THE BUSINESS BEAT

Strategies, Markets, Business & Society (SMBS)

Volume 1 | Issue 1 JANUARY 2026

NEWSLETTER FROM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS STUDIES, MAHATMA GANDHI UNIVERSITY

Message from the Honourable Vice-Chancellor

Prof. (Dr.) C.T. Aravindakumar

I am pleased to learn about the launch of *'The Business Beat'*, the newsletter of the School of Management and Business Studies. This maiden edition marks a commendable initiative and reflects the School's commitment to academic excellence, intellectual engagement, and effective dissemination of knowledge. In an era characterized by rapid economic transformation, technological advancement, and global interconnectedness, management education plays a crucial role in shaping responsible leaders and innovative thinkers. A newsletter such as *'The Business Beat'* serves as an important academic platform to capture ideas, achievements, research endeavors, and best practices emerging from the School, while also fostering dialogue between academia and industry. I am confident that this publication will not only highlight the academic, co-curricular, and research activities of students and faculty but also provide valuable insights into contemporary business trends, ethical practices, and entrepreneurial thinking. By encouraging reflection, analysis, and informed discussion, The Business Beat will contribute meaningfully to the academic ecosystem of the University. I congratulate the School of Management and Business Studies, the editorial team, faculty members, and students for their collective efforts in bringing out this inaugural issue. Such initiatives strengthen institutional culture, promote collaboration, and enhance the visibility of the School's contributions to management education. I extend my best wishes for the continued success of *'The Business Beat'* and hope it evolves into a distinguished publication that consistently reflects the vision, values, and excellence of the University.

Director's Message

Prof. (Dr.) Johney Johnson

It gives me immense pleasure to present the inaugural edition of *'The Business Beat'*, the official newsletter of the School of Management and Business Studies. The launch of this newsletter marks a significant milestone in our journey toward academic excellence, innovation, and meaningful engagement with the evolving world of business and management. In today's dynamic and interconnected global economy, management education must go beyond textbooks and classrooms. *'The Business Beat'* has been conceived as a vibrant knowledge-sharing platform that reflects the intellectual energy of our institution. It seeks to showcase the academic achievements of our students and faculty, highlight research contributions, document co-curricular and extracurricular initiatives, and provide insights into emerging industry trends and best practices. This newsletter also serves as a bridge-connecting students, faculty members, alumni, and industry professionals. By fostering dialogue and disseminating ideas, it aims to nurture critical thinking, leadership skills, ethical values, and an entrepreneurial mindset among our learners. We envision *'The Business Beat'* as a chronicle of our collective efforts, aspirations, and accomplishments. I commend the editorial team, faculty coordinators, student contributors, and all those involved for their dedication and creativity in bringing out this maiden issue. Their efforts reflect teamwork, professionalism, and a strong commitment to institutional growth. I am confident that *'The Business Beat'* will evolve into a flagship publication of the School of Management and Business Studies, enriching our academic culture and enhancing our visibility and impact. I encourage all stakeholders to actively contribute and engage with future editions. I extend my best wishes to the entire team and look forward to many more insightful and inspiring editions of *'The Business Beat'*.

PUTIN'S VISIT TO INDIA
A Turning Point For Business and Trade

Ejas Ahammed Nowshad
S3 MBA

President Vladimir Putin's visit to India on December 4th and 5th, held primarily in New Delhi, comes at a moment when the global economic order is undergoing visible stress. Trade routes are being reconfigured, supply chains are no longer taken for granted, and businesses across the world are learning to operate amid geopolitical uncertainty. Against this backdrop, The India-Russia Annual Summit 2025 was not merely a diplomatic engagement but a carefully watched event with clear economic and commercial implications.

What stood out during the visit was the emphasis on continuity, stability, and long-term cooperation rather than headline-grabbing announcements. The discussions reflected a shared understanding that **sustainable business relations are built gradually, through trade frameworks, institutional cooperation, and trust between markets.**

Reworking the Trade Relationship

India-Russia trade has grown rapidly in recent years, but it has also become highly concentrated, with energy imports accounting for a large share. During the visit, both sides openly acknowledged the need to correct this imbalance and move towards a more diversified trade structure.

Russia expressed interest in expanding imports from India, particularly in sectors where Indian firms have developed global competitiveness. Pharmaceuticals, agricultural products, engineering goods, and textiles were repeatedly highlighted as areas with strong growth potential. For Indian exporters, this signals the possibility of tapping into a large market that is actively seeking alternative supply sources.

This shift, however, will require more than policy intent. Businesses will need to invest in understanding regulatory requirements, consumer preferences, and distribution networks within the Russian market. The visit, therefore, sets the direction, while execution will depend on how effectively companies respond.

Energy Cooperation as an Economic Stabiliser

Energy cooperation remained central to the discussions, reflecting its importance in the bilateral relationship. Russia's assurance of continued and reliable energy supplies carries significance beyond diplomatic messaging. For India, affordable and stable energy imports play a critical role in controlling inflation, supporting industrial output, and maintaining economic momentum.

The dialogue also extended beyond crude oil to include fertilizers and petrochemical cooperation. Fertilizers, in particular, have a direct bearing on agricultural productivity and food prices. By strengthening cooperation in this area, both countries aim to reduce vulnerabilities arising from global supply disruptions.

From a business standpoint, predictable energy and input costs allow firms to plan investments and operations with greater confidence, an often-overlooked but crucial factor in long-term growth.

Placing the Private Sector at the Centre

A notable feature of the visit was the attention given to business-to-business engagement. While government-to-government agreements set the framework, the real momentum in trade comes from companies identifying opportunities and building partnerships.

Industry interactions during the visit focused on sectors such as technology, clean energy, logistics, and advanced manufacturing. These discussions reflect an effort to move the relationship beyond traditional trade into areas that support innovation and value creation.

Improved connectivity through transport corridors and logistics cooperation was also highlighted. Efficient logistics reduce transaction costs and improve competitiveness, making trade commercially viable rather than merely strategic.

Rethinking Financial Arrangements

Another important dimension of the visit was the renewed emphasis on financial cooperation, particularly the use of national currencies for trade settlement. In a global environment marked by currency volatility and financial restrictions, this approach is seen as a way to ensure smoother transactions and reduce exposure to external shocks.

For businesses, alternative payment mechanisms can improve cash flow management and reduce transaction delays. While challenges remain in scaling such systems, the intent signals a willingness to adapt financial practices to changing global realities

Opportunities and Responsibilities for Businesses

The outcomes of the visit open several doors for Indian companies; from expanding exports to forming joint ventures and exploring new supply chains. At the same time, they underline the responsibility of businesses to approach these opportunities with careful planning.

Trade imbalances, regulatory differences, and geopolitical risks remain part of the equation. Companies will need to strengthen risk assessment, compliance mechanisms, and market intelligence to operate successfully in this evolving environment.

Navigating a Complex Global Landscape

The visit also reflects India's broader approach to international economic engagement, One that seeks to balance relationships without becoming overly dependent on any single partner. This pragmatic stance is increasingly relevant in a world where economic decisions are often shaped by political considerations. For businesses, this means operating with agility, staying informed about global developments, and being prepared to adjust strategies as conditions change.

President Putin's visit to India may not have produced dramatic announcements, but its significance lies in the direction it sets for future business and trade relations. By focusing on diversification, energy security, private sector participation, and financial cooperation, the visit strengthens the foundation of the India-Russia economic partnership.

In an uncertain global economy, such steady and structured engagement offers businesses a measure of predictability; an asset that is becoming increasingly valuable.

TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE OF PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Krishnapriya S
(MBA S3)

In today's digital era, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a game-changer across industries—and Human Resource Management is no exception. What was once considered a function rooted purely in human judgment has now evolved into a technology-driven discipline where data, automation and intelligence shape organizational performance. AI is not replacing HR; instead, it is redefining how HR professionals work, make decisions, and create value.

Enhancing Recruitment and Talent Acquisition :One of the most visible impacts of AI is in recruitment. Intelligent algorithms screen thousands of resumes within seconds, shortlist candidates based on specific criteria, and even remove potential bias by focusing on skills rather than subjective impressions. Chabot's conduct initial candidate interactions, schedule interviews, and answer common queries—speeding up the hiring cycle. AI-driven assessments also analyses communication, problem-solving, and cultural fit, making recruitment more accurate and efficient.

Improving Employee Learning and Development : AI has revolutionised training through personalised learning platforms. These systems identify skill gaps, recommend customised courses, and track progress. Adaptive learning modules adjust difficulty levels based on employee performance, creating a more engaging experience. Virtual reality (VR) and AI-powered simulations also help organizationsconduct skill-based training in risk-free environments.

Enhancing Employee Experience and Engagement: Employee experience is now a major focus area, and AI tools help HR understand workforce sentiment through real-time feedback analysis. Sentiment-tracking platforms analyses employee comments, surveys and communication patterns to identify early signs of stress, disengagement, or burnout. AI-powered virtual assistants support employees by providing instant responses to HR queries, reducing wait time and improving satisfaction.

Data-Driven Decision Making: AI enables HR managers to move from intuition-based decisions to evidence-based insights. Predictive analytics tools forecast employee turnover, identify high-potential performers, and analysesorganizational trends. By using data patterns, HR can design proactive strategies—such as retention plans, workload adjustments, or tailored benefits—to support organizational goals.

Streamlining HR Operations: Routine tasks like payroll processing, attendance tracking, leave management and compliance have become faster and more error-free with automation. AI-powered HRIS systems integrate all employee information, helping HR teams work more strategically rather than spending time on paperwork. This shift allows professionals to focus on high-value tasks such as employee development, policy formulation and organizational culture.

Addressing Ethical and Human Concerns: Despite its advantages, AI also poses challenges. Over-reliance on algorithms could overlook human emotions, and poorly designed AI models may introduce hidden biases. There are also concerns about privacy and data security. Therefore, organizations must adopt AI responsibly—with transparency, fairness and appropriate human oversight.

AI is transforming HR by bringing efficiency, accuracy and innovation to traditional processes. For future managers and HR professionals, understanding AI is no longer optional—it is essential. By blending technological intelligence with human insight, organizations can build workplaces that are smarter, more inclusive and better prepared for the future. AI does not replace the "human" in Human Resources; it strengthens it.

Learning and Development in the Digital Era

Anila Ashok
(MBA S3)

The digital era has significantly transformed the way organisations approach learning and development. Rapid technological advancements, globalization, and changing workforce expectations have made continuous learning a necessity rather than an option. Traditional classroom-based training methods are gradually being replaced or supported by digital learning solutions that offer flexibility, accessibility, and personalization. Learning and Development (L&D) in the digital era focuses on equipping employees with updated skills, improving performance, and preparing them to adapt to constant change. As organisations face intense competition and innovation, effective digital L&D strategies play a crucial role in ensuring long-term organisational success.

Learning and Development in the digital era is characterized by the shift from conventional training methods to technology-driven learning approaches. Digital learning allows employees to access training materials anytime and anywhere, enabling self-paced and continuous learning. E-learning platforms and Learning Management Systems (LMS) have become central to modern L&D as they help organisations deliver structured training programs, monitor employee progress, and assess learning outcomes efficiently. These systems support a wide range of learning formats such as videos, presentations, quizzes, and assessments, making learning more engaging and interactive.

Another important feature of digital L&D is microlearning, which focuses on delivering short and focused learning content. This approach matches the modern employee's limited attention span and helps in better retention of knowledge. Mobile learning further strengthens digital L&D by allowing employees to learn using smartphones and tablets, increasing convenience and participation. The integration of advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, and Augmented Reality has further enhanced learning experiences by enabling personalized learning paths, real-time feedback, and immersive skill development. Social learning through digital collaboration platforms encourages knowledge sharing, teamwork, and peer-to-peer learning, creating a strong learning culture within the organisation.

Digital L&D also relies heavily on data and analytics to measure training effectiveness and identify skill gaps. By analysing learning data, HR professionals can design targeted training programs that align with organisational goals and employee needs. Despite its many advantages, digital learning also presents challenges such as digital fatigue, technological barriers, and the need for continuous content updates. Therefore, organisations must balance technology with human interaction and provide adequate support to ensure effective learning outcomes.

Moreover, digital learning supports upskilling and reskilling initiatives, which are essential as job roles and technologies continue to evolve. It also helps organisations maintain consistency in training across different locations and departments. By encouraging self-directed learning, digital L&D increases employee motivation, accountability, and long-term career development.

Learning and Development in the digital era has redefined how employees acquire knowledge and develop skills. Technology-driven learning solutions offer flexibility, efficiency, and opportunities for continuous growth, making them essential for modern organisations. Although challenges such as digital overload and technical limitations exist, well-planned digital L&D strategies can overcome these issues and enhance employee engagement and performance. By embracing digital learning and fostering a culture of continuous development, organisations can build a skilled, adaptable, and future-ready. ▪

STOCK MARKET UNDER PRESSURE:
Understanding the Current Volatility in Indian Equities

Abhishek K S
S3 MBA

The Indian stock market is currently experiencing significant volatility. This is due to a mix of global uncertainties, cautious investor sentiment, and changing economic expectations. In recent days, benchmark indices like the BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 have faced consistent declines, reflecting a more risk-averse attitude among investors.

While fluctuations in financial markets are common, the recent drop points to deeper reasons behind investor actions. This article looks at the main factors causing the current market pressure and its implications for the economy and market participants at large.

1. Global Economic Uncertainty Affects Sentiment

The global financial landscape has been unstable, mainly because of concerns about interest rate decisions from major central banks, like the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank. When policymakers signal potential rate hikes or extended tight monetary conditions, international investors usually move their money into safer assets.

For Indian markets, this results in:

- Foreign Institutional Investor (FII) selling,

- Increased volatility in currency markets, and

- Weakness in sectors sensitive to global capital movements, such as IT and financials.

2. Rupee Depreciation Increases Pressure

The sharp drop in the Indian rupee against the US dollar has added to market instability. A weaker rupee impacts:

- Import-heavy industries like oil, gas, and manufacturing,

- Companies with significant foreign debt,

- Overall inflation expectations, as imported goods become pricier.

3. Profit Booking by Domestic Investors

After months of steady gains, domestic investors are now taking profits, especially in sectors that reached record highs. While profit booking is not unusual, it can amplify downward trends in tandem with global sell-offs.

Mid-cap and small-cap stocks are particularly at risk, as these segments usually see sharper corrections in volatile times.

4. Mixed Corporate Earnings and Specific Sector Challenges

Recent quarterly earnings have been uneven across sectors. While banking and FMCG sectors have shown strength, areas like:

- Information Technology,

- Pharmaceuticals, and

- Export-oriented industries

have reported slower growth due to weak global demand and rising cost pressures. This disparity among sectors has contributed to uncertainty and inconsistent market trends.

5. Rising Commodity Prices and Inflation Worries

Fluctuations in crude oil and commodity prices are a major concern since India heavily relies on imports. Higher energy costs lead to:

- Increased manufacturing costs,

- Higher transportation expenses, and

- Elevated inflation expectations.

6. Investor Focus Shifting Toward Safety

In times of market pressure, investors typically gravitate towards safer assets such as:

- Government securities,

- Gold, and

- High-quality debt instruments.

This shift tends to reduce liquidity in equity markets, increasing volatility and leading to sharper corrections.

What This Means to the General Public and Investors

Therefore, this volatility is something that has important implications for investors and non-investors who are part of the larger economy. Stock market movements often reflect deeper economic processes, the effects of which gradually percolate into daily life.

To the individual investor, this phase reminds one of the virtues of patience and long-term orientation. Short-term market declines may be unnerving, but they are part of economic cycles. History has shown that in such periods of uncertainty, markets recover, rewarding disciplined investors rather than those who react emotionally.

Market pressure can indicate to working professionals and households a broader economic change, such as increasing inflation, higher costs of borrowing, and employment trends. These factors are drivers of loan rates, household expenses, and future financial planning. Knowing these signals can better equip people with decisions concerning savings, investments, and spending.

During such phases, businesses-mostly small and medium enterprises-have to bear the burden of higher input costs and cautious consumer demand. On the other hand, a period of correction usually instills efficiency, innovation, and prudent financial management that could lead to strengthening businesses with time.

On the whole, the market scenario today clearly demonstrates how global events, domestic economic policy, and individual finances are deeply interconnected. This can be a period of readjustment rather than just being threatening: a period in which expectations are reset and a viable foundation laid for growth when times turn stable.

The current pressure on the stock market reflects a complex relationship among global uncertainties, domestic economic factors, and changing investor behaviour. While this turbulence may be worrying in the short term, it provides important insights into how financial markets react to economic signals. ▪

Financial Inclusion and Digital Financial Access in Emerging Economies

Emerging economies are not just adopting digital finance; they are redefining economic participation itself.

India is about to undergo a financial revolution unprecedented in its history. A national movement driven by digital identity, mobile payments, fintech innovation, and policy-led inclusion has grown out of what started out as a mission to bank the unbanked. Once plagued by widespread financial exclusion, the country now leads the world in digital public infrastructure. Over 500 million Indians joined the formal banking system between 2014 and 2025, bringing account ownership close to universal levels. This change affects the lives of rural farmers, gig workers, women entrepreneurs, and senior citizens alike. It is not just technological; it is social, economic, and profoundly human.

UPI and the Rise of Digital Finance: One of the most important drivers of India's financial inclusion journey is the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Launched in 2016, UPI has completely changed how money moves in India. What began as a simple peer-to-peer payment system has grown into the world's largest real-time digital payments network. In June 2025 alone, India processed over 18.39 billion UPI transactions worth 24.03 lakh crore, while UPI remains the backbone of everyday digital commerce. Handling nearly 85% of the nation's digital payments and close to half of global real-time transactions, UPI has set a global benchmark.

The impact of UPI is beyond smartphone users. From offline UPI and USSD options, digital payments have reached rural and low-connectivity areas, and millions have joined the digital revolution. With nearly $120 billion in annual remittances going directly to Indian households, with UPI, distances, high costs, and delays gave place to speed, trust, and convenience.

This transformation is part of a broader global shift toward digital finance. According to the most recent Global Findex from the World Bank, financial account usage in developing economies has reached an all-time high, with 40% of adults saving through a formal account in 2024. At the same time, mobile money platforms worldwide have

Josmi Xavier
MBA S3

surpassed two billion registered accounts and now process transactions worth nearly $1.7 trillion annually. These developments show that financial inclusion is no longer limited by physical distance or bank branches. Instead, it is being powered by digital systems that connect individuals directly to the formal financial ecosystem. As digital payment networks expand, digital rails are increasingly becoming the backbone of financial inclusion in emerging markets.

India's Success in Financial Inclusion: India represents one of the most powerful examples of this transformation. Between 2014 and 2025, more than 500 million citizens have entered the formal banking system, achieving near-universal account ownership. The recent improvement has been powered by digital public infrastructure in the form of Aadhaar for identity, Jan Dhan accounts for access, and UPI for transactions. UPI, initiated in 2016, became the world's largest real-time payment system. By mid-2025, it processes billions of transactions each month and forms the spine of everyday commerce. Its offline and low-connectivity features have further extended digital finance into rural and underserved regions, ensuring inclusion beyond urban India.

Government Initiatives: Banking Beyond Branches: The success story of financial inclusion in India has been made possible by the government's focused initiative over the past decade, which has increased accessibility, usage, as well as the quality of financial services. This has been led by the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), which has over 55.98 Crore accounts, with more than half of them being female accounts. In addition, the availability of Ru Pay Cards, overdraft, microinsurance, Bank Mitras,

and Digital Banking Units has enabled branchless banking, which has now become a reality in India. Other sectors that have increased the safety net available to the less privileged, such as low-income households and the unorganized sector, are insurance, pension, PMSBY, PMJJBY, and APY.

Credit facilities have also been revolutionized. Schemes such as MUDRA and Stand-Up India have offered more than 35 lakh crore and 61,000 crore, respectively, to small borrowers, first-time entrepreneurs, SC/ST communities, as well as women-owned businesses. For farmers, Kisan Credit Cards have increased two-fold the amount of institutional credit, thereby making them less dependent on private moneylenders. For instance, Mahila Samriddhi Yojana, which provides training for skills along with microfinance, has improved the presence of women in the financial sector. Such interventions indicate that India has transformed from selective banking to universal access.

Bridging India's Digital Gap: Even with significant progress, India still faces structural challenges in digital finance. Nearly 200 million rural citizens struggle with poor connectivity, cyber fraud reached 1.25 lakh crore in 2025, digital literacy remains low among first-time users, and regional disparities limit equitable access. India's government has taken highly progressive, foresighted steps in the following areas: The Digital Payments Vision 2025, initiated by the RBI, specifically focuses on offline UPI solutions, with many solutions available for low-internet conditions, Aadhaar-enabled e-KYC allows accounts to be opened in minutes, The Digital Rupee, a CBDC pilot with more than 20 million users, provides a safe way of managing cash while ensuring efficient welfare distribution, and the Account Aggregator System secures data sharing with consent, thereby enhancing availability of formal credit to MSMEs as well as individuals.

Financial Inclusion Index 2025: The RBI's Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index) captures India's progress across access, usage, and quality. The FY2025 score of 67.0, up from 64.2 in 2024, reflects meaningful improvements across banking, insurance, pensions, digital infrastructure and grievance redressal. The index has moved up by 24.3% since it was launched in 2021, indicating sustained national commitment toward a more inclusive financial ecosystem.

A Future-Ready Financial System: The benefits of financial inclusion brought by digitization are far more than a matter of convenience. It is suggested that financial inclusion through fintech has the potential to add trillions of dollars to the GDP of emerging economies over the coming decade. MSMEs are able to access to formal credit, households are able to enhance resilience, and the government is also able to optimize welfare because of direct benefit transfers.These reforms signal a deeper shift in how economies function. Finance is no longer a privilege mediated by proximity or paperwork; it is becoming a public utility embedded in daily life.

But with careful application, the financial access revolution will merely increase the number of people banked, it might just democratize the entire process of opportunistic growth. This is the lesson that aspiring future managers, policymakers, and financial experts need to learn. The age of exclusion is over; the future is for financially inclusive economies.

India's experience reveals a profound truth: when finance becomes digital, it becomes democratic and in emerging Indian economies, this democracy of financial access is building a stronger, more inclusive India.

▪

PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND OUR FINANCIAL CHOICES

A multitude of psychological and social factors that affect our decisions.

Behavioural finance examines the substantial linkage between human psychology and financial decision-making. While traditional finance is based on the assumption that people are rational and will continually act in their own best economic interest, actual human behaviour is much more complicated. Behavioural finance enables us to comprehend why we make financial decisions and why markets sometimes act unpredictably. It also shows how psychological factors can affect everything, from personal spending habits to general investment trends.

This field became especially important after the financial crisis in 2008, when economists realized that market outcomes could not be explained through rational models alone. Human emotions, fear cycles, herd reactions, and mental shortcuts all enter into financial behaviour-revealing a world wherein decisions are not always logical but emotional and deeply psychological.

Cognitive Biases and Mental Shortcuts in Financial Decision-Making

Behavioural finance rests on one of the central ideas that there are cognitive biases, or systematic errors in thinking, that serve to influence the ways in which we process information and make decisions. Commonly, our brains use shortcuts called heuristics to reach quick judgments. These rules of thumb are helpful in everyday life but unhelpful when dealing with difficult financial decisions.

For example, confirmation bias leads people to seek out information that confirms their preconceptions while ignoring evidences. In the social media environment, this leads to echo chambers in which investors hear only what they want to hear and end up making decisions based on incomplete or biased information. Similarly, familiarity bias compels people toward what is familiar.

Another powerful bias is self-serving bias: people attribute their own skill for successes but cite bad luck for failures. This leads to overconfidence, which promotes unnecessary risk. There is also framing bias, which is a cognitive bias where the presentation of information, not the information itself, affects decisions. For instance, a gain framed as a "90% chance of profit" seems more enticing than a "10% chance of loss," even though they mean the same thing.

These prejudices show that not every investor view information objectively. Rather, their decisions are influenced by internal beliefs, emotional comfort, and subconscious patterns

Malavika S Nair
MBA S3

passed down through experience and society.

Emotional Influences and the Irrational Side of Money

Money evokes strong emotions: fear of losing savings, the thrill of possible profits. Emotions, rather than logic rule these decisions. Among the key concepts of behavioural finance is loss aversion, meaning the pain of losing money is emotionally twice as powerful as the pleasure of earning an equivalent amount.

This fact has been captured by the following statement of the founders of behavioural finance:

"People fear losses more than they value gains." – Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman

This emotional imbalance interferes with everything, from minor purchasing decisions to major investment strategies

This leads investors to hold on to losing stocks too long, hoping they will recover, or sell the winning stocks too early to "lock in" gains. It is the fear that leads to panic sales during market crashes, and greed that drives people to chase rising markets without an understanding of risks. Pride keeps people from admitting mistakes, while anxiety leads to hesitation and lost opportunities.

Even professional analysts and economists who have been trained to base their views on data and logic succumb to emotional traps. Our brains never developed to think in terms of abstract concepts related to financial risk, compounding, or long-term market uncertainty. Because of this, emotional awareness and discipline become essential tools for responsible financial behaviour.

Behavioural Patterns and Social Influence in Investment Choices

Human behaviour is influenced a great deal by the actions and expectations of other people. This is why herd behaviour can be seen in financial markets: when many people start buying any particular stock, cryptocurrency, or an asset, others join in-not because they understand the investment, but because they fear missing out.

This has conventionally resulted in financial bubbles, market crashes, and irrational price movements. Individuals usually think that if everyone else invests in something, then that must be a good opportunity. The herd mentality drives up prices way beyond real values to crash when confidence falls.

Social comparison plays a role. Seeing peers succeed financially through social media posts, conversations, or lifestyle changes creates pressure to follow similar investment trends. This type of social influence makes it harder for people to think independently, to analyse risks, or to make decisions in the long run according to their goals.

Understanding these psychological patterns helps the investor ground their judgment, avoid emotional traps, and make decisions based on analysis rather than pressure from people surrounding them.

The Importance of Behavioural Finance to Growing Generations

Today, the financial world for younger generations is faster, digitized, and emotionally provoking than ever. Access to trading apps, hype from cryptocurrencies, online influencers, and a constant stream of finances, young investors today are more susceptible to emotional decision-making, misinformation, and herd mentality. Behavioural finance helps the young generation understand their own psychological reactions to money and how to recognize biases, stay calm in market ups and downs, and make long-term thoughtful decisions, rather than impulsive ones. Learning early will thus help the younger generation build better financial habits. An understanding of behavioural finance is not just important but indispensable to deal intelligently and confidently with today's financial world.

A GLIMPSE OF GHANA – THE GATEWAY TO AFRICA

The Republic of Ghana, previously known as the Gold Coast, was the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence from colonial rule on March 6, 1957. The West African country is often referred to as the Gateway to Africa, with Accra serving as its capital city.

The country which was colonised by the British is renowned for its rich culture, warmth, hospitality and dynamic growth. Ghana is celebrated worldwide for its political stability and rapidly growing economy, particularly in sectors like technology, tourism, and agriculture.

The story of Ghana cannot be complete without mentioning Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the first Prime Minister and President of the land, who led the country to independence.

Ghana remains the largest producer of Gold in Africa and 6th in the world. The country is also the world's second-largest producer of cocoa. The world's largest man-made lake by surface area (Lake Volta) can be found in no other country than Ghana.

Ghana is one of the most peaceful countries in Africa. According to the 2025 Global Peace Index, Ghana is the most peaceful country in West Africa.

One can get a feel of Ghana through its colourful festivals, traditional music, dance, and symbolic Kente cloth - each pattern carefully woven to tell a meaningful story.

You cannot visit Ghana without taking a photo at the AD1957, or experiencing the nightlife on the beaches. To have a feel of nature and wildlife, your go-to places are, among others, the Kakum National Park or the Mole National Park.

Also, be sure to visit the Elmina and Cape Coast castles to gain a firsthand understanding and feel of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Whether you're drawn by its investment opportunities, delicious cuisine like jollof and waakye, or simply the warmth of its people, Ghana remains a destination full of promise, inspiration, and energy.

When Emotion Shops & Logic Shows up Late : The Psychology of Buying

Nafcy Moosa
S3 MBA

Have you ever noticed how we sometimes hit “add to cart” long before we stop to think? Or how a simple logo or brand name can convince us to spend far more than we intended? And why those emotional festival ads somehow make us misty-eyedand suddenly craving a chocolate we had no intention of buying?

Here’s the truth: emotion goes shopping first; logic shows up later with the bags.

In a marketplace overflowing with choices, knowing why people buy is now just as important as knowing what they buy.Research from consumer psychology and behavioral science repeatedly shows that purchases are rarely made through cold, rational evaluation. Marketing specialist Colin Cooper notes that our decisions are coloured by a mix of emotions-excitement, fear, delight, nostalgia, even guilt.

Neuroscience backs this up: emotional reactions fire much faster and much deeper in the brain than analytical thinking. By the time logic wakes up, emotions have already signed the order and that’s where smart marketers strike gold,by building brands that tap into the subconscious, trigger feelings, and create experiences that speak to the human mind as it really is, not as we pretend it is.

Here is how it works :

The Lazy Brain: Real hero of Marketing

Marketers often talk about emotions, creativity, or brand loyalty,but one of the biggest influencers in customer behavior is something far simpler: the brain’s natural tendency to avoid hard work. Psychologists call this “the cognitive miser principle” where, the brain prefers conserving energy rather than doing heavy thinking. Kahneman and Tversky explained this through their two thinking modes:

System 1, which is fast, intuitive, and effortless

System 2, which is slow, analytical, and gets tired quickly

Most people prefer staying in System 1 and this is the best opportunity for marketers.Instead of creating complicated buying experiences, you design ones that feel smooth, simple, and almost automatic.

That’s where nudge marketing comes in.According to Thaler and Sunstein, nudges help people make better choices effortlessly and without manipulation.

You see them constantly in a plan already selected as the “recommended option”,a subscription marked as “most popular”,“Only 2 left!” warnings that trigger urgency,Auto-filled details at checkout,and in the ultimate friction-remover: one-click payment.In the end, the formula is simple: make buying easy, and the brain will buy. Not because it was tricked, but because it felt good, comfortable, and effortless.

Ads That Sell Feelings, Not Products

Modern ads aren’t selling products anymore. They’re selling emotions-big, dramatic, heart-squeezing emotions.

Ever noticed how the chocolate itself barely gets any screen time? It just sits there in the corner like a shy extra. Meanwhile, the real screen space goes to nostalgia, family hugs, romantic glances, and those slow-motion smiles nobody actually does in real life.

Picture this: a guy about to propose-sweaty palms, rehearsed lines, panic mode on.Logically, he should carry something meaningful-maybe a handwritten note, photo, some heartfelt speech.

But what does he pick up?A Dairy Milk!

Seriously?Since when did a purple bar become a relationship milestone?Why? Because ads have trained his brain: chocolate equals love.

And it doesn’t stop there. Diwali, birthdays, Raksha Bandhan, Valentine’s Day-chocolate has quietly replaced laddoos, cards, and thoughtful gifts. Somewhere along the way, a purple wrapper became India’s go-to emotional expression.

And it’s not just Dairy Milk. Brands like Tanishq, Nescafé, Tata Tea, cracked the emotion code. Tanishq gives us full goosebumps with wedding stories where the jewellery is a background prop. Nescafé serves motivation more than coffee. Tata Tea sells awareness, not just chai.That’s the real magic of emotional advertising. It doesn’t focus on what the product does. It focuses on what the product makes you feel.

Repetition = Familiarity = Trust

Now, let’s talk about one of marketing’s oldest tricks - so ancient, probably has a senior citizen ID card: Repetition.

No complicated psychology, no fancy jargon. Just showing up again, and again, and again until the brain finally sighs and says, “Okay fine, I know you now.”

Humans are basically like that neighbour who only starts trusting you after spotting you outside the gate 20 times and brands know this better than anyone.That’s why the same ad follows you everywhere,before your YouTube video, during it, after it, and possibly in your dreams. It’s also why a startup you’ve never tried suddenly feels reliable,because their logo has appeared before you 50 times this week.

The formula is simple : Repeat Look familiar Become trusted Get bought.

Just a gentle brainwashing. Say the name often enough, and the brain starts acting like it’s an old friend and once the brain approves, the wallet obediently agrees.

This is why even imperfect ads work - Strange jingles? Effective, Awkward acting? Still works.

Because the brain isn’t chasing perfection-it’s chasing familiarity.

No Sense. All Attention.

When an ad is illogical, exaggerated, or downright weird, it instantly breaks routine and forces attention, because the brain is wired to notice anything that doesn’t fit familiar patterns.

This moment of confusion is not rejection; it is curiosity. The humour and randomness lower mental resistance, allowing the message to slip in without being questioned.Such ads also activate emotional shortcuts -amusement, surprise, relief-which are processed faster than logic and remembered longer. Over time, the repeated absurdity becomes familiar, and familiarity turns into trust and recall-like the famous 5 Star commercials.Their nonsense becomes repeat-worthy, meme-worthy, and troll-friendly, which is exactly how trends are born.People share them not because they understand them, but because they enjoy them, and enjoyment spreads faster than logic ever could.

Identity : The Secret Ingredient in Every Purchase

Most of us don’t buy things because they’re “practical” or “long-lasting,” no matter what we loudly declare in front of others, instead, we purchase them for that tiny logo, which is a proof of a certain lifestyle, income group, or mindset that you belong to .

Every purchase is basically a small broadcast of our identity - sometimes subtle, sometimes dramatic, sometimes uploaded to Instagram with filters doing half the personality work.

Take a watch.-Functionally, it tells time.But emotionally, It screams, “Look at responsible, successful me.”

A branded bag?-Technically storage.But in our heads, “Classy, elegant me.”

In short we don’t buy products,we buy versions of ourselves and marketers totally play along. Brands become personality shortcuts. Shoes become confidence. Coffee becomes a vibe. Phones become status. Even water bottles are now trying to convince you they’re part of your personality.Because features speak to the mind,but identity?

Identity speaks directly to the ego and that’s why a brand tag often sells more than a specification ever could. Customers aren’t just shopping , they’re displaying who they are that tiny logo isn’t decoration but a social identity.

The Brain Loves Stories

Here’s a fact about humans: give us statistics and our brain immediately hits “delete.” But give us a story-with a little drama, a little humour, a little emotional masala and suddenly the brain springs up like, “Ah yes, entertainment. Continue.”

Our brains are literally designed for stories. This is also why marketers don’t scream, “This device has 17 functions and 12-hour battery life!” . Instead, they say, “This gadget made my life easy.”

Stories light up multiple parts of the brain-emotions, senses, imagination-basically turning your head into a full film studio.Then there’s the “transportation effect,” where a good narrative pulls you so deep that your brain forgets reality for a moment. That’s why ads with pets, grandparents, or dramatic music suddenly make you emotional for no reason.

This is exactly why storytelling is marketing’s cheat code. A great story doesn’t just highlight the product, it makes you imagine yourself inside the moment. You don’t picture the features; you picture the feeling, Relief, Ease,Joy,Confidence,Comfort - Whatever the brand wants you to experience, the story makes your brain rehearse it and once your mind has felt something, the product becomes more than an object,it becomes a tiny emotional upgrade.Because in a world full of information, it’s not the facts that win your heart,it’s the story that makes you pause, smile, tear up, or think, “Hey… that could be me.”

Social Signals

Humans are unbelievably social-so social that half our decisions are basically, “What’s everyone else doing? Okay, I’ll do that too.” That’s why social proof is a marketer’s secret superpower. The moment we feel confused or unsure, our brain avoids doing any heavy thinking and instead checks whether the crowd has already made the decision for us. Reviews, ratings, “Bestseller” tags, and “10,000 people bought this today” suddenly look like glowing signs saying, “Relax, you’re making the right choice.”

A big part of this comes from the bandwagon effect. When something seems popular, we automatically assume it must be good, or at least safe. The brain loves that kind of shortcut. Then comes herd behaviour-when uncertainty hits, the inner voice whispers, “Just follow the crowd, they probably figured it out.” And Cialdini’s social proof principle ties it all together: when we lack information, we borrow confidence from the actions of others. In short, other people’s decisions become our decision.

Social proof doesn’t only say a product is high quality,it subtly says buying it makes you look smart, stylish, and part of the “in” group and honestly, people love being in that group more than they love coupons, cashback, or even free delivery.

In conclusion, it all comes down to respecting how people actually think and feel.People don’t pull out their wallets because of technical specifications or perfectly listed features.

They buy because something about the product moves them-a feeling, an emotion, a moment of connection.The logical mind shows up only afterward to tidy things up with reasonable explanations, pretending it was in charge all along.

If you want customers to convert, the trick isn’t to push harder or overwhelm them with choices. It’s to make the entire process feel naturally simple. When buying feels clear, familiar, quick, and completely effortless, and when everything looks straightforward and low-effort, the mind doesn’t bother analysing or debating-it just relaxes, goes with the flow, and thinks, “Alright… let’s buy it.”

In the end, effective marketing isn’t about deceiving or manipulating anyone.It’s about recognizing how the mind truly works and shaping experiences that feel intuitive, warm, and wonderfully human.

The Great Strangulation: How Monopolies Are Killing the Indian Middle Class

Sumish S Parayil
S3 MBA

If you look out the window in 2025, the Indian skyline is dotted with cranes, the stock market is hitting record highs, and banners of “Viksit Bharat” flutter in the wind. But look closerat the kitchen table of a middle-class family or the ledger of a small shopkeeperand you see a different reality: a quiet, suffocating desperation.

The last decade (2014–2024) has been a masterclass in wealth transfernot from the rich to the poor, but from the pockets of the common people into the vaults of a select few conglomerates. We were promised “Minimum Government, Maximum Governance,” but what we received was “Maximum Monopoly, Minimum Choice”.

This is not just an economic consolidation; it is a strangulation.

The Inflation Nightmare: Paying Global Prices on Third-World Incomes

The most visceral assault on the common man is the cost of living. While official statistics peddle a narrative of “low inflation,” the reality in the grocery store is a cruel joke.

Take the humble “thali.” In October 2024, reports indicated a sharp rise in food costs, driven by onion and tomato prices that surged over 40-50% due to supply disruptions and extreme weather. While corporate profits soared, the food on your table shrank. Milk prices have nearly doubled in many regions, and food inflation stubbornly sat above 8–9% for much of late 2023 and 2024.

This inflation is compounded by the “Fuel Tax Extortion.” In 2014, when global crude was over $100 a barrel, petrol was 71. Today, with crude significantly cheaper, we pay 95–100. The government has turned fuel into a cash cow, hiking excise duties to fund its coffers while bleeding the commuter. For a family earning 15,000 a month, paying 900 for a gas cylinder isn’t just inflation; it is an eviction from the middle class.

The Trap: From “Data Revolution” to Digital Feudalism

The most insidious change of the last decade is the death of competition. You are no longer a customer to be wooed; you are a user base to be monetized.

Remember 2014? You had a dozen choices: Airtel, Vodafone, Idea, Aircel, Docomo. Then came the trap. Reliance Jio entered with free dataa classic predatory move that the public cheered. But as competitors bled to death and exited, the trap snapped shut. By 2024, the market had calcified into a duopoly.

The result? In July 2024, private operators hiked tariffs by 10–25% in unison. Entry-level plans were wiped out, hitting the rural poor the hardest. You now pay for what the company wants you to consume. If you don’t like it, where will you go? There is nowhere left to run.

The Sky-High Robbery

The same script played out in the skies. The Indian aviation market, once a vibrant mix of full-service and low-cost carriers, has become a graveyard for airlines like Jet Airways and Go First.

Today, the sector is effectively a duopoly between IndiGo and the Tata Group, which together control over 90% of the market. The lack of competitive tension has led to “cartelization”. Domestic airfares rose by 43% in the first half of 2024 compared to pre-pandemic levels, one of the highest jumps in the Asia-Pacific region. Yet, service quality has plummeted, with passengers treated like cargo because airlines know they have no other option.

The Silent Crisis: A K-Shaped Disaster

While the “National Champions” expand, the backbone of the economy is being broken. Economists call it a “K-shaped recovery”—a polite way of saying the rich got richer while the poor got destitute.

- **The Savings Collapse:** Recent data reveals that household savings in India have dropped to a multi-year low of 18.1% of GDP in FY24, while financial liabilities have surged. Families are selling gold and taking loans just to maintain their lifestyle.
- **The MSME Massacre**: The small business sector faced a “triple shock” of Demonetization, GST, and Lockdowns. In 2024-25 alone, over 35,000 MSMEs officially shut down. These aren’t just businesses; they are livelihoods vaporized to boost the market share of giants like Amazon and Reliance Retail.
- **Wage Stagnation:** While the stock market celebrates, real wages for rural laborers and industrial workers have grown at less than 1% annually over the decade. We are creating a generation of “working poor” who wear ties but cannot afford to buy a home.

Conclusion: A Nation Divided

The India of 2025 is a country of two separate realities. India A lives in gated communities, flies business class, and celebrates the rising Sensex. India B—the other 90%—struggles to recharge their phones, pays GST on milk, and watches their small businesses die.

We have traded our chaotic, vibrant democracy for a sterile, expensive corporate fiefdom. The middle class is not just being squeezed; it is being strangled. If this path continues, we won’t just have inequality; we will have a society that is fundamentally unlivable for anyone who isn’t a billionaire.

The Monetary Transformation

Ajai Dev T.S.
MBA S3

India's latest monetary policy review is not a rate update but a strategic signal towards the future of economic stability and financial planning.

India is at an economic inflection point. After months of easing inflation and stable domestic growth, the RBI has announced a monetary stance reset in a calibrated way. But the decision to cut the repo rate by 25 basis points-down to 5.25%-is much more than a technical adjustment; it reflects a broader shift toward supporting growth while ensuring financial discipline.

That is quite significant for students and professionals alike in finance and management. The attempt has been to bring predictability where volatility had reigned, with the purpose of strengthening credit flow, boosting investment, and maintaining monetary balance.

The Turn of Interest Rates: The most far-reaching feature of the new policy, arguably, is the reduction in the repo rate. As inflation has fallen to 0.25 percent-the lowest in several years-the RBI seems to think that the time is now ripe for a cautious growth-promoting policy move. The lower rates will percolate down the banking system and make loans cheaper for householders, corporates, and small businesses.

Simultaneously, adjustments to the SDF at 5.0% and the MSF and Bank Rate fixed at 5.5% provide clearer signalling for liquidity management. Further, the RBI has also injected 1 lakh crore into the system through open market operations to ensure smoother credit transmission.

"The policy recognises that the economy is stabilising; the aim is to support growth without risking inflation."

The Financial Sector's Perspective: While this benefits borrowers directly, the policy also extends clarity to banks and financial institutions. The rate corridors are simple to ensure that there is reduced uncertainty in fund management. The neutral stance will indeed offer flexibility, allowing institutions to adjust quickly once conditions evolve.

However, this transition may not be smooth. As the lending rates come down, deposit rates tend to soften, putting initial pressure on bank margins. With GDP growth expected at 7.3%, credit demand will pick up, leading to an improvement in aggregate lending. Sectors linked to borrowing-MSMEs, infrastructure, and housing-are the biggest beneficiaries.

A Modern Monetary Vision: This policy thus represents a change in the way India approaches monetary intervention. A changed financial landscape, brought about by digital banking and advancing fintech, coupled with uncertainty in the global economy and changes in consumption patterns, was acknowledged here. The focus, now, was no longer on mere volatility control but on achieving sustainable expansion.

However, all this depends on actual implementation. While the RBI has indicated the direction, banks must ensure that the benefits are transmitted to borrowers effectively. Market behavior, global trends, and the financial dynamics at the state level are also important factors. Economists point out that the next few months would be the test for the system to balance growth with stability.

If implemented right, the new monetary measures will be more than a tweaking of interest rates; they will help create a more robust, growth-oriented financial ecosystem. The era of inflation-induced caution is giving way to a measured push for expansion. Agility, insight, and an understanding of India's evolving monetary landscape are what will see the future manager or financial professional through this new order.

STRATEGIC HR FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE; Mobilising Employee Engagement in Developing India

Sreelakshmi Satheesh
S3 MBA

As India continues to grow and transform, sustainability has become central to the country's development agenda. Faced with intensifying climate risks and increasing pressure to meet global targets, India is rapidly expanding its efforts in renewable energy, sustainable finance, and green growth. The NITI Aayog India's premier policy has mapped hundreds of government interventions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), showing the nation's commitment to responsible development. India has also made bold climate pledges: achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2070, meeting 50% of energy demand through renewables by 2030, and creating a 2.5–3 billion tonne CO_2 sink through increased forest and tree cover.

Strategic HR brings sustainability from policy into practice by embedding it across the employee lifecycle. It starts with recruitment and onboarding, where organisations can select candidates who value responsible behaviour and introduce them early to sustainability goals. HR strengthens green capabilities through training in energy management, responsible resource use, ethical decision-making, and digital workflows. Employees are also encouraged to participate in green committees, recycling campaigns, CSR initiatives, and community development projects linking daily work to national sustainability priorities. Integrating sustainability goals into performance appraisals and recognising eco-friendly efforts reinforces positive habits and accountability. Furthermore, using digital tools for meetings, documentation, and communication reduces resource consumption and supports India's broader transition to a low-carbon economy. Through these practices, HR ensures that employees feel engaged, empowered, and connected to the organisation's environmental and social responsibilities.

In conclusion, Strategic HR plays a crucial role in aligning organisational culture with India's ambitious sustainability commitments. By enabling employees to understand and contribute to green initiatives, HR helps bridge the gap between national climate goals and everyday workplace behaviour. As an MBA student envisioning the future, I imagine an India where workplaces operate with clean energy, employees champion sustainable practices, and organisations collaborate to support the country's SDG agenda. I see a future where responsible leadership, ethical HR systems, and engaged employees collectively drive India toward becoming a global leader in sustainability

WHEN "NO PAIN" HURTS SALES

Amal Michael
MBA S2

A Marketing Lesson from the Dettol–Savlon Story

In marketing, innovation is often assumed to be an automatic advantage. A product that is safer, gentler, or more comfortable should logically outperform its rivals. Yet, real-world markets frequently challenge this assumption. A telling example lies in the Indian antiseptic segment, through the contrasting journeys of **Dettol** and **Savlon**.

For decades, Dettol, owned by Reckitt, has been a trusted household name. Beyond its disinfecting ability, Dettol established a powerful sensory association: the sharp stinging sensation when applied to cuts or burns. Over time, this discomfort became a symbol of effectiveness. For many consumers, pain meant protection.

Against this backdrop, **Savlon**, marketed as a gentler antiseptic, entered with a differentiated promise. Its key message was simple and logical—effective protection without the sting. Scientifically, this positioning made sense. From a consumer psychology perspective, however, it proved problematic.

Savlon's advertising highlighted the absence of pain as a benefit, indirectly contrasting itself with traditional antiseptics like Dettol. Instead of reassuring consumers, the message unsettled them. In a market conditioned to believe that "strong medicine must hurt," a pain-free antiseptic felt suspicious. The lack of sting was interpreted by many as a lack of strength.

As a result, the product struggled to build trust at the pace expected. The challenge was not product efficacy, but perception. Consumers did not reject Savlon because it failed to work; they hesitated because it failed to align with their deeply ingrained beliefs.

This episode illustrates a fundamental marketing truth: **products compete in the consumer's mind before they compete on store shelves.** Dettol had spent decades shaping expectations. Savlon attempted to overturn those expectations too abruptly, without first reframing the belief that pain equals effectiveness.

For managers and marketers, the lesson is clear. Innovation alone is not enough. New features must be communicated in a way that resonates with existing mental models—or gradually reshapes them. Comparative messaging, especially when it challenges emotional associations, must be handled with care.

The Dettol–Savlon story extends beyond antiseptics. Across industries, consumers often associate discomfort with quality and speed with carelessness. Businesses that ignore these perceptions risk undermining even superior products.

In the marketplace, logic does not always win. **Perception does.**

The Compliance Quagmire

Sooraj J Nair
MBA S3

India's labour reforms are not just a legal update,they are a wake-up call for the future of HR strategy.

India stands at a legislative precipice. For decades, the nation's industrial engine has operated under a labyrinth of over 40 separate and often overlapping labour laws. This archaic framework created a regulatory nightmare for small enterprises and a safety vacuum for the workforce. The government's recent consolidation of these laws into four streamlined codes, Wages, Industrial Relations, Social Security, and Occupational Safety, is not merely an administrative update; it is a fundamental reset of the Indian employment contract.

For the MBA student eyeing an HR specialisation, the implications are stark. The reforms attempt to bring clarity where confusion once reigned, aiming to modernise the workplace while ensuring smarter compliance.

The Gig Economy Shift Perhaps the most disruptive change lies in the Social Security Code. For the first time in India's legal history, the definition of "employee" expands to formally cover gig and platform workers, including delivery partners and freelancers. This opens the door to insurance, old-age benefits, and maternity protections for millions who previously operated outside formal safety nets. For HR managers, this signals a major shift in cost structures and strategic planning for platform-based businesses.

Simultaneously, the Code on Wages introduces a universal wage system. Minimum wage standards will now apply to all employees, not just those in specific scheduled industries, ensuring greater transparency and accountability in payroll.

"The codes recognise that the workforce is changing; the aim is to extend protection without slowing economic growth."

The Employer's Perspective While the codes promise to protect workers, they also offer an olive branch to employers: simplified compliance. The new framework replaces dozens of forms with a single registration and annual return, drastically reducing the paperwork maze that has long stifled MSMEs. Furthermore, the Industrial Relations Code offers operational freedom by formalising fixed-term employment, a crucial flexibility for project-based industries.

However, the transition will not be seamless. Although companies gain long-term predictability, they may initially face a spike in payroll costs due to the new, uniform wage definitions.

A Modern Vision. These codes represent a shift in how India views work itself, acknowledging a landscape changed by technology and e-commerce. However, the true effectiveness of these reforms hinges on implementation. While the central government has passed the codes, several states are still finalising their specific rules, requiring HR professionals to remain agile.

If implemented effectively, these reforms will do more than just clean up the law books; they will build a more inclusive, future-ready world of work. The era of chaotic compliance is coming to an end; the future HR manager must be prepared to navigate this new order.

Academic Sessions for Research Scholars – 2025

TWO DAY WORKSHOP ON BASIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The sessions were led by
Dr. U. Faisal,
Professor, Kannur University

The School of Management and Business Studies (SMBS), Mahatma Gandhi University organized a two-day Basic Research Methodology Session for research scholars on 20 and 21 November 2025, from 10.30 AM to 4.30 PM.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Tijo Thomas, who emphasized the importance of a strong methodological foundation for conducting rigorous and impactful research.

The sessions were led by Dr. U. Faisal, Professor, Kannur University, who delivered comprehensive and application-oriented inputs on research methodology. The first day focused on basic research aspects, including formulation of research problems, research objectives, research design, and an overview of statistical techniques commonly used in management research. Dr. Faisal explained the appropriate contexts for using different statistical tools, enabling scholars to make informed methodological choices.

The second day concentrated on sampling techniques, where various probability and non-probability sampling methods were discussed in detail. A distinctive feature of the session was the interactive segment in which each research scholar was provided an opportunity to explain the sampling technique adopted in their own study, followed by expert feedback and suggestions from the resource person.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by a research scholar, expressing appreciation to the resource person and the organizing team for the insightful and engaging sessions.

Academic Sessions for Research Scholars – 2025

ONE-DAY WORKSHOP ON INTEGRATED REVIEW METHODOLOGIES

The workshop was led by
Dr. Nimitha Aboobaker
Assistant Professor, School of Management Studies, CUSAT, Kochi

The School of Management and Business Studies, Mahatma Gandhi University organized a one-day workshop on "Integrated Review Methodologies: Bibliometrics and Systematic Literature Review with Generative AI Insights" on 09 April 2025, from 9.30 AM to 4.30 PM, at the SMBS campus.

The programme began with an introductory and welcoming address by Dr. Roshna Varghese, who highlighted the importance of structured and methodologically sound review studies in contemporary research and warmly welcomed the resource person and participants.

The workshop was led by Dr. Nimitha Aboobaker, Assistant Professor, School of Management Studies, CUSAT, Kochi. The workshop commenced with an introductory session highlighting the importance of rigorous review methodologies in contemporary academic research. Dr. Nimitha elaborated on the conceptual foundations of bibliometrics, key indicators such as citation analysis, co-authorship, and keyword mapping, and demonstrated how bibliometric tools can be used to identify research trends and gaps. The sessions provided a comprehensive overview of bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review (SLR). Dr. Nimitha discussed various SLR frameworks and protocols, enabling participants to understand how to design rigorous and publishable review studies.

A key highlight of the workshop was the hands-on sessions on bibliometric tools and NVivo software, where participants gained practical exposure to literature mapping, thematic analysis, and qualitative data organization. The role of Generative AI tools in supporting review processes was also discussed, with emphasis on ethical and responsible usage.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Tijo Thomas, who expressed gratitude to the resource person, organizing team, and participants for their active involvement and contribution to the success of the workshop.

Academic Sessions for Research Scholars – 2025

NAVIGATING ACADEMIC FRONTIERS: INNOVATIVE RESEARCH TOPICS & METHODOLOGY FOR SCHOLARS

The session was led by the distinguished resource person,
Prof. (Dr.) Gabriel Simon Thattil,
Academic Director, Loyola College of Social Sciences, and former Dean and IQAC Director of the University of Kerala.

The School of Management and Business Studies (SMBS), Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, successfully organized an academic session titled "Navigating Academic Frontiers: Innovative Research Topics & Methodology for Scholars" on 17 December 2025 at 11:30 AM in the Seminar Hall, SMBS.

The session commenced with a warm welcome address by Dr. Johney Johnson, Head of the Department, SMBS. He emphasized the university's commitment to fostering a research-driven academic culture and highlighted the importance of continuous engagement with evolving research paradigms. He highlighted the need for young researchers to adopt a disciplined, ethical, and purpose-driven approach to research, especially in the field of management and social sciences.He also acknowledged the contributions of Prof. Thattill in shaping research excellence across institutions.

The session was led by the distinguished resource person, Prof. (Dr.) Gabriel Simon Thattil, Academic Director, Loyola College of Social Sciences, and former Dean and IQAC Director of the University of Kerala. Drawing from his extensive academic and research experience, Prof. Thattil delivered an insightful and thought-provoking session for research scholars.

The lecture strongly highlighted the purpose of research, stressing that research should always be purposive rather than merely procedural. Prof. Thattil explained that a meaningful research study must go beyond data collection and analysis to address real-world problems and contribute to knowledge creation. He underlined the importance of clearly identifying research problems that have practical relevance, policy implications, and societal value.

The interactive session provided scholars with clarity on choosing innovative research topics, aligning methodology with research objectives, and maintaining academic integrity throughout the research process. Participants found the session highly enriching and motivating, especially in understanding the broader purpose and impact of their doctoral work.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Research Scholar Joffy Johnson. Overall, the programme served as an inspiring platform for research scholars to reflect on the true essence of research and to strive for academic work that is impactful, ethical, and socially relevant.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABILITY IN BUSINESS: INDUSTRY 5.0 PERSPECTIVE

As we move beyond traditional Corporate Responsibility, we embrace Industry 5.0, a future-driven approach that integrates cutting-edge technology, circular economy models, and purpose-driven leadership to create a more resilient, regenerative, and profitable world. This conference brings together industry leaders, policymakers, innovators, and change makers to discuss how businesses can move beyond compliance and actively contribute to a sustainable global economy. From AI-powered sustainability solutions to net-zero business models, groundbreaking strategies that redefine success in the corporate world will be explored. Let's collaborate, innovate, and drive meaningful impact. We invite you to participate in the conference on Sustainability in Business: Industry 5.0 perspective.

DOCTORATES AWARDED IN 2025

Name	Title of the Study	Date
Smt. SruthiBhuvanendran	Adoption and Actual Usage Behavior of Artificial Intelligence for Talent Acquisition in Select IT/ITeS Firms	10 November 2025
Sri. Noushad K. K	Price Discovery and Volatility Spillovers in Spot and Futures Agricultural Commodity Markets in India	7 July 2025
Ms. Anna Anjana Varghese	Role of Brand Experience in Shaping Brand Loyalty towards Herbal Cosmetics in Kerala	11 April 2025
Ms. Jyothy Chandra R	Influence of Tacit Knowledge Sharing on Innovative Capability: An Empirical Analysis on Select IT Firms in Kerala	7 May 2025

MASTERING THE MARKET:
SMBS PARTNERS WITH NISM FOR FINANCIAL EXCELLENCE


The School of Management and Business Studies (SMBS) recently took a significant step towards empowering its MBA students with essential market skills by organizing an intensive "Certificate Course in Financial Market". Held on October 30th and 31st, 2025, this annual capacity-building initiative was conducted in close association with the National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM), a key educational wing of SEBI. The two-day program, which ran from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM daily in the SMBS Seminar Hall, was designed to go beyond textbooks and provide a practical roadmap for navigating the complexities of the Indian securities market.

Guiding the students through this financial landscape was Dr. Liance Mathew, an Assistant Professor in Commerce at The Cochin College and a seasoned NISM Trainer. His sessions were far from a dry academic lecture; Dr. Mathew employed a highly engaging and interactive teaching style that demystified complex financial concepts for everyone in attendance. The comprehensive curriculum covered a wide spectrum of vital topics, ranging from the fundamental structures of primary and secondary stock markets to the nuances of choosing the right broker. Students also dove deep into investment avenues like mutual funds, equity, and debt funds, while gaining crucial insights into risk management, the role of regulators, and potential career paths within the sector.

The true measure of the program's success was reflected in the enthusiastic response from the participants. On the final day, students Applonia Sumi Sunny and Sooraj J Nair shared their feedback, specifically praising the course's practical orientation and the trainer's expertise. The attendees acknowledged that the knowledge gained during these two days was invaluable not just for their professional aspirations, but also for their personal financial planning. To ensure the retention of these critical concepts, the program concluded with a mandatory online quiz, with access links shared to all participants via email. By successfully blending academic theory with market reality, this initiative has equipped the next generation of managers with the financial awareness and disciplined investing habits necessary for long-term success.

FOSTERING GLOBAL INNOVATION:
A JOINT SESSION WITH WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY


On **Wednesday, October 22, 2025**, the SMBS Board Room buzzed with fresh ideas as we hosted a special **"Interaction on Entrepreneurship and Innovation."** Organized as a joint initiative between **UCIC and SMBS**, the event brought students face-to-face with global thought leaders to discuss the future of student-led innovation.

Distinguished Guests from South Africa

We were honored to welcome two distinguished guests from **Walter Sisulu University (WSU), South Africa,** who shared their expertise in governance and development:

- Ms. Nombulelo Khanyisile Blaai: An Education Management Professional and Social Justice Activist who serves as the Coordinator of WSU's Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development hub.
- Mr. Vumuxolo Berthwell Sonqishe: The Deputy Director of Student Governance, Leadership, and Development, known for leading vital leadership training initiatives under Student Affairs.

A Dialogue on Ideas

The session began with a warm welcome address by Prof. Dr. Sajimon Abraham. Rather than a traditional lecture, the event was designed as a highly interactive session focused on open discussion.

Students were encouraged to voice their thoughts, with a standout moment provided by Sumish S Parayil, who presented his own entrepreneurship ideas to the group.

Looking to the Future

The interaction went beyond just sharing ideas; it opened doors for future collaboration. A key highlight of the discussion was the potential for **student exchange programs** and continued partnership between our institutions.

The insightful afternoon concluded at 3:30 PM with a formal Vote of Thanks delivered by Malavika S Nair.

EUNOIA 2025: AN AFTERNOON OF BEAUTIFUL THINKING

The SMBS Auditorium buzzed with energy on Wednesday, August 6th, 2025, as the department hosted "Eunoia 2025"—a celebration themed "An Afternoon of Beautiful Thinking". This annual Fresher's Party served as the official welcome for the incoming MBA students (S1), designed to build bridges between the new cohort, their seniors (S3), and the faculty.

Proceedings commenced sharply at 2:00 PM under the lively guidance of anchors Sooraj J Nair and Applonia Sumi Sunny. The event opened on a solemn note with a prayer song rendered by Luthiya Jose, followed by a warm welcome address from the S3 Class Representative, Harichandana MR. The program was formally inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Johney Johnson, who set the tone for the afternoon. To mark the beginning of this academic journey, the inaugural session featured felicitations and words of wisdom from distinguished faculty members, including Prof. E Sulaiman, Prof. Santhosh P Thampi, Prof. Sajimon Abraham, Dr. Biju M K, Dr. Roshna Varghese, Dr. Madhulal M, and Dr. Tijo Thomas.

The atmosphere shifted from formal to festive as the cultural segment took center stage at 2:30 PM with a dance performance by the S3 batch, quickly followed by an energetic showcase from the freshers at 2:40 PM. By 2:50 PM, the auditorium transformed into a hub of laughter and interaction as students participated in various games and entertainment activities, breaking the ice and fostering a spirit of camaraderie.

As the celebration wound down, S3 Class Representative Sumish S Parayil delivered the formal Vote of Thanks, expressing gratitude to all performers, organizers, and staff. Following refreshments at 4:45 PM, the event successfully concluded at 5:00 PM, leaving the new batch warmly welcomed into the SMBS family and promoting a spirit of collaboration.

FROM CASTING TO COST-EFFICIENCY:
A HOLISTIC INDUSTRIAL VISIT TO ERNAKULAM

The bridge between academic theory and industrial reality is often best crossed through direct experience. On February 12, 2025, the students of the School of Management and Business Studies (SMBS) embarked on a comprehensive industrial visit to Anna Aluminium in Ernakulam. Under the guidance of Faculty Coordinator Prof. (Dr.) E Sulaiman and Student Coordinator Stephin Benny, the initiative was designed to provide students with a deep dive into the manufacturing sector, focusing on the practical applications of their curriculum. The primary objective was to move beyond the classroom and witness the operational intricacies of quality control, safety measures, and production efficiency in a live industrial setup.

Upon arrival at the Anna Aluminium facility, the cohort was warmly received by company representatives who set the stage with an introductory session detailing the company's history and ISO 9001-2015 certified production standards. This was followed by the core component of the visit: a guided tour of the manufacturing unit

Here, students observed the complete lifecycle of aluminium production, from raw material processing to casting and the final finishing stages. The learning experience was bidirectional; an interactive Q&A session allowed students to query industry experts on current challenges and opportunities, fulfilling the goal of gaining firsthand knowledge of production techniques.

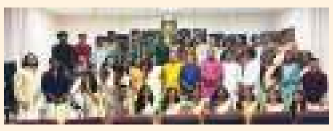
However, the itinerary was crafted to be more than just an academic exercise; it was a blend of education and cultural enrichment. Following the industrial session, the group proceeded to the Hill Palace to explore the rich heritage and architectural marvels of Kerala. The journey continued with relaxing visits to the beach and Marine Drive, providing a perfect backdrop for student bonding and cultural exposure. These recreational stops were integral to the trip, offering a well-rounded experience that balanced rigorous learning with social interaction.

A standout achievement of this excursion was the exceptional financial and logistical management displayed by the student coordinators. With a goal to make the trip accessible to everyone, the team utilized KSRTC for transportation and rigorously managed expenses. Through careful planning, the estimated cost per student was significantly reduced from INR 500 to INR 370. The financial prudence was evident in the final accounting, which showed a surplus of INR 7,820 from the collected funds after covering major expenses like bus rent and entry fees. This effective cost management ensured that no student was left behind due to financial constraints.

The day concluded with a safe return to the university. Although unforeseen delays pushed the arrival time to 11:30 PM, the coordinators ensured that every single participant, including the 62 students and faculty, returned home safely. The visit was a resounding success, meeting its educational objectives while demonstrating the students' ability to organize, budget, and execute a complex event flawlessly.

THRIGONAM 2025
A CELEBRATION OF CULTURE, FRIENDSHIP, AND PROSPERITY





Onam is more than just a festival; it is a vibrant celebration of harvest, unity, and the annual homecoming of the benevolent King Mahabali. Embracing these traditions, SMBS hosted "Thrigonam 2025," a program dedicated to the themes of Culture, Friendship, and Prosperity.

A Morning of Tradition and Blessings

The festivities began at 09:00 AM with the creation of the Pookalam (Floral Carpet), setting a colorful tone for the day. The official function opened with a prayer song by Luthiya Jose and a warm welcome address by Harichandana M R.

We were honored to have our Head of Department, Prof. Dr. Johney Johnson, deliver the Inaugural Address. The morning continued with felicitations and blessings from our esteemed faculty, including Prof. Dr. E Sulaiman, Prof. Dr. Santhosh P Thampi, Prof. Dr. Sajimon Abraham, Dr. Biju M K, Dr. Roshna Varghese, Dr. Madhu Lal M, Dr. Tijo Thomas, and Ms. Varsha Babu.

Cultural Highlights & Emerging Stars

Anchored by Sumish S Parayil, the cultural segment was a testament to the strong coordination between the S1 and S3 students. The stage came alive with performances ranging from the traditional Thiruvathira by S1 girls to energetic dances and mood songs.

A major highlight was the Malayali Manka and Sreeman competition. Congratulations to the winners from the S3 batch:

• Keerthi Ashokan • Sooraj J Nair

The Grand Sadhya and Afternoon Fun

No Onam celebration is complete without a feast! At 12:30 PM, attendees enjoyed a traditional Onam Sadhya. The energy remained high into the afternoon with competitive Onam games starting at 03:00 PM, featuring fun challenges like Kasera Kali, Sundarikku Pottu Thodal, Uriyadi, and the intense Vadam Vali (Tug of War).

The event concluded with a Vote of Thanks delivered by Sumish S Parayil, wrapping up a memorable day of joy and tradition.

EMPOWERING FUTURE MANAGERS: A DEEP DIVE INTO SAP

In a rapidly evolving business landscape, technical proficiency is just as crucial as management theory. Recognizing this, the department successfully conducted a comprehensive SAP Training Program in November 2025, facilitated by Enbridg International Training Campus, Kottayam. The sessions were held in the Computer Lab and ran from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM across five intensive days—the 19th, 21st, 24th, 25th, and 26th—offering students a rigorous immersion into enterprise resource planning. The initiative commenced with a formal welcome address by Prof. Dr. Sajimon Abraham, setting a tone of professional ambition for the week ahead.

Guided by a team of four expert trainers, the curriculum was meticulously designed to bridge the gap between academic concepts and corporate utility. The training focused on three critical business pillars: the Financial Accounting Module, which covered core principles and transactional processes; the Sales and Distribution Module, addressing the end-to-end management of sales orders, shipping, and billing; and the Human Capital Module, which introduced the nuances of personnel administration and organizational structures.

The program distinguished itself through a balanced methodology that combined theoretical frameworks with crucial hands-on practical sessions. Far from being a passive lecture series, the training was highly interactive, with participants actively engaging with the software on their own laptops to ensure they learned how to use the system effectively through direct experience. This practical approach garnered constructive feedback from participants such as Djegui Sylla, Keerthi Ashokan, and Sooraj J Nair, who attested to the value of the skills acquired. The comprehensive workshop concluded with a vote of thanks presented by Applonia Sumi Sunny, marking a successful step toward future career readiness for all attendees.

BEYOND THE BOARDROOM: MASTERING THE ART OF DINING ETIQUETTE

In the corporate world, leadership is often defined not just by what you know, but by how you present yourself. Recognizing that critical business decisions are frequently made over meals, the MBA students of SMBS embarked on a unique educational journey on November 20th, 2025. Accompanied by faculty coordinators Prof. Dr. E Sulaiman and Dr. Biju, the cohort traveled to St. Joseph's Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology in Pala for a specialized workshop titled "Professional Dining Etiquette". The initiative was designed to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and corporate polish, focusing on the soft skills essential for future managerial roles.

Upon their arrival at 10:20 AM, the students were warmly welcomed by the Principal of St. Joseph's Institute, who inaugurated the session with an insightful address on the importance of professional grooming. The workshop itself was a departure from traditional classroom learning, offering a comprehensive and highly interactive experience. The curriculum covered the nuances of formal dining, guiding students through appropriate social conduct and the often-intimidating array of cutlery usage. To ensure practical mastery, the institute hosted a demonstration featuring five different dishes, teaching the students the sequential use of utensils and proper protocol for a formal table setting.

A standout feature of the program was the dedicated session on buffet etiquette—a common yet complex scenario in the business world. Following a lecture on line management and serving protocols, students participated in a live, hands-on session where they applied their new skills while serving themselves from a buffet spread. The successful day concluded in the afternoon with a formal vote of thanks delivered by Prof. Dr. E Sulaiman, acknowledging the exceptional training provided by the host institute. As the group gathered for a final commemorative photo, they left not just with memories, but with a newfound confidence to navigate professional social settings with grace.

CRAFTING THE PERFECT PITCH: ALUMNI INSIGHTS ON RESUMES AND LINKEDIN

On November 27, 2025, the Smart classroom at SMBS became a hub of career readiness as the MBA Semester 3 students organized a pivotal "Alumni Talk" focused on professional development. The session, held from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, was specifically tailored for the final year MBA batch (2024-26), aiming to bridge the gap between academic preparation and corporate expectations. The event commenced with a formal welcome by the Head of the Department, Prof. Dr. Johnny Johnson, followed by a warm address to the attendees by Sooraj J Nair, setting the stage for a morning of actionable insights.

The spotlight was on distinguished alumna Ms. Amrita Sunilkumar, whose session was designed to guide students through the often-daunting process of creating high-impact resumes. Moving beyond generic advice, Ms. Sunilkumar provided a "resume masterclass" that dissected the anatomy of a winning CV, emphasizing the need to quantify achievements and craft compelling summaries while avoiding common errors that lead to rejection. A critical portion of the talk was dedicated to demystifying the "black box" of recruitment: the Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS). Students learned the specific criteria recruiters and software use to evaluate applications, gaining a clear, step-by-step methodology for effective resume construction that ensures visibility in a competitive job market.

The seminar extended its scope to digital presence as well, offering a foundational session on leveraging LinkedIn. Here, the speaker highlighted the importance of profile completeness and professional networking etiquette as mandatory tools for modern career growth. The comprehensive morning concluded with a formal vote of thanks delivered by Malavika S Nair, marking the end of a successful program that equipped the outgoing batch with the strategic tools necessary to make a lasting first impression on future employers.

SAYONARA 2025

A HEARTFELT FAREWELL TO THE MBA CLASS OF 2025

On August 22, 2025, the SMBS Hall was filled with a mix of nostalgia and excitement as we gathered for "Sayonara 2025". The event was dedicated to celebrating the journey of the outgoing MBA 2023-25 batch, cherishing our shared memories, and wishing them success in their future endeavors.

A Morning of Inspiration and Gratitude

The program kicked off at 10:00 AM, guided by our energetic anchors, Sooraj J Nair and Applonia Sumi Sunny. The atmosphere was set with a soulful prayer song led by Malavika S Nair and Luthiya Jose, followed by a warm opening address from Malavika.

The session featured inspiring words from our leadership and faculty:

Inaugural Address: Our Head of Department, Prof. Dr. Johney Johnson, took the stage to offer inspiration and guidance to the graduating students.

Faculty Felicitations: To offer their blessings and encouragement, we heard from esteemed faculty members including Prof. Dr. E Sulaiman, Prof. Dr. Santhosh P Thampi, Prof. Dr. Sajimon Abraham, Dr. Biju M K, Dr. Roshna Varghese, Dr. Madhu Lal M, Dr. Tijo Thomas, and Ms. Varsha Babu.

Walking Down Memory Lane

The emotional core of the event began at 10:40 AM with the "Sayonara Video Message". This visual tribute provided a heartwarming walk down memory lane, capturing the seniors' time at SMBS. Following the video, representatives from the outgoing batch took the stage to share their own experiences, gratitude, and memories in a series of emotional speeches.

Wishing You the Best

As a gesture of warmth from the organizing juniors, special snacks were provided to the seniors during the program. The event concluded with a Vote of Thanks delivered by the S3 class representative, Sumish S Parayil, who expressed gratitude to all attendees and organizers. Before officially signing off at 12:30 PM, the seniors and juniors gathered for a final Photo Session, capturing the smiles and camaraderie of this special occasion forever.

To the Class of 2025: Farewell, but not forever! We wish you the very best in your future careers.

Published by SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS STUDIES
Mahatma Gandhi University, Priyadarsini Hills, Kottayam.

Design & Production : Wild Thoughts, Kottayam