (n=17) who often do. An equal proportion, 14.17% (n=17), reported that QR codes never impact their repurchase behavior, while only 2.50% (n=3) stated that QR codes always influence their repeat purchases. This suggests that while QR codes can have some effect on customer loyalty, their influence is generally moderate and not consistently strong among most readers. (Fig.5.1)

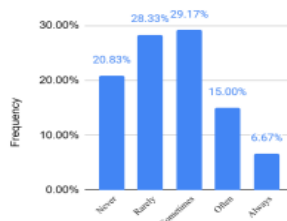


Fig. 5.2

The present data shows that most respondents, 29.17% (n=35), sometimes feel that QR codes in print ads strengthen their trust in a brand. This is closely followed by 28.33% (n=34) who rarely feel an increase in trust and 15.00% (n=18) who often do. A smaller portion, 6.67% (n=8), reported always experiencing greater trust, while 20.83% (n=25) stated that QR codes never strengthen their trust in a brand. This suggests that QR codes have a moderate impact on brand trust, with many readers remaining uncertain about their influence. (Fig.5.2)



Fig.5.3

The present data shows that majority of the respondents, 30.83% (n=37), sometimes recommend a brand because of its QR code offers. This is followed by 23.33% (n=28) who rarely do so and 13.33% (n=16) who often suggest brands for this reason. A smaller portion, 10.83% (n=13), reported always recommending a brand due to QR code offers, while 21.67% (n=26) stated that they never do. This indicates that QR code promotions in print ads can influence brand recommendations for some readers, but are not a continuous decisive factor for most. (Fig.5.3)

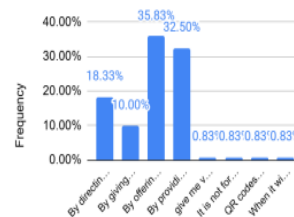


Fig.5.4

The present data shows that customers believe QR codes in print advertisements build brand loyalty primarily by offering quick brand updates, with 35.83% (n=43) selecting this option. This is followed by providing special deals or discounts at 32.50% (n=39), and directing customers to feedback channels at 18.33% (n=22). Early access to new products is chosen by 10.00% (n=12). A small portion of respondents (each 0.83%, n=1) added qualitative insights, noting that QR codes deliver value when they help customers understand a product, solve relevant issues, or create interactive experiences. Overall, the findings suggest that timely updates and exclusive offers are the most influential QR-code features for strengthening brand loyalty. (Fig.5.4)

9. RESEARCH FINDINGS:

- People prefer to read online news over print news because it is faster, easier, and updated instantly.
- QR codes in print ads are not easily noticed, which shows low visual impact or weak placement.
- Scanning behavior is very low. Most respondents rarely or never scan QR codes in print ads.
- People scan QR codes only when they see value such as discounts, detailed information, or entertaining content.
- Attractive design and clear discounts makes people scan, while plain or confusing QR codes are ignored.
- QR codes can build loyalty only when they offer meaningful rewards, such as deals, early access, updates.

10. CONCLUSION:

The aim of this research was to understand how people really feel about QR codes in print advertisements and whether they actually help connect print media with the digital world. The results show that QR codes can be useful, but only when they are done the right way. While many people do notice print advertisements, QR codes often go unnoticed. Most participants said they only sometimes or rarely see them, which means simply adding a QR code to an ad is not enough. It needs to stand out and clearly show why it is worth scanning. The study also found that very few people regularly scan QR codes. People are more likely to scan only when they expect something valuable, such as a discount, helpful information, or interesting content. If there is no clear benefit, they usually ignore it. For those who do scan, QR codes can make print ads feel more interactive by leading to websites or extra content. However, trust and loyalty depend more on what people see after scanning. Overall, QR codes work best when they respect people's time and offer something genuinely useful.

LIMITATIONS:

- The study focuses on people's attitudes and actions, not on the digital content linked to QR codes.
- The quality and usefulness of the content behind QR codes were not examined.
- The success of QR codes may vary depending on the content they lead to.
- Declining use of print media may have influenced participants' responses.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

An important area for future study is to examine actual scanning behavior. Researchers could track real time QR code scans from printed materials to see how many people truly interact with the codes. Future studies could also explore the quality and type of digital content that is linked to the QR

codes. Understanding what kind of content motivates people the most can help the brands create more meaningful experiences. Another future direction is to study the design and placement of QR codes. Factors like size, color, contrast, surrounding text, and call-to-action messages may also influence whether people notice and scan the codes or not. In summary, future research can better explore how new technologies truly engage audiences as print and digital media merge.

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From Consumers to Creators: Public Involvement in Content Creation on Social Media

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Abstract: *This study explores how ordinary social media users are shifting from passive consumers of content to active creators. With the rise of interactive features such as reels, stories, vlogs, and live videos, public participation in content creation has increased significantly. The research examines how this involvement influences the credibility and authenticity of online content, as well as its cultural impact on digital communities. Findings suggest that when users create and share their own posts, they feel more engaged, connected, and empowered on social media. Public participation also contributes to diverse perspectives, faster information exchange, and the formation of new online cultures. Overall, the study highlights that social media has evolved into a collaborative space where users not only consume information but also shape it.*

Keywords: *Public participation, social media, Content creation, credibility, content creation.*

1.INTRODUCTION:

The shift from being mere consumers of content to becoming creators on social media represents a major change in the way people interact with media today. Long ago, content was created only by professionals TV stations, newspapers, and big companies while the rest of us watched, read, or listened passively. But now, social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, T and Facebook have given everyone a chance to create and share their own content. This change is important because it gives people the power to express themselves, tell stories, and connect with others in ways that were not possible before. social media is not only about posting photos and videos, but also about planning what to post, who the intended audience is and trying to be creative and consistent. Producers tend to pay attention to the topics that their followers consider interesting and post various kinds of content, which may be short videos, photos, or the text. Most of them also live by a schedule, where they maintain their followers always entertained. The nature of social media is engaging and therefore the creators receive instant feedback in the form of likes, comments and shares that will help them to improve and establish better relationships with their followers. The fact that anyone can be a creator has made online communities or personal brands a reality to many people. Others even sell products or cooperate with brands with their content. Social media has more to do with posting pictures or videos than advertising business; it is partly planning what to post, it is knowing who the audience is and attempting to be creative and consistent. Producers tend to pay attention to the topics that their followers consider interesting and post various kinds of content, which may be short videos, photos, or the text. Most of them also live by a schedule, where they maintain their followers always entertained. The nature of social media is engaging and therefore the creators receive instant feedback in the form of likes, comments and shares that will help them to improve and establish better relationships with their followers. One of the most productive on this shift is the creation of creator economy. The composers can simply bring their carrier out of this by earning money through advertisement, sponsorship and many more that it assists the people to learn further about this sift. Rather than relying on the usual

employment they can be the producers of content and create video on their own. By expounding on it with the creator.

2.LITERATURE REVIEW:

Organic user-generated content (UGC) is becoming more influential as people trust real users more than traditional ads or influencers, especially in TikTok beauty communities. This study shows that users create brand-related content because they genuinely like products, enjoy creativity and self-expression, want to help others with honest reviews, and feel a sense of belonging in online communities. Engagement and social validation also motivate them, while viewers prefer UGC that is authentic, visually appealing, and based on real experiences. Overall, the study highlights how community-driven, trustworthy content shapes purchasing decisions and brand perception **(Rimi Abdi, 2025)**.

The paper discusses how User-Generated Content (UGC) became a vital digital marketing strategy during India's COVID-19 lockdown, when traditional advertising slowed and people spent more time on social media. Because UGC is created by real users rather than brands, it appeared more authentic, trustworthy, and influential, making it effective for engaging audiences and shaping purchase decisions. The paper highlights how brands used UGC to maintain visibility and connection by launching challenges, contests, and interactive campaigns that encouraged people to create and share their own photos or videos from home. Examples include Pidilite's family craft challenge, Oreo's home-based recipe and play content, Kellogg's #PassTheBowl breakfast videos, and hygiene awareness campaigns like Dettol's #HandWashChallenge and Lifebuoy's #LifebuoyKarona, which generated billions of views. Overall, the study concludes that UGC enabled brands to sustain engagement during the crisis and has become a powerful long-term marketing tool in India's digital landscape. **(Rahul G. Kargal, 2021)**

The thesis examines how social media strongly influences modern consumer behaviour by shaping trust, opinions, and purchase choices. It highlights that people rely heavily on user-generated content, reviews, and influencer recommendations, which they perceive as more authentic than traditional advertisements. Trust emerges as the most important factor, as consumers prefer brands that communicate openly, behave ethically, and protect their personal data. The study also explains how social media algorithms personalize content, create viral trends, and encourage impulse buying, while raising concerns about privacy and transparency. Overall, the research concludes that brands can build long-term customer loyalty by maintaining authenticity, using responsible influencer partnerships, engaging meaningfully with audiences, and ensuring ethical digital marketing practices. **(Firdosh Pathan and Vaishali Mihir Baraot, 2024)**

The thesis investigates how three types of social media content brand-generated content, user-generated content, and influencer-generated content together shape brand associations and deepen customer engagement. It first shows how brands use visual content on Instagram to signal characteristics like brand personality, product features, symbols, and user/experience imagery. Then, it analyses hotel reviews from TripAdvisor to understand how tourists form brand image through cognitive, emotional, and behavioural elements, influenced by factors such as culture and COVID-19. The research finds that users trust and rely heavily on UGC to build brand perception. The thesis also studies how the originality of brand-created content increases cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement, leading to stronger intentions to visit and recommend the brand. Finally, it examines micro-influencers, showing that when influencers fit well with the brand and resemble their followers, engagement increases and positively affects brand attitudes and behaviours. Overall, the study concludes that brands should integrate all three content types of brands, user.

The article examines how influencer marketing on social media especially on Instagram helps brands increase awareness, shape brand values, and boost user engagement. Using examples from celebrity cosmetic brands like Fenty Beauty and Kylie Cosmetics, the study shows that influencers and celebrities play a major role in communicating brand messages, building emotional connections, and influencing consumer purchase decisions. Fenty Beauty focuses on inclusivity and diversity, while Kylie Cosmetics emphasizes individuality and trendiness, yet both effectively use influencer power to engage audiences. The paper highlights how influencers create trust, authenticity, and strong community interaction through user-generated content, tutorials, and lifestyle branding. However, it also notes challenges such

as influencer scandals, declining credibility, ad saturation, and the risk of mismatched brand–celebrity values. The study concludes that influencer marketing remains a powerful strategy but must be used carefully, with future trends moving toward micro-influencers and AI-assisted influencer selection. (Ximan Xu 2023)

The objectives of the present study are:

- To study basically how public participation makes content creation on social media
- To examine how participation affects the social media on creation.
- To assess the effects of public participation involvement in content creation.

3. SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH:

- User-generated content (UGC) means content created and shared by users themselves, such as posts, photos, videos, and opinions.
- Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter help users easily publish and spread their content to large audiences.
- It encourages participation and self-expression, where users actively share ideas and creativity instead of only consuming content.
- UGC supports community building by connecting people with similar interests and encouraging interaction.
- Media organizations motivate users and groups to post regularly, promoting participatory content creation and audience engagement

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK WORK:

4.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT):

According to the Uses and Gratifications Theory, viewers actively use media to meet their social and personal needs. Because social media platforms enable users to satisfy motivations like entertainment, social interaction, information sharing, self-expression, and self-validation, users transition from passive consumption to active participation in the context of social media content creation. According to UGT, viewers deliberately decide to produce content such as reels, vlogs, memes, or reviews to satisfy their need for recognition, social belonging, and identity development. According to this theory, user-generated content results from voluntary participation motivated by social and psychological rewards.

5. RESEARCH GAP:

The following are some of the notable gaps in the expanding research on user-generated content (UGC) and its role in social media marketing related to a brand. Little is known about deeper, more into the complex psychological motivators in different cultural and demographic groups although numerous studies exist on the broad motivation such as excitement about products, social belonging and self-expression. Also, a substantial body of literature has not been developed regarding the effects of inconsistent brand responses to user-generated content (UGC) on the long-term motivation and engagement of creators, particularly across platforms on social media. Much attention has been focused on the effectiveness of the user-generated content (UGC) to influence consumer behaviour and brand engagement, whereas not so much attention has been paid to the problem of misinformation, verification of the content, and maintaining authenticity.

6. METHODOLOGY:

This study focuses on understanding public participation in social media content creation by using a quantitative, descriptive survey-based approach. Data was collected through an online questionnaire designed using Google Forms, which made participation easy and accessible for respondents. The survey was divided into two sections: the first gathered demographic information, while the second examined users' level of activity and involvement in creating and engaging with content on social media platforms.

- **Research Design:**

The study used a quantitative, descriptive survey-based research design to examine public participation in social media content creation; this method focuses on collecting numerical data about user behaviour and engagement; it helps in identifying patterns and trends in how people create and interact with online content; it was chosen because it is simple, structured, and effective for studying user engagement.

- **Target Population:**

The target population included active social media users from different age groups; it focused on individuals who use digital platforms and participate in or observe content creation; the population represents general online users who engage with user-generated content regularly.

- **Sample Size:**

A total of 102 respondents participated in the study; most participants completed the survey properly; however, a few responses were not fully honest or complete; still, the sample size was sufficient to observe engagement trends and participation behaviour.

- **Sampling Technique:**

The sampling was done through an online voluntary sampling method; the survey link was shared through social media platforms; participants responded based on their willingness to take part; this method allowed quick and wide reach among digital users.

- **Data Collection Methods:**

Data was collected using Google Forms; the questionnaire was divided into two parts demographic questions and social media participation questions; it was easy for respondents to answer; Google Forms automatically organized responses and generated charts and distributions; pie charts were used to analyse age-based participation; the method ensured efficient data collection and clear presentation of engagement trends.

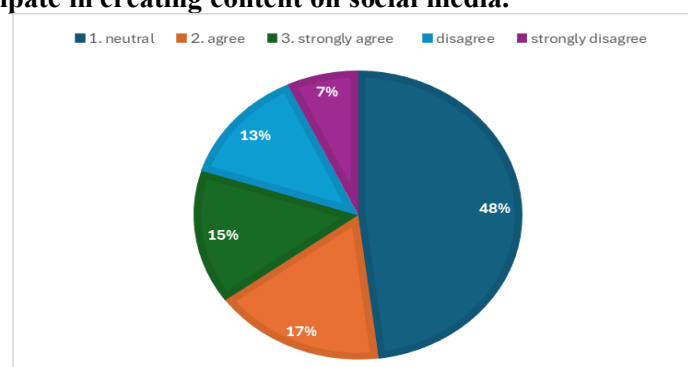
7. DATA ANALYSIS:

VARIABLE	CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE
Age	18-25	88.2%
Gender	female	53.9%
Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	64.7%
Social Media platform	Instagram	66.7%

Table 1. Demographics Characterization

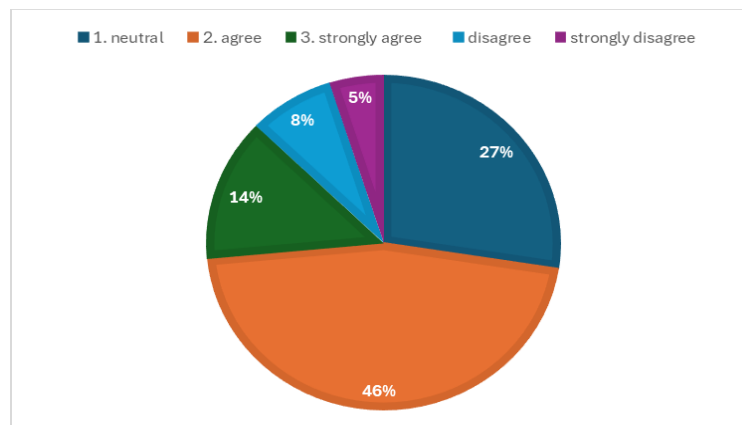
According to the demographic data, most respondents (88.2%) are between the ages of 18 and 25, suggesting that young adult social media users make up the majority of the study's participants. Gender-wise, the slightly larger portion of the sample consisted of 53.9% female participants. In terms of educational background, many respondents (64.7%) had earned a bachelor's degree, indicating that people with higher levels of education made up most of the sample. With 66.7% of respondents citing Instagram as their primary platform, it was found to be the most popular social media platform.

7.1 I actively participate in creating content on social media.



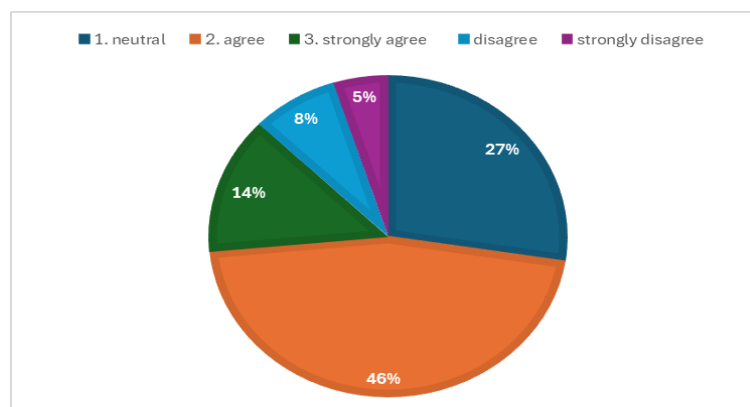
Most of the people in the survey were neutral (48%), meaning that they were not sure or even were not involved in content creation. Combined 32 percent -17 percent agree and 15 percent strongly agree-said that they do develop content, with an intermediate level of active participation among users. Conversely, 13% of the respondents said No and 7% strongly said No, which looked at a smaller section of the population not actively engaged. Generally, the data demonstrate that although some part of the respondents are active creators, most people remain neutral or tend to have minimum participation.

7.2 I feel more engaged with social media when I can create my own content.



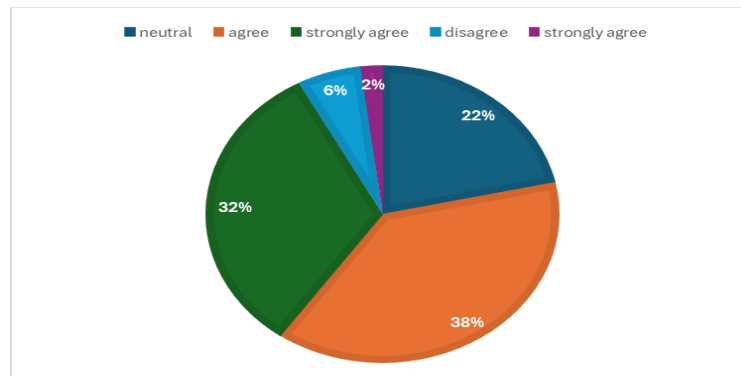
Their answers demonstrated a particular trend, and most of them stated that they had a positive tendency to share the content frequently. Many of the respondents are motivated to remain users of social media with more than half of the total respondents indicating that they agreed with its 46 percent of the respondents and strongly agreed with its 14 percent of the respondents. Conversely, 28% of them said they did not have an opinion meaning that they posted inconsistently or irregularly. On the other hand, less percentage showed reluctance as 8% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed indicating low participation. The responses are broadly varied with a variation in the personal participation.

7.3 User-generated content appears more authentic than brand-created content.



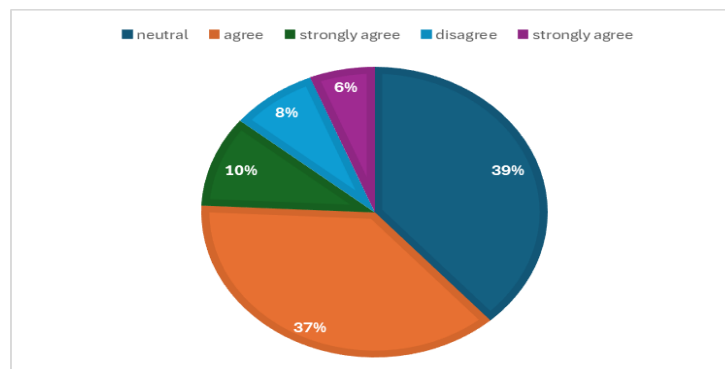
The responses revealed a distinct pattern, with most of them indicating a favourable inclination toward frequent content sharing. More than half of the participants feel motivated to continue using social media, as evidenced by the 46% of respondents who agreed and the 14% who strongly agreed. In contrast, 28% expressed no opinion, indicating ambiguity or irregular posting patterns. Conversely, a smaller percentage showed reluctance, with 8% disagreeing and 5% strongly disagreeing, indicating low participation. With some variance in individual involvement, the responses generally show

7.4 I trust content more when it is created by regular users instead of influencers or brands.



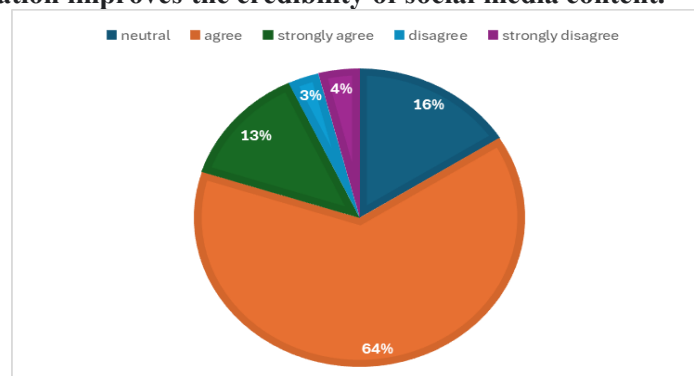
The data shows a strong positive inclination among respondents, with 38% agree and 32% strongly agreeing. A moderate portion of participants (22%) remained neutral, suggesting some uncertainty or mixed views within the group. Only a small minority expressed disagreement, with 6% disagreeing and 2% strongly disagreeing. Overall, the findings indicate a notable preference for content created by regular users, reflecting higher levels of trust compared to other sources.

7.5 Users express honest opinions when they create their own content.



With 37% agreeing and 10% strongly agreeing, the responses show a balanced range of opinions, suggesting that almost half of the participants think that personal content is genuine. Nonetheless, most respondents (39%) expressed no opinion, indicating ambiguity or a range of experiences with the sincerity of such statements. In contrast, 6% strongly disagreed and 8% disagreed, indicating a discernible degree of scepticism among some respondents. Overall, the results show conflicting opinions regarding the honesty reflected in user-generated content, with both moderate confidence and significant reluctance.

7.6. Public participation improves the credibility of social media content.



The responses show a strong positive tendency, with 64% agreeing and 13% strongly agreeing. This indicates that most participants view increased involvement as beneficial for the reliability of online content. A smaller segment (16%) remained neutral, suggesting some uncertainty or a lack of strong opinion on the matter. Only a minor portion expressed disagreement, with 3% disagreeing and 4% strongly disagreeing. Overall, the results reflect broad confidence in the role of public involvement, with limited scepticism among respondents.

8. MAJOR FINDINGS:

- Instagram is the most preferred platform among respondents (66.7%), ahead of WhatsApp and YouTube, while Facebook usage is very low; this indicates that users prefer visual, interactive, and creator-friendly platforms for daily engagement.
- Public participation improves content diversity, with most respondents agreeing that when more users create content, it brings wider perspectives, topics, and voices to social media.
- Easy content-creation tools such as reels, stories, vlogs, and memes attract more participation; simple and built-in features make it easier for users to create and share regularly.
- User-generated content is seen as more authentic and credible than brand-created content; this shows that trust is shifting from official sources toward real user experiences and peer contributions.
- User-driven trends and discussions influence culture and opinions; most respondents believe that active users shape online conversations, social behaviour, and digital culture through their posts and engagement.

9. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH:

The study provides useful insights into public participation in social media content creation, but it also has several limitations. The findings are mainly Instagram-focused since most respondents were Instagram users, so the results may not fully represent behaviour on other platforms. The data is based on self-reported responses, which may be influenced by social pressure and may not always match actual user behaviour. A high number of neutral answers makes it difficult to clearly understand users' confidence in creating their own content. The study also did not deeply examine differences based on age, gender, or background, and it captures opinions only at one point in time, so it cannot reflect fast-changing social media trends. Additionally, it does not clearly explain why some users are unwilling to create content. Future research should explore these behavioural barriers, compare different social media platforms, include more demographic and digital literacy factors, observe real user behaviour, and conduct long-term studies focusing on content formats like reels, memes, vlogs, and reviews to better understand how users shape the digital world.

10. CONCLUSION:

The study provides informative insights into public participation in social media content creation, but it has some limitations. The findings are largely Instagram-focused because most respondents were Instagram users, so the results may not fully represent behaviour across other platforms. The data is based on self-reported answers, which can be influenced by social pressure or uncertainty and may not always reflect actual user behaviour. A high number of neutral responses makes it difficult to clearly measure users' confidence in creating their own content, and differences based on age, gender, and background were not deeply examined. The survey also captures opinions at only one point in time and cannot follow rapidly changing social media trends. Future research should compare multiple platforms, include more demographic and digital literacy factors, observe real online behaviour, and study specific UGC formats like reviews, memes, and reels to better understand how users participate and shape the digital space.

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A Comparative Analysis of Animated and Human-Centric Coca-Cola Advertisements on Brand Recall and Purchase Intention among Young Consumers in Bengaluru.

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ABSTRACT: *This research aims to evaluate how animated advertisements and advertisements featuring human characters influence brand recall and purchase intention among young adults aged 18–30 in Bengaluru, India. In the context of increasing digital consumption and evolving advertising strategies, it is important for marketers and communication practitioners to understand which type of advertisement is more effective in building a meaningful connection with digital natives. The study is guided by three key objectives: first, to examine whether young adults in Bengaluru prefer animated Coca-Cola advertisements over those featuring real people; second, to assess whether animated advertisements enable stronger brand association and recall compared to human-centric advertisements; and third, to rank the two advertisement types based on their influence on purchase likelihood. The research will adopt a descriptive survey design, with data collected from approximately 150–200 participants using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. Participants will be exposed to two Coca-Cola advertisements—one animated and one featuring human characters—and will be asked to evaluate their overall impression, brand recall, emotional response, and purchase intention. The study is grounded in the Hierarchy of Effects Model, which explains how advertising influences consumers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses during the decision-making process. The findings are expected to contribute to existing advertising literature and provide practical insights for developing more effective advertising strategies targeted at India's urban youth.*

Keywords: *Coca-Cola Advertisements; Animated Advertising; Human-Centric Advertising; Brand Recall; Purchase Intention.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Advertising in the modern digital era has undergone a significant transformation over the past two decades, shifting from traditional media such as television and print to digital platforms driven by technology, smartphones, and internet accessibility. With consumers increasingly engaging with social media, YouTube, and OTT platforms, brands now rely on creative, interactive, and visually appealing digital content to capture attention. Creativity has become a vital component of advertising, as today's consumers face information overload and possess shorter attention spans, making emotional appeal, striking visuals, and memorability essential for effective communication. Within this evolving landscape, animated advertisements and human-centric advertisements have emerged as two prominent creative formats. Animated advertisements use techniques such as cartoons, 2D and 3D graphics, fantasy elements, and brand mascots to communicate messages in a visually stimulating and imaginative manner, often resonating strongly with younger audiences by creating exaggerated or fictional realities. In contrast, human-centric advertisements portray real people, emotions, and everyday situations, fostering authenticity, relatability, and trust through depictions of family bonds, friendships, and social values. Both formats play a crucial role in building brand awareness and recall by reinforcing visual and emotional cues that help embed the brand in consumers' minds. Advertising

also significantly influences consumer buying decisions by shaping perceptions, emotions, and attitudes toward products. Young adults aged 18–30 represent a major target audience, particularly in Bengaluru, a highly urbanized and digitally connected city with a large population of tech-savvy early adopters. Coca-Cola, as a globally recognized brand with a strong advertising legacy, extensively uses both animated and human-centric approaches to connect emotionally with youth. The present study aims to examine how these two advertisement formats affect brand recall and purchase intention among young adults in Bengaluru, providing insights into the most effective creative strategies for engaging this digitally driven audience.

2. OBJECTIVES

- 1.To examine young adults' preferences for animated versus human-centric Coca-Cola advertisements in Bengaluru.
- 2.To determine whether young adults recall the Coca-Cola brand more effectively through animated or human-centric advertisements.
- To analyze whether purchase intention is higher for animated or human-centric Coca-Cola advertisements.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What are the preferences of young adults in Bengaluru regarding animated versus human-centric Coca-Cola advertisements?
- Do young adults recall the Coca-Cola brand more effectively when exposed to animated advertisements or human-centric advertisements?
- Is the purchase intention among young adults higher for animated Coca-Cola advertisements or for human-centric Coca-Cola advertisements?

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Nadira Khanum's study, *The Effects of Animation in Television Commercials on Viewers' Ability to Recall Information* (2017), examines how animation enhances cognitive processing and memory in advertising. The research concludes that animated commercials improve information recall by using multisensory stimulation such as motion, color, and character-driven storytelling, which simplifies complex messages and creates strong mnemonic cues. Animation's structured narrative and visual uniqueness help capture attention and support memory formation, although excessive visual complexity can cause distraction and reduce recall. Khanum emphasizes that animation must align with brand identity to maintain credibility. Supporting these findings, Hushain and Kant's study, *The Impact of Animated Ads on Consumer Perception Across Various Advertising Channels* (2023), demonstrates that animated advertisements generate higher brand awareness, engagement, and emotional connection across television, digital, and social media platforms. Their research highlights the importance of consistent visual elements across channels while noting that high-quality animation requires significant time and financial investment.

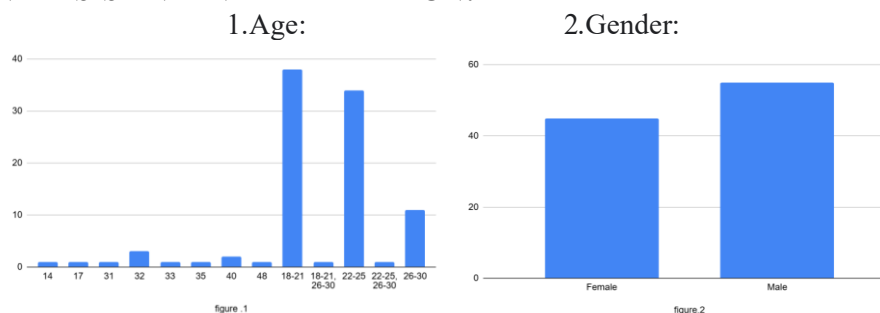
5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

The Hierarchy of Effects Model serves as the theoretical basis of the study which asserts that customers pass through the cognitive, affective, and conative stages in the order stated before making a purchase. This model provides a basis for the study to analyze in-depth and systematically how different creative advertising methods can either positively or negatively impact the customer journey through these stages. With the purpose of raising brand recall and awareness, the study will determine whether animated or human-centered advertisement will lead to stronger mental association in the cognitive stage. The affective stage, which is concerned with the consumer's attitudes and emotions, fits in well with examining young adults' preferences and feelings towards the different Coca-Cola commercials. At last, it is assessing the intention to buy that arises from the exposure to the convincing power of the message.

6. METHODOLOGY:

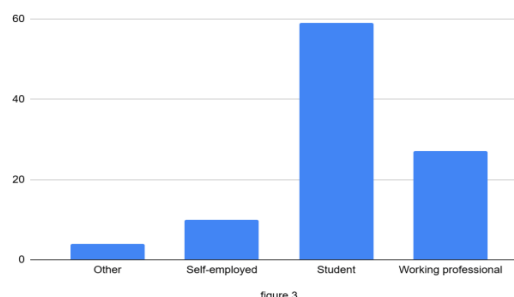
This study adopts a descriptive survey research design to examine and compare the influence of animated and human-centric Coca-Cola advertisements on consumer preferences, brand recall, and purchase intention. A quantitative research approach is employed to collect standardized responses from participants regarding their exposure to digital advertising, advertisement preferences, message comprehension, recall ability, and likelihood of purchase. The target population consists of young adults aged 18–30 residing in Bengaluru, India, who are actively exposed to digital media platforms. Using a simple random sampling technique, a total of 100 respondents were selected, ensuring that every individual within the defined age group had an equal chance of participation. Data collection was carried out through a structured questionnaire divided into three sections. The first section gathered demographic details and information on digital media usage, the second exposed participants to both animated and human-centric Coca-Cola advertisements and assessed their likes, dislikes, and understanding of the conveyed messages, and the third measured brand recall and purchase intention after viewing each advertisement type. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were fully informed about the study's purpose, voluntary nature, and duration. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by avoiding the collection of personally identifiable information, and data were analyzed only in aggregated form. The study ensured respectful content presentation and transparent reporting of findings without bias or manipulation.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:



Based on the age distribution, it is evident that the adult population constitutes the majority of the participants. The largest group is formed by the age bracket of 18–21 years (38 respondents), followed by the age bracket of 22–25 years (34 respondents) and then the age bracket of 26–30 years (11 respondents). The older age groups were hardly represented, as only a tiny percentage of participants revealed their ages being outside the specified ranges. Overall, the young age group accounts for a significant part of the sample. The sample shows a gender distribution that is quite well balanced with 55% male and 45% female participants. Although the men's percentage is slightly higher, both sexes are fairly represented in the sample

3.Occupation:



Based on the data, the largest group of respondents were students (59), followed by working professionals (27). In general, students constituted the most of the sample; only four individuals picked "other," and a smaller percent were self-employed (10)

5. Do you watch advertisements on digital platforms (YouTube, Instagram, etc.) regularly?

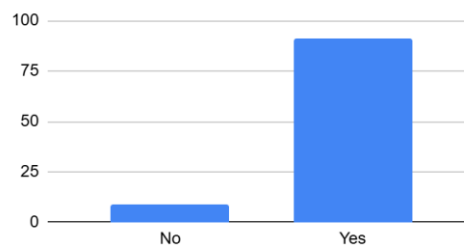


figure.4

The majority of the participants, that is, 91 out of 100, admit that they usually see ads on digital platforms, only 9 of them deny so. This means digital advertisement exposure is quite usual among the respondents.

5. After viewing both Coca-Cola ads (one animated and one human-centric), which type did you find more appealing?

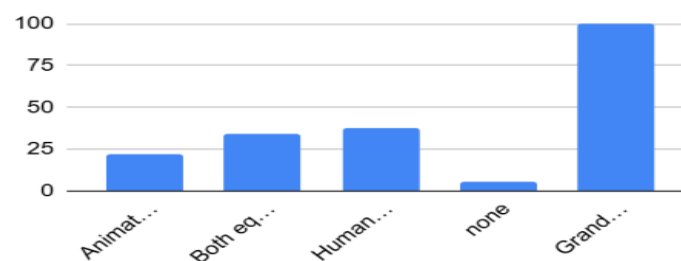


figure.5

The results indicated that the human-centric advertisement was preferred by 38 respondents, whereas the animated version was the favorite of 22. Moreover, 34 people believed that both advertisements were equally attractive and 6 declared that they had no specific preference. Despite the fact that a lot of the audience appreciated both the methods, the human-centric advertisement still managed to win over the audience by a little margin.

6. Which advertisement format do you think communicates Coca-Cola's brand message more clearly?
98 responses

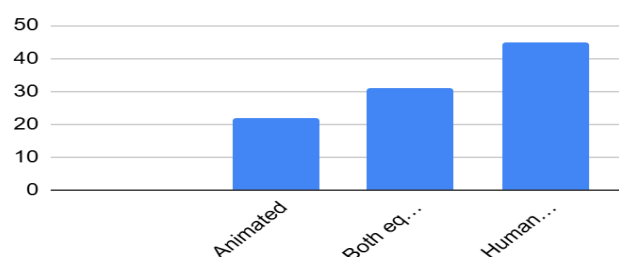


figure.6

The commercial focusing on people, as per the opinion of most of the 45 respondents, was the one that communicated Coca-Cola's brand message most effectively. The animated version, however, was preferred by 22 of the respondents, and 31 of them believed that both the human-centric and animated versions were equally good in terms of conveying the idea.

7. Human-centric format was perceived as the most effective in delivering the brand message.

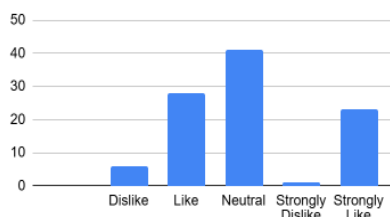


figure.7

The animated Coca-Cola ad had, as a rule, positive or at least neutral reactions by the majority of the audience. The most common reaction was neutral (41), after that came Like (28) and Strongly Like (23). There were six participants that did not like and one that did not like at all the commercial, though this means that only a small part of the audience was negative. Overall the animated ad was accepted very well.

8. Rate your overall liking for the human-centric Coca-Cola advertisement.

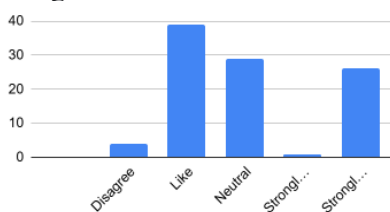


figure.8

The human-centered Coca-Cola commercial had many positive reactions. The majority of respondents pointed out that they liked it (39) or strongly liked it (26), while 29 felt neutral. Only four people disagreed and there was one strong disagreement, which means negative feelings were hardly expressed. In general, the majority considered the human-centric ad to be a good one.

9. How well do you remember the main message of the advertisement you preferred?

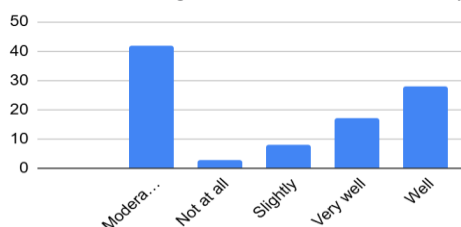


Figure 9

The majority of the participants had a very good memory of the main idea of the ad they liked most. Moderate (42) and Good (28) were the main replies, and then a bit (17). Just a few people were able to recall it slightly (8) or not at all (3). In general, message recall was rather strong.

10. The characters or visuals in the advertisement made the brand easier to remember.

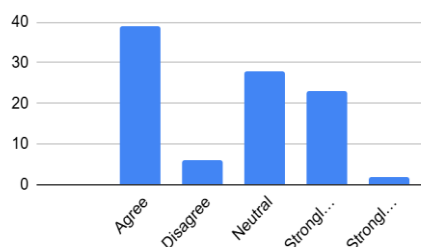


figure 10

Most of the participants were of the opinion that the personalities or pictures of the advertisement had a significant role in making the brand known among consumers. Out of the total, 28 participants were neutral, 39 were in favor, and 23 were in strong support of this statement. Only six persons expressed

disagreement and two indicated strong disagreement. Overall, through the use of images, brand recall was uplifted.

11. After watching the animated advertisement, how likely are you to purchase Coca-Cola?

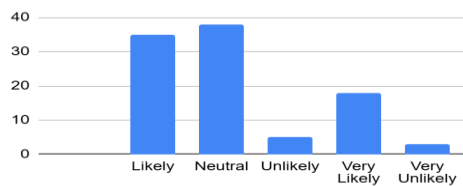


figure 11

Most of the people taking part in the study said either neutral (38) or probable (35) they would like to buy Coca-Cola after seeing the animated commercial. Just a tiny fraction of respondents were against (5) or very unlikely (3) to buy it, and another 18 were really keen on it. In general, the animated ad created a quite positive level of purchasing interest, so to speak.

12. Which advertisement type most motivates you to choose Coca-Cola over other beverage brands?

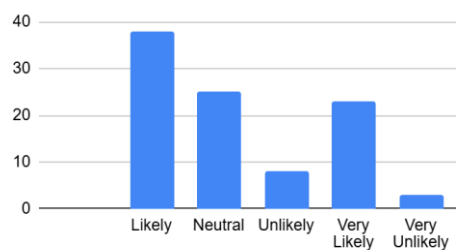


figure 12

Most participants expressed positive buying intentions after they were exposed to the human-centric ad. Among the respondents, 38 people said they would probably buy Coca-Cola, and 23 considered it to be very likely. There was a very small proportion of people who were not likely (8) or very unlikely (3), whilst 25 were neutral. The overall effect of the human-centric advertisement on the purchase was an increase in interest rather than a decrease.

8. CONCLUSION:

This research assessed the impact of advertisement style on purchase intentions, brand recall, and preferences among digitally active young adults in Bengaluru. The study compared Coca-Cola's animated ads against human-centric ads. Among the 100 respondents, 91% reported high exposure to digital media via platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and OTT services, confirming that the 18–25 age group is a primary consumer of digital advertising.

Findings indicated that human-centric ads held a marginal advantage over animated versions. Respondents perceived human-centric content as more appealing and effective at communicating Coca-Cola's message, largely due to emotional relatability and the use of authentic, real-life situations. While this format more significantly increased purchase intent, the animated ads maintained a strong secondary appeal. A notable subgroup reacted positively to the animated style, citing its creative visuals, vibrant colors, and imaginative storytelling as key engagement factors. Regarding memory, the majority of participants successfully recalled the primary message of the ad they found most attractive. Tests confirmed that both animated and human characters played a vital role in brand name retention. This suggests that high visual stimulation, regardless of format, is a primary driver for cognitive encoding and recall in young urban consumers. In conclusion, while human-centric storytelling currently leads in effectiveness for this demographic, animated ads remains a powerful tool for brand differentiation. A hybrid strategy—leveraging the emotional depth of human narratives alongside the creative distinctiveness of animation—would allow brands like Coca-Cola to maximize reach. By aligning ad styles with media consumption habits, advertisers can effectively strengthen brand loyalty and purchase intentions among the digital-native youth of Bengaluru.

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Representation of Plus-Size characters in Bollywood Post-2010

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Abstract: *This study examines the representation of plus-size characters in mainstream Bollywood cinema released after 2010, focusing on how body size is narrativized through humor, marginalization, and conditional visibility. Using qualitative thematic analysis of selected commercially prominent films, the research investigates how fat bodies—particularly female bodies—are framed as comedic devices, narrative obstacles, or sites of self-surveillance. Drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis, Foucauldian discourse theory, fat feminist scholarship, and corporeality studies, the study reveals the persistence of fatphobic tropes despite the industry's engagement with progressive themes. The findings highlight Bollywood's continued reliance on normative aesthetics, underscoring the need for more inclusive and dignified bodily representations.*

Key Words: *Bollywood; Plus-size character; Fat-shaming; Corporeality, Body-positive narrative*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Cinema, a social technology creating and disseminating stories, pictures influencing moral imagination, cultural standards, and liking. Bollywood-the Hindi language film industry has become a significant center of cultural production. The logics of the story and artistic decision have such an impact on a wide range of diasporic regions and social classes. This is the reason why Bollywood's portrayals of embodied difference don't exist in a vacuum, rather it supports common perceptions of identity, health, social worth and desirability. To understand how corporeality is verbalized, presented, and scrutinized in the modern cinema, alongside what ideological work is accomplished through such representations, this research examines the way plus-size people are portrayed in Bollywood films which have been produced and released after 2010. Multiple global research have shown how mediated representation of body size is not neutral rather they shape the audience's perception and in many cases reinforce stigmatizing ideas (**Burmeister & Carels, 2014**). As per a media psychology experimental research, visual socialization in early childhood impacts body expectational such exposure to stigmatizing content and humor linked with body weight reinforced negative stereotype decreasing empathy for plus-size individuals (**Hayes & Tantleff-Dunn, 2009**). As it links representational techniques (portrayal of bodies) with quantifiable social consequences (audience feeling and behavior), these media-effects understanding are critical for analyzing films.

Concepts of the "body beauty" have been constructed historically and institutionally, by the experts studying Indian visual culture. **Sumita S. Chakravarty (2011)** claims how popular Indian culture limit beauty standards linking modernity to grooming, slimness, and commodified well-being though the aspects of film, advertising, and celebrity spectacle. Due to which, individuals that differ from the established norm are often perceived as excessive or morally questionable. Representation is a theoretical and empirical problem. Drawing on psychoanalytic and critical theory makes it easier to comprehend why plus-size characters are often neglected. Lacanian symbolic theory, in particular, the

notion of a symbolic Center and the constitutive Other, demonstrates how normative values function as structuring parameters for social recognition. When a body departs from the symbolic ideal, it is designated as 'Other' and is susceptible to discursive management like shame or humor. Jacques Lacan (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2022). claims how Lacan's paradigm explains why plus-size characters are often left out of important subject positions unless they follow the symbolic rules.

This psychoanalytic viewpoint is complemented by Foucauldian concepts of biopower and disciplinary regimes, which highlight how the institution and cultural practice influence life itself. Foucault's description of power as a productive, regulatory force that normalizes through surveillance, categorization, and regimes of truth offers a lens through which one examines filmic practices (casting, costumes, camera framing, plot arcs) and how it contributes to a larger social technology that discipline bodies. As a result, such depictions that medicalize obesity, present weight loss as 'healing', or depict certain bodies as hazardous or filthy can be understood as biopolitical practices embedded in cultural industries (*Taylor, 2010*). The fat-feminist movement adds another crucial dimension. The concept of hyper(in)visibility—the contradictory experience where plus-size women are both stunningly apparent and devoid of interiority—highlights gendered disparities in how bodies are understood. Jeannine Gailey's work on hyper(in)visibility explains why plus-size female characters often appear in spectacles of excess (comical bodies, obscene dance) while being denied sexuality, independence, or thematic substance (*Gailey, 2014*). Even though there are fewer empirical analyses of Indian films, the number is growing over time. Comprehensive textual analyses of modern Hindi films, such as Fanny Khan, show how narrative choices and marketing tactics allow ostensibly progressive stories to control obese female bodies

2. OBJECTIVES:

- Examine how plus-size characters are represented in mainstream Bollywood films released after 2010, with specific attention to humor, narrative positioning, and visual framing.
- Analyze how cinematic techniques and narrative strategies contribute to the normalization of fat-shaming and bodily marginalization, particularly through comedy, romance, and domestic spaces.
- Interpret these representations through critical theoretical frameworks—including Lacanian psychoanalysis, Foucauldian discourse theory, fat feminist theory, and corporeality studies—to understand how fat bodies are positioned within Bollywood's symbolic and visual economy.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- How are plus-size characters narratively and visually represented in post-2010 Bollywood cinema?
- What recurring tropes and cinematic strategies are used to frame fat bodies as comedic, undesirable, or narratively marginal?
- How do these representations reflect broader cultural discourses of body regulation, desirability, and power within Bollywood cinema?

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A broad body of research establishes humor as a mechanism for normalizing prejudice against fat bodies. (*Burmeister & Carels, 2015*) demonstrated that exposure to weight-related jokes significantly increases anti-fat attitudes in adults, echoing (*Thomas and Esses, 2004*) findings that sexist humor reinforces sexist beliefs. Burmeister and Carels argue that humor conceals discrimination, allowing fatphobia to operate unchallenged. This aligns with (*Hayes & Tattleff-Dunn, 2010*) work showing that even very young girls internalize the message that fat bodies are unacceptable. Together, these studies emphasize how aesthetic hierarchies are learned early and shape adult responses to comedic portrayals of fatness—especially relevant to Bollywood's frequent use of fatness as a punchline. To understand fatness as a cultural construct, several scholars have analyzed how Indian cinema encodes fat bodies within symbolic hierarchies. *Gaya and Justin's (2018)* Lacanian reading of *Da*

Thadiya and *Inji Iduppazhagi* shows fat characters being coded as “Other,” positioned for ridicule and framed through normalized expectations that fat bodies are inherently humorous. **Singh’s (2021)**, using an intersectional perspective on *Gippi* and *Fannee Khan*, identifies recurring tropes such as the “chubby Punjabi girl,” arguing that body size restricts the roles offered to even ostensibly progressive female characters. These studies trace persistent patterns of marginalization in post-2010 cinema.

This tendency continues even in films that present themselves as socially progressive. **Chatterjee (2021)**, in *Either Queer or Fat*, shows how *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga* advances queer representation while simultaneously desexualizing its plus-size characters, revealing how visibility for one marginalized identity can coexist with invisibilization of another. Similar insights appear in **Nayanthara K. J.’s (2020)**, work, *Exploring Fat Lives*, which argues that despite body positivity messaging, Indian films maintain a “fat as bad” trope rooted in cultural disgust. These patterns persist across genres, making plus-size characters easy targets for ridicule.

Body policing is also linked to romance and aspirational narratives. The comparative study *Destigmatization of the Fat Female Body in Size Zero and Dum Laga Ke Haisha* (2018) shows how films that champion “inner beauty” still rely on humiliation, taunts, and pressures to “glow up.” Rather than celebrating size inclusivity, Bollywood rewards films that ridicule plus-size heroines. Similarly, **(Kumari & Singh, 2023)** analysis of *Fannee Khan* shows how Lata’s body is hyper-visualized, scrutinized, and framed as a narrative burden, demonstrating the film’s superficial inclusivity that conceals deep-rooted fatphobic structures.

More recent scholarship shows that such patterns persist into the 2020s. **Aswathy A. and Meenu B (2024)** critique of post-millennial South Indian “fat films” reveals ongoing reliance on weight-loss arcs, conditional acceptance, and sanitized positivity, indicating limited representational progress. **Jain, Lal and Raina (2023)** discourse analysis further demonstrates that audiences internalize cinematic cues, reinforcing stereotypes rather than challenging them. Their findings support the need for more research into how Bollywood actively shapes cultural fatphobia rather than merely reflecting societal attitudes **(Jain et al., 2023)**

5. METHODOLOGY:

This research uses a **descriptive, interpretive qualitative design** combining close textual analysis and thematic coding

Films were selected based on clearly defined criteria:

- Wide theatrical release and mainstream visibility, **Mainstream Bollywood theatrical releases (2011–2020)** to reflect dominant industry narratives post-2010
- Commercial or cultural impact, films with wide releases, star casts, or strong box-office/cultural presence
- Presence of identifiable plus-size characters in secondary or supporting roles whose bodies are explicitly used for humor, ridicule, or narrative contrast.

The final sample includes

- *Bodyguard* (2011)
- *Shaandaar* (2015)
- *Ujda Chaman* (2019)
- *Ghoomketu* (2020).

Data Collection Process

Each selected film was viewed **twice**. The first viewing enabled holistic narrative comprehension, while the second involved **scene-by-scene analysis** focusing exclusively on sequences where plus-size characters appear. A **scene log** was created documenting visual framing, camera movement, editing patterns, costume design, sound cues, and narrative function, with attention to how corporeality is mobilized on screen.

Coding Schema and Analysis

A **hybrid coding framework** combining deductive and inductive approaches was employed. Deductive codes were drawn from established theory—symbolic marginalization (Lacan), biopolitical regulation (Foucault), and hyper(in)visibility (fat feminism). Inductive codes emerged from repeated viewing,

including comic relief, self-directed humor, transformation arcs, romantic avoidance, occupational desexualization, and representational erasure.

Analytical Procedure

Analysis progressed through **descriptive mapping**, **theoretical interpretation**, and **synthesis**, culminating in a thematic analysis table that reveals cross-film representational patterns and ideological structures.

6. FILM ANALYSIS:

Bodyguard (2011)

In *Bodyguard*, the character of Tsunami Singh illustrates Bollywood's long-standing reliance on fat male bodies for slapstick humor and exaggerated physical comedy. The very name "Tsunami Singh" signals the film's intent: it reduces his identity to a caricature of largeness and chaotic physicality. His body becomes the principal comedic device, shaping how he moves, interacts with others, and occupies space on screen. His inability to keep up during physical sequences—such as attempting to catch a running bus or engaging in routine activities—is exaggerated to the point of parody.

Scene 1: The first appearance of Tsunami Singh

The first appearance of Tsunami Singh in *Bodyguard* immediately establishes him as a comic excess figure whose body becomes a site of humor before he speaks a single line. As the bus prepares to depart, Tsunami approaches Lovely Singh with exaggerated enthusiasm, only to slip and fall at his feet. The fall is not incidental—it is framed in a medium-wide shot that captures the full weight of his body collapsing forward, emphasizing bodily volume as the cause of

The shot composition further underscores **material immateriality**: though Tsunami is physically present, the narrative does not grant him subjectivity. The camera uses his body as a punchline, a momentary visual gag before the story moves back to the real protagonist. As soon as Lovely dismisses him, the scene transitions without giving Tsunami emotional space or narrative agency, reducing him to a body without interiority.



Fig 1: His introduction begins with a comical fall through exaggerated effects of ground shaking and 'funny' background music (Org, 2025).

Shaandaar (2015):

Shaandaar attempts to position itself as a body-positive film, but it inadvertently reinforces the very stereotypes it tries to critique. The character of Isha is repeatedly subjected to fat-shaming, both through direct comments from other characters and through subtle narrative cues. Her body becomes a source of ridicule, tension, and conflict throughout the film. Despite the film's insistence that her size should not define her, nearly every scene involving Isha brings the audience's attention back to her weight.

Scene 1: The Wedding Dress Trial:

This scene begins with Isha entering the room filled with relatives who eagerly wait to see her in her wedding dress. The bridal attire serves as a symbolic expectation of femininity—slimness, elegance, and perfection. As she struggles to pull the dress up, the camera focuses on her discomfort, zooming in on the tight fabric and the failed attempts to zip it. This visual emphasis turns her body into an object of inspection, amplifying the gap between her and the culturally idealized “bridal body.” As she fails to fit the dress, her relatives exchange glances and comments that communicate disappointment rather than concern.



Fig 3: shows Isha struggling to fit in her lehenga through closeup shots of her struggle (*ak movies, 2023*).

Ujda Chaman (2019):

Ujda Chaman presents one of the rare instances in contemporary Bollywood where a plus-size woman is positioned as a romantic lead, yet the film still reinforces body hierarchies and conventional desirability norms. Although the narrative appears progressive on the surface—critiquing look-based judgments and encouraging acceptance—it simultaneously frames the plus-size female body as undesirable, comedic, or morally compensated through personality. In this early encounter, Apsara is introduced through a visual grammar that foregrounds her body before her personality. The camera lingers momentarily on her size, subtly marking her as “atypical” for a romantic lead. Chaman's surprise at her appearance and his awkward body language indicate how the film constructs fatness as a narrative obstacle. His discomfort aligns with Lacan's idea of the “Other,” where Apsara becomes the body that disrupts the dominant aesthetic order. While the film attempts to portray Chaman as shallow for judging her, the cinematography still positions her weight as an evaluative marker.



Fig 6: the main character, Chaman instantly is dejected by finding out that Apsara is plus size, while there is no direct comment, the gaze shows his scrutiny (Sss.movies.1k, 2024).

Scene 4: Wedding Reception Finale:

The final sequence frames the couple's union as a triumph over appearance-based prejudice, but the celebratory tone still implies that Aaina's acceptance is exceptional. The camera often contrasts her body with slimmer women in the scene, subtly reinstating conventional beauty hierarchies even at the moment of narrative closure. The scene attempts to offer resolution, but its visual framing and narrative implications reinforce the latent belief that love for a plus-size woman is an act of generosity rather than a natural occurrence.

Ghoomketu (2020):

Ghoomketu offers one of the clearest contemporary examples of how Bollywood still relies on the fat female body as a narrative obstacle and a source of ridicule. The film's treatment of Janki, the protagonist's wife, revolves almost entirely around the weight of her corporeality and the discomfort it supposedly evokes.

Scene 1: Janki's Introduction:

Janki's introduction is one of the most telling examples of how contemporary Bollywood visually codes the fat female body as inherently undesirable. Instead of presenting her as a complete person, the film introduces her through fragmented corporeal cues: the camera focuses on her hand holding a large glass of milk, her heavy footsteps, and the fabric of her saree. An ominous soundscape accompanies her entry, framing her body as a narrative threat rather than a character. Her face remains hidden behind her saree pallu, while the camera tracks Ghoomketu's horrified reactions, not Janki's feelings.



Fig 7. A slow pan with ominous background music as Janki drinks milk and Ghoomketu scared in the corner paints him as the victim in this frame (Org, 2021.)

The film's narrative arc suggests that fatness is inherently incompatible with love, desire, and visibility. Janki only becomes a legitimate romantic partner once she is no longer fat. This reinforces harmful cultural messages about body size, punishment, and the conditional acceptance of women. *Ghoomketu* ultimately reveals how contemporary Bollywood continues to rely on fat bodies as comedic burdens while reserving beauty, desire, and narrative agency for thin characters.

• THEMATIC ANALYSIS TABLE

Table 1. This table outlines thematic patterns in the cinematic treatment of plus-size bodies in seven

Film	Plus-Size Character / Target	Key Scenes / Usage	Representation Type	Stereotypes Reinforced	Relevant Theories	Overall Implication
Bodyguard (2011)	Tsunami Singh	Falling off bus; hostel disguise; repeated slapstick	Comic relief	Fat = chaotic, clumsy, unserious	Lacan: Othered body. Foucault: Regulation via mockery. Corporeality: Exaggerated movement.	Reinforces view of fat male bodies as comedic objects.
Shaandaar (2015)	Isha (plus-size bride)	Bridal dress trial; food policing; fiancé mocks her; wedding speech	Emotional conflict; body as obstacle	"Uncontrollable eater," "unfit bride"	Fat Feminism: Fatness = failed womanhood. Foucault: Family as disciplinary space.	Reveals emotional harm of fat-shaming; ends with self-acceptance.
Ujda Chaman (2019)	Apsara (love interest)	Insecurity scenes; "matching flaws" storyline	Romantic-comedic tension	Fatness = conditional desirability	Foucault: Social pairing norms. Corporeality: Body tied to insecurity.	Attempts positivity but still hinges on body-based pairing.
Ghoomketu (2020)	Janki (wife)	Hidden face; avoidance; weight-loss reveal	Body as burden; invisibility	Fat = shame, undesirability	Lacan: Exclusion from symbolic order. Fat Feminism: Erasure until thin.	Extreme example of fat female invisibilization until transformation.

Bollywood films, mapping narrative usage, stereotypes, and theoretical interpretations to reveal broader

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Analysis of selected mainstream Bollywood films released between 2011 and 2020 reveals persistent and patterned representations of plus-size characters that position fat bodies as comic, undesirable, or narratively disruptive. Across genres, plus-size characters—particularly women—are rarely afforded narrative depth, romantic legitimacy, or visual dignity. Scene-level analysis demonstrates that fatness functions less as a character trait and more as a cinematic device used to generate humor, shame, avoidance, or transformation-driven resolution. Four dominant representational patterns emerge. Across films, thin bodies retain cinematic value, visibility, and emotional legitimacy, while fat bodies remain peripheral, comic, or conditional. Fat feminist theory underscores how female fatness is repeatedly equated with failure, lack of desirability, and diminished worth. Even when films gesture toward empathy or social critique, they ultimately reinstate dominant beauty hierarchies by resolving conflict through bodily correction or exclusion. Overall, the findings confirm that post-2010 Bollywood continues to participate in a visual economy of desirability that marginalizes plus-size bodies. Despite broader cultural conversations around body positivity, mainstream Hindi cinema remains reluctant to represent fat characters as fully human, romantically valid, or narratively central, thereby reinforcing entrenched fatphobic norms through humor, gaze, and narrative structure.

7. CONCLUSION:

This research demonstrates that post-2010 Bollywood continues to rely on entrenched fatphobic representational patterns when depicting plus-size characters. Across the analyzed films, fat bodies are consistently positioned as sources of humor, discomfort, narrative obstruction, or conditional acceptability rather than as complex, autonomous subjects. Whether through comic exaggeration, romantic exclusion, bodily discipline, or visual fragmentation, plus-size characters remain marginal to the cinematic center of desirability and narrative authority. The findings highlight how normalized fat-shaming in popular cinema shapes cultural attitudes toward body size. For filmmakers, the research exposes a reliance on outdated tropes that restrict narrative imagination. Academically, the study contributes to discussions on corporeality and symbolic hierarchy in Indian cinema. Socially, it underscores the need for representational reform to reduce stigma and promote body diversity with dignity and narrative agency.

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Analysing The Musical Narratives and Aesthetics Used by AR Rahman In Select Mani Ratnam Films

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Abstract: *The evergreen partnership between ace composer A.R. Rahman and the legendary director Mani Ratnam continues to redefine Indian cinema's sonic dimensions, with music serving as a dynamic narrative driver and aesthetic innovator. This paper analyses Rahman's musical narratives and aesthetics in two crucial collaborations: Guru (2007) and O Kadhal Kanmani (2015). Through examination of key songs and scores, it explores how Rahman's leitmotifs, rhythmic progressions, and genre fusions—blending Indian classical traditions with Western orchestration, electronic textures, and global influences—mirror themes of ambition, romance, and cultural modernity. In Guru, expansive soundscapes underscore entrepreneurial ascent and emotional turmoil, while in O Kadhal Kanmani, youthful melodies propel contemporary love stories with classical undertones. The study reveals Rahman's evolution toward immersive, story-synched compositions that bridge tradition and innovation. By comparing these mid-career and later works, this research fills a void in scholarship, offering insights into their collaborative maturation and broader implications for globalized Indian film music.*

Keywords: *A.R. Rahman, Mani Ratnam, Musical narratives, Genre fusion, Leitmotifs, Classical-contemporary Blend.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

A. R. Rahman and Mani Ratnam represent one of the most influential director–composer collaborations in contemporary Indian cinema, known for an integrated approach in which music functions as a narrative force rather than mere entertainment. Their films exemplify a deep synthesis of sound and image, with songs and background scores actively shaping characters, themes, and emotional trajectories. *Guru* (2007) and *O Kadhal Kanmani* (2015) mark two distinct phases of this collaboration, reflecting shifts in cinematic style, musical aesthetics, and audience sensibilities across different eras. Within the broader context of Indian cinema—where music has long served as a key emotional and cultural vehicle—Rahman's arrival in the 1990s signaled a paradigm shift through his innovative fusion techniques, technological experimentation, and genre-blending compositions, with Mani Ratnam's films consistently providing a fertile space for these musical innovations to drive narrative meaning.

2. AIM OF THE STUDY:

This research's main goal is to dissect the musical narratives and aesthetic strategies employed by A. R. Rahman in *Guru* and *O Kadhal Kanmani*, with a major focus on the interaction of melody, harmony, rhythm, orchestration, and fusion techniques with Mani Ratnam's visual narrative. This research wants to find out how Rahman's music contributes to the development of characters, emotional changes, cultural identity, and the creation of a film atmosphere in each movie.

3. RESEARCH GAP:

Scholarship on A.R. Rahman's film music primarily focuses on early Mani Ratnam collaborations like *Roja* and *Bombay*, highlighting their East–West fusion, leitmotifs, and socio-political resonance. Later works such as *Guru* and *O Kadhal Kanmani* receive far less analytical attention, with existing writing limited to surface-level reviews that overlook narrative function, aesthetic evolution, and Rahman's co-authorial role. This study fills that gap through a comparative analysis that traces Rahman's maturing musical strategies across Ratnam's mid- and late-career films.

4. OBJECTIVES:

- To examine the musical narratives and focusing on how leitmotifs, rhythmic evolutions, and song placements help enhance the films
- To dissect Rahman's aesthetic innovations, such as fusions of Carnatic/Hindustani ragas with electronic, Latin, and global elements
- To assess the director-composer dynamics in Tamil cinema over the years

5. METHODOLOGY:

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design to explore how A. R. Rahman constructs musical narratives and aesthetics in Mani Ratnam's *Guru* (2007) and *O Kadhal Kanmani* (2015). The films were selected for their contrasting narrative settings a period biographical drama and a contemporary urban romance and for representing different phases of the Rahman–Ratnam collaboration. Rather than relying on quantitative measures, the research emphasizes contextual interpretation of musical meaning through an integrated analytical framework drawing from musicology, cinematic narrative theory, and aesthetic analysis. This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how Rahman's music shapes the sensory experience and narrative structure of both films.

6. MUSICOLOGICAL ANALYSIS – GURU:

Aspect	Description
Fusion Techniques	The music style used is a mix of folk, Sufi, and Hindustani components along with the Western orchestral arrangements. The fusion gradually moves from the country, agrarian sounds to the contemporary, symphonic ones, thus mirroring Guru's rise from a small, rural background to an urban one.
Harmonic & Rhythmic Analysis	The harmonic structure of the music is a combination of Indian modal frameworks with Western chords and orchestral pads. The rhythms are generally fast and repetitive cycles, which represent the ambition and the industrial movement, however, there are also softer and slower rhythmic patterns for romance and inner conflict.
Motifs	For repeated works themes of the dissertation of <i>Guru</i> and <i>Sujatha</i> are differently changed from the point of the instrumentalization and dynamics. The deep layering of shehnai, flute, tabla, Indian strings, and large-scale orchestration produces a cinematic soundscape that is quite authentic in the cultural aspect but is directed at the emotional elevation of the listener.

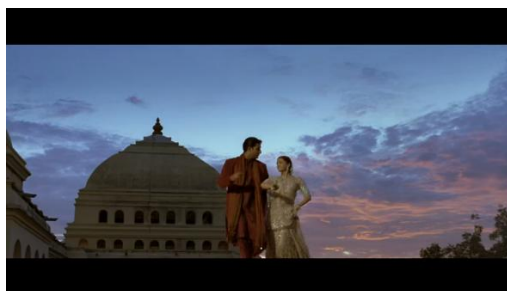


Fig. 1

Frame from the song “Aaruyire”, which employs a soft, flowing melody and a minimal set of instruments to portray the love between Guru and Sujatha. The strings have a calming effect, while the airy percussion and silky vocal lines are the perfect audio counterparts for the visuals of domestic intimacy and emotional healing. Rahman gradually increases the arrangement as the couple gets more and more intimate in the video, thus matching the musical warmth with the deepening relationship. The peaceful aural world of the track is an ideal match for the gentle, loving visuals of Mani Ratnam, thus making it a single cohesive expression of love and reconciliation.

7. MUSICALOGICAL ANALYSIS – OK KANMANI:

Aspect	Description
Fusion Techniques	The fusion combines minimalistic electronic music elements with Carnatic influenced pieces, indie-pop textures, ambient synths, and urban sound design. The fusion epitomizes the modernity, casualness, and emotional depth of the contemporary world of Adhi and Tara’s relationship.
Harmonic & Rhythmic Analysis	Harmonic language stays pure and clear, mainly triadic or modal, with the support of synth pads and soft electronic loops. Rhythms are characterized by light electronic pulses, lo-fi beats, dance grooves, and very soft percussive textures that reflect the emotionally subtle, yet fast-paced, urban setting.
Motifs	Intimacy was the concept that was most deeply emphasized through the sparse arrangements and the breathy vocals. The music also featured an electronic-acoustic blend. The motifs are now shorter and more atmospheric, and they are often loop-based, thereby corresponding to the minimalist visual and digital-age storytelling of the film.



Fig. 2

“Malargal Ketten” gives a sense of calm and grounding, emotionally and spiritually, which is depicted through the fusion of Carnatic melodic structure with Rahman’s soft contemporary arrangement. The classical vocal lines by K.S. Chithra are supported with a soft piano and a barely noticeable orchestration, resulting in a tranquil ambience which is the starkest contrast to the different parts of the film that have a modern and fast-paced theme. The song in the video is reflecting the characters’ inner world and the traditional musical style is the symbolic representation of the older values becoming the characters’ modern relationship’s grounding influence. The purity and the minimalism of the music are

great visual accompaniments and they are focusing on the emotional clarity as well as cultural continuity.

8. HARMONIC AND RHYTHMIC ANALYSIS- GURU:

Aspect	Description
Rhythmic Design	Powerful rhythmic energy is evident in the scenes where the character's ambition is focus heavily; the character in the play uses a repetitive, industrial-like pattern to symbolize growth, machinery, and determination.
Tempo Variations	In the scenes showing the business growth, the tempo is fast and energetic, but in the personal or romantic scenes, it is slow and emotional.
Percussion Choices	The acoustic side of percussion is represented by such instruments as the tabla, dholak, and folk rhythms at the beginning; then the orchestra percussion and cinematic drums were added to the production.



Fig. 3

“Mayya Mayya” is a composition that takes its modal framework from the Middle East. The main scale is Phrygian-dominant with a fixed tonal center which is largely responsible for the hypnotic and sensual character of the song. Rather than using rich chord progressions, Rahman opts for a prolonged drone and decorated melodic lines to evoke the atmosphere. The rhythm is what mainly gives the song its power: quick, syncopated darbuka patterns make up a tight 8-beat loop through which the intensity and seductive tension are elevated. The multiple layers of percussion, the off-beat accents and the recurring rhythmic motifs not only facilitate the visual choreography but also strengthen the song's exotic, mysterious vibe.

9. HARMONIC AND RHYTHMIC ANALYSIS- OK KANMANI:

Aspect	Description
Rhythmic Design	The sound of the city is beautifully captured through light electronic grooves, lo-fi beats, and soft pulses, which symbolize the youth and the emotional fluidity of the urban lifestyle.
Tempo Variations	Primarily the songs have a consistent mid-tempo tempo with an occasional bright and energetic electronic rhythm being used for the sake of energy and the depiction of a playful kind of romance.
Percussion Choices	The sound of electronic drums, digital percussive clicks, soft kick loops, and minimalistic beat patterns are what mainly dominate the tracks.

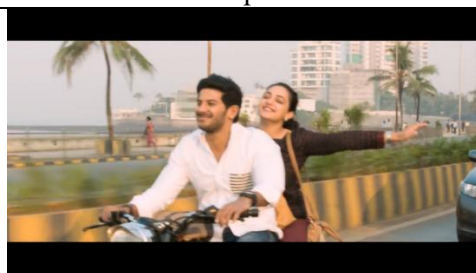


Fig. 4

“Mental Manadhil” employs a basic, repetitive harmonic structure based on a few cycling major and minor chords, which results in the song having a light, catchy, and modern indie-pop kind of vibe. Rahman intentionally maintains the harmony very minimal to resonate with the youthful characters' bright and unpredictable nature. The composition rhythm-wise is centered around a consistent electronic beat with sharp programmed drums, syncopated hi-hats, and a 4/4 driving pulse which reflects the carefree, fast-paced urban setting of the story. The rhythmic groove generates energy while the repetitive hook is there to remind the playful, impulsive side of Aadhi and Tara's liaison.

10. ANALYSIS:

GURU (2007) — CODED MUSIC–SCENE ANALYSIS

Code	Time Stamp	Scene Explanation	Narrative Function	Musical Motives / Techniques
Village Departure	00:08:20–00:10:00	Young Guru moves out of his village, packed with dreams.	Shows Guru's simple background and emotional connection	Village percussions, shehnai, country flute themes; modal tunes representing the purity and rural background.
Guru Returns from Turkey	00:18:40–00:21:00	Interaction with foreign markets increases his ambition..	Illustrates the transition of the dreamer to a self-assured businessman.	Delicate orchestral strings, gentle synth undertones, Indo-Western fusion depicting the widened worldview.
Tere Bina Montage	01:18:00–01:23:00	Guru and Sujatha's personal emotional voyage.	Deepens romantic bond; humanizes Guru's personal life.	Sufi-based melody, spiritual vocal ornamentation, warm harmonium-like pads; leitmotif of devotion.
Business Expansion Sequence	00:56:10–01:00:30	Guru establishes factories, logistics networks, workforce..	Highlights ambition, productivity, and large-scale growth.	Fast rhythmic ostinatos, repetitive percussive cycles; industrial-like rhythms mirroring machinery.
Media & Political Pressure	01:42:00–01:45:00	Opposition and newspaper exposés escalate.	This raises the conflict and characterizes Guru as a persecuted visionary.	A low brass, chromatic string tension, heavy orchestral hits; dissonant harmony depicting the struggle.
Guru's Illness	02:05:00–02:07:30	Guru has a stroke and his physical strength deteriorates.	Unveils helplessness; hints at the eventual rescue storyline.	Few strings, ambient drones, flute fragments; broken themes indicating delicacy.
Final Court Speech	02:30:40–02:34:00	The teacher philosophically explained his views to the people.	Final point of the exploratory odyssey; storytelling resolution and ethical triumph.	Repetition of the Guru's motif with a grand symphony; the successive chords representing the hero's victory.

CODED MUSIC–SCENE ANALYSIS: O KADHAL KANMANI (2015)

Code	Approx. Time Stamp	Scene Explanation	Narrative Function	Musical Motives / Techniques
Train Meet-Cute	00:04:00–00:05:30	Adhi meets Tara visually for the first time in a Mumbai local train.	The scene conveys the city life vibe, the beat of the metro, and the energetic turn of the day.	The music includes ambient pads, gentle electronic pulses, and light synth textures to bring out the theme of a new encounter.
“Mental Manadhil” Montage	00:25:10–00:29:00	The love birds roam around Mumbai, showing their love in a playful way	The film characters the free-spirited love and casual modern bonding	Indie-pop beat, electronic loops, repetitive vowels; youthful rhythmic drive.
Moving into Shared Apartment	00:40:00–00:42:30	Adhi and Tara begin cohabiting.	Indicates the affection, understanding, and harmony of a small household.	Lo-fi beats, minimal synth loops, warm pads; loop-based motifs reflecting routine and comfort.
“Malargal Kaetten” Scene	01:03:50–01:06:15	Bhavani aunty sings a Carnatic kriti; Tara listens quietly.	Connects contemporary characters with classical cultural memory; an anchoring of the emotions.	A Carnatic raga (Hamsadhwani), classical gamakas, mridangam touches; a contrast to the electronic palette.
Argument & Emotional Distance	01:17:30–01:19:45	On one hand, Adhi and Tara arguments escalate due to a lack of commitment.	Shows discord between the characters' desire for modern freedom and their emotional insecurity.	Unresolved chords, low drones, minimal rhythmic presence; harmonic ambiguity representing doubt.
Clinic/Hospital Anxiety	01:34:00–01:36:20	When Adhi is injured, Tara freaks out	Stir up the characters' emotions to a great extent; change the mood from light to grave.	Hybrid scoring—electronic pads + orchestral swells; the increase in volume reflects the characters' emotional panic.
Final Commitment (“Kaara Aattakkaara”)	01:52:20–01:55:00	Two people decide on a long-term love and maturity.	Finalizes the emotional journey; connects a modern relationship with a solid one.	Complete return of the theme, deepened rhythms, mellow harmonic ending; resolved electronic–acoustic blend.

11. DISCUSSION:

Comparative analysis of *Guru* (2007) and *O Kadhal Kanmani* (2015) discerns an evolution of A.R. Rahman's musical strategies according to the narrative, time, and aesthetic sensibilities of Mani Ratnam. The two films, though almost ten years apart, both reveal Rahman's adaptive and context-sensitive approach to film scoring, his ability to seamlessly integrate the musical structure with the narrative function. In *Guru*, Rahman stages a grand and musically cohesive journey mirroring the transformation of the main character from a village boy to an industrial magnate. The music unfolds its journey paralleling that of the protagonist, moving from a strong reliance on folk-oriented themes to a fully orchestrated grandeur and finally to a sophisticated fusion of all these elements to depict the protagonist's triumphant upward journey. The use of leitmotifs here is more prominent, with the melodic figures that are associated with the ambitious side of *Guru* and the emotional one of *Sujatha* appearing repeatedly. Especially during the montage sequences showing the industrial growth, the rhythm becomes the main storytelling tool—percussive ostinatos depict growth, momentum, and mechanization. Consequently, the music of *Guru* not only follows the narrative but also becomes the engine of the story, it is the power of the music that the rise, the risk, and the change are intensified.

12. FINDINGS:

1. Rahman Modulates Musical Scale According to Narrative Scale

Guru employs massive orchestral arrangements, folk-classical blends, and thematic motifs to visually depict an epic, biographical, rise-to-power narrative, while *OK Kanmani* relies on minimalism, electronic textures, and intimate sound design for a tale of a small, quiet, modern-type romantic drama. Finding: Rahman changes musical scale to reflect story impact.

2. Fusion Techniques Reflect Character Identity and Socio-Cultural Themes

Fusion in the film "*Guru*" mirrors the changes in the main character's personal life and the country's development. As the music changes step by step from folk to orchestral fusion, it symbolizes the rise of the socio-economic status of the character *Guru* and the transformation of India from a rural to an industrial country. The fusion in "*OK Kanmani*" is a way of describing the hybridity of the modern city life. The mixture of electronic and Carnatic elements reflects the real urban life of the present day.

Finding: The use of fusion in music is far from being merely an aesthetic choice; it is deeply embedded in the themes and serves as a narrative device.

3. Rhythm Functions as a Narrative Driver in *Guru* but as an Emotional Shaper in *OK Kanmani*

Industrial, repetitive rhythms in *Guru* reflect ambition and progress. Smooth, lo-fi rhythms in *OK Kanmani* express mood, attraction, tension, and emotional transitions.

Finding: Rhythm changes from characterizing external action (*Guru*) to internal emotion (*OKK*).

4. Leitmotifs Are Stronger and More Defined in *Guru*

Guru's ambitious motif and *Sujatha*'s emotional motif keep repeating and developing. *OK Kanmani* has more concise, mood-based motifs due to its contemporary, less structured narrative style.

Finding: *Guru* features conventional leitmotivic scoring, while *OKK* is characterized by micro-motifs and textural identifiers.

13. CONCLUSION:

This study examines how A. R. Rahman's music in Mani Ratnam's *Guru* (2007) and *O Kadhal Kanmani* (2015) functions as a core narrative force rather than a mere background element. It shows that Rahman's compositions are closely aligned with each film's themes, visual language, and character arcs: in *Guru*, his use of evolving leitmotifs, folk-classical fusion, and dynamic rhythmic structures underscores ambition, social mobility, and personal transformation, while *O Kadhal Kanmani* employs a contemporary soundscape marked by electronic minimalism and sparse Carnatic influences to reflect urban intimacy and modern relationships. The comparative analysis reveals that Rahman's fusion techniques carry strong metaphorical meaning, bridging tradition and modernity as well as rural and urban sensibilities. Overall, the study highlights how musical elements such as harmony, instrumentation, and recurring motifs guide emotional interpretation and actively contribute to character development in both films.

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Between Fantasy and Realism: Chaos, Non-Human Forces, and Narrative Worlds in Lijo Jose Pellissery's Churuli and Jallikattu

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Abstract: This research explores how Lijo Jose Pellissery navigates the line between fantasy and realism in *Churuli* and *Jallikattu*, creating narrative realms characterized by chaos and fluid human–nonhuman interactions. Utilizing a mix of visual analysis, the study examines narrative organization, character actions, sound elements, and visual themes to explore how each film generates immersive and disorienting cinematic experiences. A thematic analysis uncovers consistent motifs like repetitive aggression, and fluid boundaries between the natural and the supernatural that influence the films' ontological uncertainty. The results suggest that Pellissery's cinema substitutes traditional realist coherence with sensory abundance and structured disarray, framing chaos not as a narrative failure but as a creative organizing principle. In *Jallikattu*, entities such as the bull and the environment have agency that matches or surpasses that of human characters, whereas in *Churuli*, folklore, illusion, and changing realities blur the lines between myth and actual experience. Collectively, these films expose narrative realms where significance arises from the interaction among physical environments, nonhuman influences, and human desires. The research suggests that Pellissery's films redefine the connection between people and their environments.

Keywords: Fantasy-Realism, Chaos, Human-Non-Human Relations, Narrative Word Building.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Since it debuted, film has served as an extremely influential form of art and culture, allowing for the development of rich, immersive story environments by integrating many different aspects - image, sound, acting, and montage - into filmic forms. The twin strengths of cinema are that it can provide an authentic recording or illustration of a real-world environment while also having the ability to filter that same environment through a lens of imagination, and in the extreme cases of use a filtered image to establish symbolic and/or abstract meaning. Globally, directors from many different cultural contexts have utilized the conflict of these two strengths as the vehicle to investigate questions of identity, mythological interpretation, human experience(s), and the nature of perception(s). Particularly in the tradition of Malayalam cinema, this lineage is particularly valid as there have been significant amounts of cinematic productions created by Malayalam filmmakers for decades using beautiful and engaging strands of realism, literature, and character-driven narrative development. The initial emergence of the Malayalam New Wave in the 1970s and early 1980s was a clear turning point to socially conscious content; through applying various styles of minimalist film aesthetics, pursuit of philosophical inquiry, and an emphasis upon the ordinariness of the world, filmmakers of that era (e.g., Adoor Gopalakrishnan, G. Aravindan, Bharathan) subverted traditional methods of representing a filmic story. This experimentation and development of a unique approach represent a direct response to the film, and contributes to the purpose of authentic film-making by enabling viewers to obtain a better understanding of the world.

In 2022 and beyond, these contributors to developing and establishing a singularly defined tradition of cinema have inspired a resurgence of experimentation in cinema. Destruction of borders

between various genres, non-linear narratives of constructed stories, cutting-edge styles of visual representation, rich soundscapes with immersive characteristics, are all significant characteristics of this recent effort to push the limits of cinema.

2. REVIEW OF LITRATURE:

In Jallikattu: a film is an example of how to create a famous work using different narrative strategies. Cinemas have always served as a means for immersing people in virtually all aspects of the human experience via many intersecting elements of sound, image, performances, and montages. Because films are able to both create an accurate representation of the real due to the multiple means of expression and display of the various media as a medium of metaphorical, imaginative, symbolic, and abstract representations, cinema has enabled filmmakers across the globe to utilize both realism and the imagination of the audience to explore and depict the concepts of identity, myth, human experience, and understanding of the perception of the world around us.

In Malayalam cinema specifically, the film's richness in terms of the written word, realism, and character-based narratives has made them unique and special to the region in the context of the 1970s and 1980s. The New Wave of the 1970s and early 1980s has set the standard for the focus on social issues, psychological developments, and the development of formal structures, which has transitioned into a new-fashioned hybrid genre of cinema in the 21st century, a hybrid of numerous styles of cinema utilizing non-linear story structure, dramatic visuals, and immersive aural designs.

The themes of atavistic human behaviour and instincts are what let Gopakumar, A. V. discuss Pellissery's film and how it is a commentary about the primal side of mankind and society at large through the media's portrayal of wildness. Joy, S. M., and Gokul Krishnan, G. S. discuss how the "domination" of the storyline relates to dominating society through sex, ecology, and politics, creating an illustration of how the social power structure has dissipated.

Prathiba, P. presents the psychological implications of the themes, and as it relates to the latent violence, as Jesna, J., and Ashish, M. highlight the meta-narrative of the film and the overt and covert meanings of the film.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To analyse how Churuli and Jallikattu use elements of fantasy and realism to shape their narrative worlds.
- To examine the role of chaos as a central thematic and stylistic feature in both films.
- To explore how the films depict human interactions with nonhuman forces.

4. METHODOLOGY:

The current research is qualitative and interpretive in nature and investigates the films of Lijo Jose Pellissery using symbolic representation, experimental forms, and layered and complex narratives. The focus of this research will be on the aesthetic and narrative elements of the films (*Churuli*, 2021 and *Jallikattu*, 2019) rather than the audience's interpretation or reactions to the films. This research examines the challenges that surrealism, an abundance of sensory experiences, and nonhuman agency present to traditional cinematic structure. To accomplish this, three interrelated forms of analysis will be utilized: narrative analysis, visual and stylistic analysis, and thematic analysis. Narrative analysis will include an examination of how the story is developed through time, character frameworks, and how the different characters' experiences create their own distinct worlds. Various aspects of narrative will be included, such as linear versus circular versus fragmented storytelling, mythological construct, and how characters can be thought of as symbolic, collective, or inhuman (as in the case of the people in *Jallikattu*). The liminal landscape of *Churuli*, and the lush, agrarian landscape of *Jallikattu* will also be examined through the lens of narrative ecosystems, not simply as settings. The visual and stylistic component of both films will be analyzed through various cinematic devices such as camera movement, editing, mise-en-scène, sound, color grading, spatial design, and world-building techniques. In *Churuli*, the handheld camera movement, fluid tracking, low-light natural lighting, abrupt cuts, circular editing, dense landscape of the forest, and layered soundscape have created a labyrinthine, immersive environment for the audience that is Psychologically Disorienting. In contrast, the kinetic

handheld camera work, rapid-paced editing, chaotic, rural scenes of *Jallikattu*, mirrored with expressive, energetic choreography of their performers, all create a communion with one another's frenetic energy.

Parameter	Analytical Focus	Application in <i>Churuli</i>	Interpretive Insight
Cinematography	Use of camera movement, framing, lighting, and spatial design	Handheld shots, fluid tracking, dim natural lighting, and shifting spatial orientation within the forest and village.	Creates a disorienting, immersive atmosphere that blurs boundaries between reality and hallucination; reinforces the sense of entering a labyrinthine, otherworldly space.
Editing	Rhythm, continuity/discontinuity, temporal manipulation.	Abrupt cuts, cyclical narrative editing, temporal loops, and scene transitions that lack explicit causality.	Produces narrative chaos that mirrors the protagonists' psychological unraveling; emphasizes the film's destabilized sense of time and logic.
Mise-en-scène	Composition of visual elements: setting, costume, props, performance, and physical environment.	Earthy, rustic village settings; unkempt costumes; chaotic interiors; dense forest landscapes; unpredictable character behaviour	Suggests a world ruled by disorder and hidden forces; visual clutter and unpredictability enhance the theme of a trapped, cyclical environment.
Sound Design	Diegetic/non-diegetic sound, soundscapes, ambience, and auditory motifs.	Layered forest ambience, distorted sounds, sudden volume shifts, ritualistic chants, and unsettling laughter	Sound becomes a nonhuman force that manipulates mood and space, enhancing the sense of supernatural presence and psychological disorientation.
Colour Palette	Dominant colours, saturation, tonal moods	Earth-toned browns and greens, dim lighting, low saturation, and occasional warm hues inside the village.	Reinforces the grittiness and ambiguity of the world; earthy tones ground the film in realism while low saturation amplifies eeriness and unreality.
Spatial Design & World-Building	Construction of cinematic geography and navigable space	Labyrinthine pathways, repetitive locations, and shifting spatial continuity in the forest and tavern scenes.	Creates the feeling of an inescapable loop; distorted spatial logic aligns with folklore elements

Parameter	Analytical Focus	Application in <i>Jallikattu</i>	Interpretive Insight
Cinematography	Camera movement, framing, lighting, and spatial strategies.	Kinetic handheld camerawork, rapid tracking shots, low light night sequences, and high intensity close ups.	Creates relentless momentum and sensory overload; immerses the viewer in chaos and collective frenzy, blurring human animal perspectives.
Editing	Rhythm, pace, continuity/discontinuity, montage patterns.	Fast-cut sequences, overlapping action, accelerated chase montages, and parallel editing between mob movements.	Reflects the escalating loss of control within the community; editing becomes a visual metaphor for societal disintegration
Mise-en-scène	Setting, costume, props, bodily performance, environmental detail	Rural village streets, muddy landscapes, torches, knives, chaotic crowds, and physically intense performances.	Evokes primal, ritualistic energy; the mise-en-scène positions humans as part of an animalistic
Sound Design	Ambient sound, music, rhythm, vocal textures, soundscape layering.	Rhythmic percussive score, overlapping shouts, animal roars, chaotic crowd noise, atmospheric rural soundscapes.	Sound amplifies chaos and communal frenzy; creates an auditory environment where animal and human energies merge
Colour Palette	Dominant tones, saturation levels, mood through colour.	Earthy browns, deep night-time blues, torch-fire oranges, high contrast between firelight and darkness.	Reinforces primal mood; fire-lit sequences evoke ritualistic imagery, suggesting humans reverting to ancient instinctual states.
Spatial Design & World-Building	Organization of physical space, geography of action, crowd movement.	Dense forests, open fields, narrow village lanes used as chase corridors; action spreads spatially as the mob expands.	Highlights how human society dissolves into an uncontrolled organism; space becomes an arena for instinctual behaviour and nonhuman resistance.
Performance Style	Acting choices, body movement, collective behaviour.	Intense physicality, aggressive body language, frantic crowd dynamics, escalating emotional breakdowns	Reveals humans as driven by instinct and impulse; performances emphasize the thin line between civilization and savagery.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

Jallikattu (2019) and Churuli (2021) by Jose Pellissery offer an engaging pair that explores human behavior by situating characters in unstable and overwhelming settings. Churuli takes place in a mysterious forest settlement where reality blends into myth, while Jallikattu takes place in a rural village plunged into chaos by a rogue buffalo. Despite these different settings, both movies undermine the notion of social order by showing how fear, uncertainty, and liminal thresholds cause people to revert to their primal tendencies. Together, the movies examine identity erosion, societal fragility, and violent cycles. Pellissery presents disorder as a philosophical investigation as well as a storytelling force through his unorthodox narratives, immersive sound design, and dynamic visual rhythms.

Fantasy and Realism in Narrative Construction

Churuli: It's quite interesting to see how 'Churuli' plays out a destabilizing narrative by mixing the realms of realism, folklore, and speculative science fiction into one unpredictable universe. The movie starts out as an investigation drama where two undercover police officers set foot into an isolated village, but soon after they cross a ritualistic bridge, the genres get blended so perfectly into a world that lies between folklore, myth, and science fiction elements related to the concept of lost time, distortions in sounds, and the sensation of alien existence. One of the most important characteristics of Churuli is its cyclical narrative pattern. Time loops, events are repeated in variations, and space becomes illogical in opposition to cause-and-effect narrative. This also complements Deleuze's "time image" in which linear time is replaced with psychological, mythological time. This village becomes a liminal space in which myth rules over reason, thus challenging characters as well as spectators to question realism.

a) The Breakdown of Realism via Narrative Cycles

As soon as the officers enter the forest, realism starts to shatter. The scene of walking across the bridge indicates the entry into a world of thresholds, where time and logic lose meaning. Similar incidents, changing actions, and breaks in continuity undermine narrative coherence.

b) Science Fiction Elements Blended with Tradition

Imagery related to alien abduction, such as the eerie lighting, the electromagnetic phenomenon, and the last spherical shape, integrates effortlessly with the folklore myth. There is an aesthetic of the "non-human unknown," further emphasizing the psychological disorientation.

c) World-building through Imagination and Space

Nature itself becomes a dynamic and conscious part of the story. The forest becomes more of a dynamic character that interacts rather than simply a background. Characters moving through the forest end up moving in circles despite directions. This turns the village into an "enchanted forest" that captures the essence of the fantasy world.

Jallikattu: Jallikattu is grounded firmly in realism at first, but it soon escalates into a mythological pattern with the escape of a slaughtered buffalo from a meat factory adding epic dimensions to it. A mere situation changes into a ritual of collective madness.

a) Hyper- realism

The documentary realism gives the film a sense of grounding, though the spiraling levels of chaos transform ordinary behavior into the grand, ritualistic action. The nighttime hunts under torchlight have the feel of a ritual, putting the film in the tradition of the mythopo

b) Buffalo as Legendary Creature

Traditionally, the Buffalo is depicted It not only goes beyond its symbolic significance of a buffalo but also symbolizes untamed nature and masculine ego. Its strength and unpredictability shatter the illusion of human superiority.

c) Collective Disorder "The climactic pile-up of bodies produces a surrealist, abstract image, which can be likened to nightmarish art."

Chaos as Theme and Style:

Churuli: Chaos in "Churuli" can be seen as confusion. This may be attributed to the unpredictable actions, the mood swing, the interrupted cuts, and the repeating timeline. All these relate to the mental

a) Chaos in the Community The village despises social norms through intoxication and violence, and it slowly integrates the policemen into the social disorder.

b) Structured Chaos through Story Circles

Repetition sans resolution destabilizes narrative clarity, speaking to the trapped condition of the characters.

c) Distortion of Hearing and Vision

The distorted soundscapes and heavy imagery of shadows create an epistemic chaos that disrupts perception itself.

Jallikattu in Jallikattu, chaos is kinetic and contagious. The narrative accelerates from order to frenzy through rapid cuts, dense crowds, and overwhelming sound design.

a) Narrative Escalation into Frenzy

Small conflicts can quickly escalate and expose the chaos that exists inherently in human interactions.

b) Filmic Representation of Chaos Director Pellissery and co-director Girish Gangadharan plunge the viewer into a sea of sensory overload, chaos experienced rather than observed.

Human–Nonhuman Interactions :

Churuli: Humans and the Alien/Nature: The forest and unseen alien force operate as trickster figures, manipulating time and identity while undermining human autonomy.

a) Alien/Perumadan as a Deceptive Force

This force personifies folklore's trickster archetype, which is a willfully misleading and exposing force to human limitations.

b) Forest as an Interactive Ecosystem Tracking shots and technological failures insinuate a posthuman ecology with its own agency.

c) Human Change Because of Nonhuman Factors The behavioral regression of officers suggests a confluence of human and nonhuman agency.

Jallikattu:

a) Buffalo as Concrete Power & Symbolic Power

The buffalo represents the power of nature as well as the fragility of society.

b) Human-Animal Conflict Reflections of Human Nature The desperation and brutality of human nature come into focus with the animal's constant outwitting of the humans.

c) Common Regression and the Demarcation Line between Species The concluding episodes show mankind themselves to be bestial, proclaiming that mankind is a part of the chaos of nature itself.

6. CONCLUSION:

Lijo Jose Pellissery's Jallikattu and Churuli deal with realism and fantasy together to interpret the nature of human drives and contradictions. In Jallikattu, the disarray caused by the escaped buffalo represents the real-life conflicts of society and serves both as a material and symbolic disturber of social harmony. In Churuli, these themes are advanced to a larger extent into a realm of fantasy and the metaphysical to depict the decay of society through cyclical disruption. Using the semiotics of the blending of reality and myth into stylized forms and narrative fragments, Pellissery penetrates the nature of masculinity and society related to fear.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study focuses solely on visual and cinematic analysis of the films.
- It does not consider audience reception or viewer interpretation.
- Production, industrial, and socio-economic contexts are excluded.
- This allows for greater depth in formal and thematic analysis.
- However, it limits broader cultural or demographic insights.

8. FUTURE PROSPECT OF THE STUDY/SCOPE:

The present study opens several avenues for further research into contemporary Indian cinema, particularly within the evolving landscape of Malayalam films. Future studies can expand this analysis by incorporating audience reception and interpretive frameworks, examining how viewers negotiate meaning, confusion, and sensory overload in films like Churuli and Jallikattu. Such an approach would

help bridge formal film analysis with cultural and psychological responses. Comparative research could also be undertaken by situating Lijo Jose Pellissery's work alongside global filmmakers who explore chaos, non-linearity, and nonhuman agency, such as Apichatpong Weerasethakul or Gaspar Noé, thereby placing Malayalam cinema within a broader transnational discourse. Additionally, future research may explore eco-critical and posthuman perspectives in greater depth, focusing on how landscapes, animals, and material environments function as narrative agents across regional cinemas.

Another potential direction lies in examining the industrial and technological contexts, including digital cinematography, sound design innovations, and streaming platforms, which enable such experimental storytelling. Lastly, extending the study to Pellissery's later works or similar contemporary films could help trace the evolution of fantasy-realism and chaos as enduring narrative strategies in Indian cinema.

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A Comparative Study of Women's Representation in Hindi Cinema: Analyzing *Darr* (1993) and *Darlings* (2022)

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Abstract: *The present study focuses on the changing representation of women in Hindi cinema through the comparative analysis of two films released almost three decades apart, Darr (1993) and Darlings (2022) in terms of the representation of the female protagonist. This research examines the representation of female protagonists in both films and analyzes the narrative and cinematographic methods that govern the depiction. A qualitative content analysis emphasizes on character development, visual framing, dialogue, narration agency and themes of gender-based violence. It goes on to interpret how in terms of larger changes in Bollywood, but coupled with new ways of storytelling brought on by the digital era, the screen portrayals of women have been affected. The findings point to the obvious shift from passive representations in the 1990s to more assertive and complex portraits of the contemporary cinema. This study calls attention to the role played by changing audience expectations and industry practices, as well as sociocultural conversations, in changing representations of women in Hindi films.*

Keywords: Hindi cinema, gender representation, *Darr*, *Darlings*, female agency, narrative analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

The portrayal of women in Hindi cinema has undergone a drastic transformation during the past couple of decades, indicating the broader social, cultural and industrial changes. Historically, the female characters in Bollywood films have often been passive figures whose primary narrative function was to either support or inspire the male protagonists. These depictions were influenced by social norms that reinforced traditional gender roles, moral expectations, and domesticity. Movies from the 1980s and early 1990s more often portrayed women as objects of desire, moral compasses or symbols of virtue but rarely enjoyed agency and centrality in the narration. This cinematic structure reflected the societal views of women at the time, and they perpetuated the patriarchal ideas of dependency, submission, and emotional fragility.

This trend is well manifested in *Darr*, by Yash Chopra and released in 1993. The female lead in this movie is built as a passive character and an object of the obsessive desire of the male antagonist. Her narrative trajectory is largely composed of male action - be it that of protection from harm or resolution of the central conflict. Cinematic techniques such as close ups, isolated framing and soft lighting further serve to visually reinforce her vulnerability, and the plot is committed to the male hero's journey in greater way than hers. This pattern reflects the larger conventions of mainstream Hindi cinema of the early 90s, in which women were symbolized rather than being active participants in the narrative.

By way of contrast, there is a tendency in mainstream Hindi films to foreground female agency and narrative centrality-the consequences of how tectonic plates of social consciousness, audience demand, and industry economies have shifted. The 2022 film *Darlings*, conceived in the context of a digital age has a female protagonist who is initially the victim of domestic abuse but grows into taking charge of her own situation. Her decisions, moral reasoning, and emotional resiliency come into clear focus in order to illustrate a remarkable shift in the treatment of feminine agency in the narrative. Dynamic

framing, medium shots and evocative mise-en-scene emphasise this agency, depicting her as the actor in her story rather than the object of male desire.

This shift in representation in the cinema is part of broader cultural and industrial changes. Social movements for women's rights, greater visibility of domestic abuse issues and changing societal expectations have influenced filmmakers to create more nuanced and empowered female characters. Simultaneously, the emergence of digital platforms and the diversification of audience demographics has fostered experimentation with narrative, enabling films to give greater priority to women's perspectives in a way that was less financially or socially viable during the previous decades. This research examines the extent to which Hindi cinema shapes and also mirrors cultural notions of women's perceptions by understanding the change from Darr to Darlings and understanding the role of the interaction between the practice of narratives, gender norm and cinematic form.

The comparison of the movies from one decade to the next creates a special lens through which one can look at these changes. By examining character construction, dialogue, and the organization of narration and the technique employed in the representation of visual information, the development of women's acting careers in cinema can be traced, withisms that identify patterns of continuity and transformation. These studies have great value for development of film history itself but also for the research of the more general relationship between media, culture, and social change. This research places this comparative analysis between Darr and Darlings in context and discusses how female protagonists are represented, the way in which their agency is represented and how changing cinematic practices have reshaped their narrative salience.

Ultimately, the goal of this study will be to determine the way Hindi cinema has progressed from depicting women as passive symbols, to multidimensional, autonomous, and pivotal characters in the storytelling process. The research indicates changes that, in addition, further develop the knowledge about the representation of gender in Indian popular culture and provide a basis for analyzing the continuing development of cinematic texts and their social effects.

2. Review of Literature

Scholarly discussions on women's representation in cinema have consistently highlighted the dominance of patriarchal narrative structures and visual conventions. Laura Mulvey's (1975) seminal essay on Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema introduces the concept of the male gaze, arguing that mainstream cinema positions women as passive visual objects while privileging male spectatorship and narrative authority. Mulvey's framework remains foundational in feminist film theory and provides a critical lens for understanding how cinematic form, including camera work and narrative alignment, shapes audience perceptions of gender roles. Although rooted in Hollywood cinema, her arguments have been widely applied to global film industries, including Hindi cinema, to explain the persistence of passive and ornamental female characters in earlier decades.

Studies on Indian popular cinema further contextualize these gendered portrayals within cultural and social traditions. Gokulsing and Dissanayake (1998) argue that Hindi cinema reflects and reinforces dominant cultural values by repeatedly presenting women as symbols of morality, tradition, and family honor. Their analysis demonstrates how melodramatic storytelling conventions limit female characters to predictable emotional roles centered on sacrifice, devotion, and obedience. Such frameworks help explain the constrained representation of women in mainstream Hindi films of the 1990s, where individual expression was often subordinated to cultural ideals.

Kazmi's (1999) examination of gender politics in Hindi cinema emphasizes how narrative structures privilege male protagonists while positioning women as facilitators of male emotional journeys. Through tropes such as the idealized heroine and the suffering wife, Hindi films historically reinforced traditional power hierarchies. Kazmi's work provides a critical foundation for understanding why female characters in older films often lacked independent narrative arcs, remaining dependent on male protection or intervention.

The relationship between femininity and national identity is further explored by Chakravarty (1993), who argues that women in Hindi cinema are frequently used to embody cultural purity and moral order. Her work shows how female characters are tied to social expectations rather than personal desire, particularly during periods of social transition. This framework is useful for tracing how cinematic representations of women have evolved alongside changing ideas of nationhood and modernity.

Several scholars have also examined how masculinity and power structures shape women's representation. Derne (2008) highlights how Hindi cinema often constructs men as protectors or dominant figures, reinforcing gender hierarchies that limit women's agency. Similarly, Mishra (2002) discusses how narratives driven by male desire position women as objects of longing or suffering, emphasizing their symbolic rather than autonomous function. These perspectives collectively illustrate how women's roles have historically been shaped by male-centered narrative priorities.

Research focusing specifically on women's representation across decades highlights gradual shifts in cinematic portrayals. Munshi (2010) identifies recurring stereotypes of devotion and emotional endurance while noting emerging attempts to portray women more realistically. Mazumdar (2007) and Datta (2017) extend this discussion by examining how urban settings and spatial dynamics restrict or enable female agency, showing how domestic confinement has often reinforced dependence. Uberoi (2001) further links women's cinematic roles to family and marriage narratives, emphasizing their function as stabilizing moral forces.

More recent scholarship points to significant changes in contemporary Hindi cinema. Nath (2021), Sen (2015), and Dwyer (2019) observe a growing trend toward women-centric narratives shaped by evolving audience expectations, digital platforms, and increased social awareness of gender issues. Sarkar (2017) specifically addresses changing representations of violence, noting that newer films increasingly depict women responding to abuse with greater complexity and agency. Dudrah (2015) and Mazumdar (2010) situate these shifts within broader discussions of identity and popular culture, arguing that cinema both reflects and participates in social change.

Collectively, this body of literature establishes a critical foundation for examining how women's representation in Hindi cinema has evolved over time. It demonstrates that cinematic portrayals are shaped by cultural norms, industrial practices, and shifting social discourses, making comparative studies across decades particularly valuable for understanding changing narrative and visual strategies.

2.2 Objectives

- To analyze the changing treatment of female protagonists in Darr (1993) and Darlings (2022) in terms of the changing treatment of women in Hindi cinema.
- To uncover the narrative and cinematic features such as character development, dialogue, framing, and so on that contribute to contrasting depictions of women's roles in the two films.
- To interpret how changing spaces of narrating stories, from the mainstream 1990s Bollywood to the digital age of 2020s cinema impacted the creative authorship and agency accorded to female characters.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology to examine the representation of women in Hindi cinema through a comparative analysis of the films Darr (1993) and Darlings (2022). A qualitative approach is appropriate as the research focuses on interpreting narratives, character arcs, and cinematic techniques rather than measuring numerical data. The study seeks to understand how women are positioned within film narratives and how these representations reflect broader social and cultural shifts over time.

The research design is comparative, selecting two films released nearly three decades apart to highlight change and continuity in gender representation. Darr represents mainstream Hindi cinema of the early

1990s, a period dominated by male-centric narratives and traditional gender roles. *Darlings* represents contemporary Hindi cinema shaped by digital platforms, evolving audience sensibilities, and increased engagement with issues such as domestic violence and women's agency. The temporal distance between the two films enables a meaningful comparison of cinematic approaches to female subjectivity.

The selection of these films is based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. Both films feature a woman at the center of the narrative conflict, yet differ significantly in how that character is written and resolved. *Darr* portrays its female protagonist largely as passive, functioning within a narrative driven by male desire and protection. In contrast, *Darlings* presents a female protagonist whose choices and actions actively shape the narrative outcome. Both films are culturally significant and widely viewed, making them suitable case studies for analyzing mainstream trends rather than marginal representations.

The primary data for this study consists of the films themselves, treated as textual and visual documents. Multiple viewings of each film were conducted to closely analyze narrative structure, character development, dialogue, and visual composition. Particular attention is given to scenes involving conflict, vulnerability, and decision-making to assess the degree of agency afforded to female characters. Dialogue is examined for its role in expressing power relations and moral positioning, while visual elements such as framing and camera movement are analyzed to understand how cinematic language reinforces or challenges gender norms.

Secondary data includes scholarly literature on feminist film theory, gender representation in Hindi cinema, and cultural studies. These sources provide the conceptual and historical context necessary to interpret the films critically. The review of literature informs the analytical categories used in the study and ensures that the analysis remains grounded in established academic debates.

The analytical method employed is thematic analysis. Key themes such as agency, victimhood, resistance, and patriarchal control are identified and examined across both films. This thematic approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how similar narrative situations are treated differently across time periods. Contextual analysis is also incorporated, situating each film within its socio-cultural environment.

The theoretical framework for this study draws primarily from feminist film theory and gender studies. Laura Mulvey's concept of the male gaze is used to analyze how women are visually positioned within cinematic narratives, particularly in *Darr*. Additionally, scholarship on Indian popular cinema informs the analysis. These frameworks guide interpretation and comparative evaluation.

4. Analysis

The analysis reveals a clear shift in the representation of women in Hindi cinema when comparing *Darr* (1993) and *Darlings* (2022), both at the narrative and cinematic levels. In *Darr*, the female protagonist is positioned largely as an object around which male conflict unfolds. Her character is defined by vulnerability, fear, and moral purity, with limited narrative control. The story progresses through male action and resolution, reinforcing patriarchal structures in which women function as passive figures requiring protection. Cinematic techniques such as close-ups, soft lighting, and restricted framing visually emphasize her fragility and emotional dependence, aligning with dominant gender norms of the early 1990s.

In contrast, *Darlings* presents a female protagonist who occupies the narrative center and actively drives the plot. While the film begins with her in a position of victimhood, it gradually foregrounds her agency as she makes deliberate choices in response to domestic abuse. The narrative privileges her perspective, allowing her moral reasoning, emotional complexity, and resistance to shape the film's direction. Visual strategies reinforce this shift, using dynamic framing, spatial control, and *mise-en-scène* to assert her presence rather than isolate her. The camera often aligns with her point of view, challenging earlier conventions that framed women primarily through male desire or fear.

The comparison demonstrates that the transformation in representation is not limited to character development but extends to cinematic language itself. The shift from passive framing to assertive visual positioning reflects broader socio-cultural changes, including increased awareness of gender inequality

and violence against women. Industrial changes, such as the rise of digital platforms and content-driven narratives, have also enabled more nuanced portrayals. Together, these factors indicate that contemporary Hindi cinema increasingly recognizes women as active agents rather than symbolic figures, marking a significant departure from earlier representational norms.

5. Conclusion

The study illustrates that there has been a clear and significant change in the portrayal of women in Hindi cinema from the early 1990s till date. Through comparing *Darr* (1993) and *Darlings* (2022), the research highlights some key changes as far as narrative focus, character development, and cinematic techniques used to shape the female protagonists. The female character in *Darr* finds herself in traditional gender stereotypes that emphasise emotional dependence, passivity and vulnerability. Her existence is a catalyst to conflict rather than an active player in the story and her narrative significance is largely dictated by the behaviour of the male characters around her. Through framing, lighting and camera techniques, the movie shows her fragility, showing the greater social expectations placed on women during the period when the movie was done.

On the contrary, *Darlings* delivers the rather modern female character who dictates where the story will lead with her choices, reactions and depth. In the film, Badru is the focus upon which her point of view moves the viewer in understanding the story. She goes through a journey of self-realization, from being afraid and indecisive she becomes a controlling, commanding character. Framing, emphasis on dialogue, mise-en-scene, and the story being driven by characters, allow her agency and make her character multidimensional. This has been different from the portrayals in the past when the women were often seen to be in a state of dependence on some male intervention to save them emotionally or physically.

These changes are the representation of wider social, cultural and industrial changes which have affected the film industry over the last three decades. Increasing public awareness about domestic violence, changing gender relations, and continuing discussion related to women's rights have helped to demand for more realistic and powerful representation of women on the screen. The rise of digital platforms has also made it easier for filmmakers to tell various stories without facing the commercial restrictions that would normally be associated with mainstream theatrical releases. In this way, films such as *Darlings* are able to tackle topics that are sensitive in nature with more subtlety and candor, and so room is made for stories centered around the experiences and viewpoints of women.

The comparative analysis in this paper depicts how the representation of the cinematic text is shaped by the cultural climate within which the film is produced. While *Darr* falls for the gender norms that were entrenched in the early 1990s, *Darlings* imagines a society more sympathetic to issues of women's agency, safety, and emotional strength. This implies that, given time, Hindi cinema creeps towards storylines in which women are actual persons rather than symbolic foils to men's stories. These representations are a mirror not only of change in the society but also help to construct new expectations of women's roles in the media and culture. Overall, the findings have underlined the fact that the change in women's representation is significant as well as continuous in Hindi cinema. Even though the signs of change is welcoming in the contemporary films, a deeper understanding of the way the portrayal of gender evolves continuously, would be aided by further examination across genres, eras, and regional industries. Future research could shift into considering more case studies, or adding audience reception to see how viewers interpret changing representations. This study adds to wider debates of gender and media as it provides an insight into how cinema is responsive to and part of cultural transformation.

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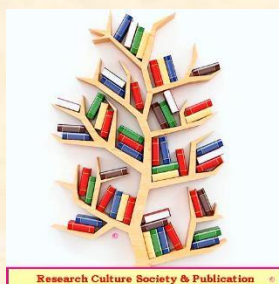
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