


## Research Article

# Mapping Soft Drink Consumption in West Bengal - A Case Study of the Beverages Industry


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**Abstract:** In recent years, the beverage industry has become a large and rapidly growing sector in India. Day by day, soft drinks have become a foremost in the daily lives of many urban consumers, particularly among the youth and working population. This study explores the patterns, preferences, and influencing factors behind soft drink consumption in West Bengal, a state where tradition and culture meet modern lifestyle choices. Through surveys conducted across various age groups and socio-economic backgrounds, this research uncovers not only the frequency and types of beverages consumed but also the cultural, climatic, and marketing-driven reasons behind these choices. This study further investigates the consumption patterns of soft drinks across the state, focusing on who drinks them, how they are influenced, and where they prefer to buy them.

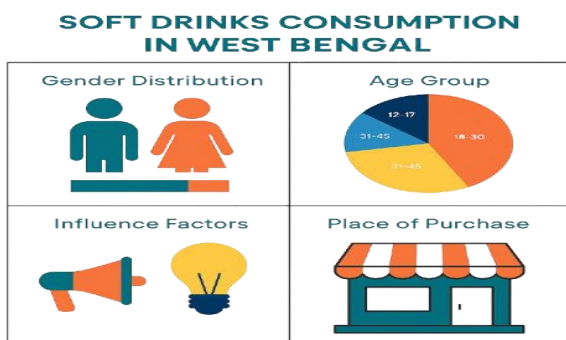
**Keywords:** Soft Drinks Consumption, Online Ads, Young Adults, Consumer Behavior, Super Markets, Health Risk

## Graphical Abstract

The graphical abstract visually summarizes the key findings and objectives of the study on soft drink consumption patterns across West Bengal.

### The illustration highlights:

- **Demographic Factors:** Age and gender-based differences in consumption trends.
- **Influencing Elements:** Factors like advertisements, peer influence, taste preference, and lifestyle habits that drive the choice of soft drinks.
- **Retail Sources:** Common purchasing points such as local shops, supermarkets, and vending outlets.
- **Health Concern Zone:** A visual cue linking frequent soft drink intake to possible health risks like diabetes, supporting the public health relevance of the study.



## 1. Introduction

Soft drinks represent a dominant segment within the non-alcoholic beverage market, encompassing both carbonated and non-carbonated types. These beverages are typically infused with artificial flavors, preservatives, sweeteners, and carbon dioxide to enhance taste and shelf life. Over the past few decades, the global consumption of soft drinks has seen a substantial rise, with India following the trend, particularly among urban and youth demographics. However, despite their popularity and appeal, soft drinks have attracted criticism due to their high sugar content and negligible nutritional value.

Numerous health studies have established links between the regular intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and the increased risk of various lifestyle disorders, such as obesity, diabetes, dental problems, and other metabolic issues. The average 350 mL soft drink contains approximately 140–150 calories and over 35 grams of sugar, yet lacks essential nutrients like calcium, fiber, and vitamins. As such, their overconsumption, especially among adolescents and young adults, raises public health concerns.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

Even though global health organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), advocate for the reduction of

sugary beverage consumption, the Indian market continues to witness a surge in demand. This situation is compounded by factors such as aggressive advertising, peer influence, urban lifestyle shifts, and limited public awareness of the health risks involved. While India's overall soft drink consumption per capita remains lower than that of many developed nations, the associated health burden is rapidly increasing.

In the context of West Bengal, known for its diverse population and evolving consumption trends, there is limited localized research exploring behavioral patterns related to soft drink intake. Understanding the key drivers behind such consumption, especially among different age and gender groups, is essential for both public health planning and informed marketing strategies.

### 1.2 Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to analyze the patterns and behavioral factors influencing soft drink consumption across different demographic groups in West Bengal.

The study mainly seeks to:

- Determine whether gender differences affect consumption frequency.
- Identify the age group most inclined toward regular soft drink intake.
- Explore the primary sources of influence—such as advertisements, peer behavior, or lifestyle factors—that encourage consumption.
- Examine the preferred purchasing channels or locations for soft drinks.

### 1.3 Motivation of the Study

The motivation behind conducting this research stems from the dual need to promote healthier lifestyle choices and help the beverage industry adopt responsible marketing strategies. While the health impacts of soft drink consumption are well-documented globally, India's rapidly shifting consumption landscape requires focused, region-specific analysis. West Bengal, with its blend of urban-rural dynamics and cultural variation, provides a compelling setting for such an investigation.

Through a structured survey conducted across various districts in West Bengal, this research aims to deliver insights that can aid both health policymakers and market analysts in understanding and addressing consumer behavior related to soft drink intake.

## 2. Related Work

In a study [1], it is observed that daily and weekly aerated drink consumption is significantly higher among adolescent boys compared to girls. Consumption is strongly linked with factors such as wealth, education, fried food intake, and television exposure. Another study [2] revealed that males, individuals from urban areas, higher wealth quintiles, and those exposed to media are more likely to consume sugar-sweetened beverages. In a community-based study [3] of over

1,000 adults, it is found over 96% prevalence of sugar-sweetened beverage consumption, with peer influence cited by one-third of participants. Overweight and high socioeconomic status were statistically associated with higher intake. A survey [4] of 20–30-year-olds in Kolkata (n = 100) revealed that although 88% were aware of health risks, a significant portion (31%) consumed soft drinks at least weekly. Among respondents, 68% were overweight, 42% preferred regular sodas, and many persisted despite negative health attitudes.

In a study [5], it is also observed that Indian Gen Y (18–30 years) showed that attitudes around convenience, availability, and nutritional perception significantly influenced consumption frequency. Easy availability near consumers proved a critical purchase factor. A comprehensive survey [6], targeting individuals aged 12 to 45, explored the determinants of carbonated drink purchases and uncovered significant gender-related variations. Attributes such as youthful energy, cultural association, social image, and the level of fizz had varying effects on beverage choices among males and females. Similarly, a transnational analysis [7] focusing on the 10–17 age group revealed that increased marketing of sugary beverages led to stronger brand recall and liking, particularly for juices rather than sodas. Analysis of data from 18 countries [8] found a mean prevalence among 12–15-year-olds of 42.1%. Trends varied by country, with some declining, some stable, and others increasing, suggesting that local contexts heavily influence consumption trajectories.

A comprehensive review [9] links high sugar and caloric density of soft drinks with obesity, metabolic syndrome, diabetes, dental caries, and associated economic costs. The findings support policy-level interventions like sugar taxes and marketing restrictions.

Further, a systematic review [10] and meta-analysis examining the relationship between socioeconomic status and sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) consumption among Indian adults. The study found that individuals from higher socioeconomic brackets consume significantly more SSBs, and that key consumption determinants include gender, age, media exposure, and fried food intake.

Lastly, from another survey, it is explored [11] that, maternal and child consumption patterns of ultra-processed foods and SSBs in informal settlements of Mumbai. Their findings reveal high intake of sugary beverages across all age groups, underscoring the strong role of household behaviours and urban living conditions in dietary choices.

### These studies collectively highlight consistent themes:

- Gender and age-based consumption differences, often with males and adolescents consuming more.
- Influential factors such as media exposure, peer pressure, accessibility, socioeconomic status, and health knowledge.
- This study will also focus on the main reasons for buying soft drinks more often.

However, no prior study has combined gender and age-disaggregated market behavior, influence sources, and retail purchase patterns at a state-wide level in West Bengal.

This research focuses on:

- Profiling consumption across urban and rural districts in West Bengal.
- Examining who (gender), when (age groups), why (various influences), and where (retail sources) soft drinks are consumed.
- Informing both marketing strategies and public health advocacy tailored to regional consumer behavior.

### 3. Data Description

The data used in this study came from a structured questionnaire survey designed specifically to analyze soft drink consumption patterns across various districts of West Bengal. The survey was conducted via online (Google Forms and social media platforms) mode to ensure inclusive participation from different socio-economic and geographical backgrounds.

A total of 12,500 valid responses were received from individuals belonging to diverse demographic categories. The participants included both males and females, spanning various age groups such as below 18, 18–25, 26–35, 36–50, and above 50. Respondents were from both urban and rural areas, covering multiple districts including Kolkata, Howrah, North 24 Parganas, Hooghly, Siliguri, Durgapur, and others.

This survey was conducted based on questions like Frequency of soft drink consumption, Gender, and age-wise consumption patterns, influencing factors (such as advertisements, peer influence, and lifestyle), and Preferred points of purchase (e.g., local shops, supermarkets, or online platforms).

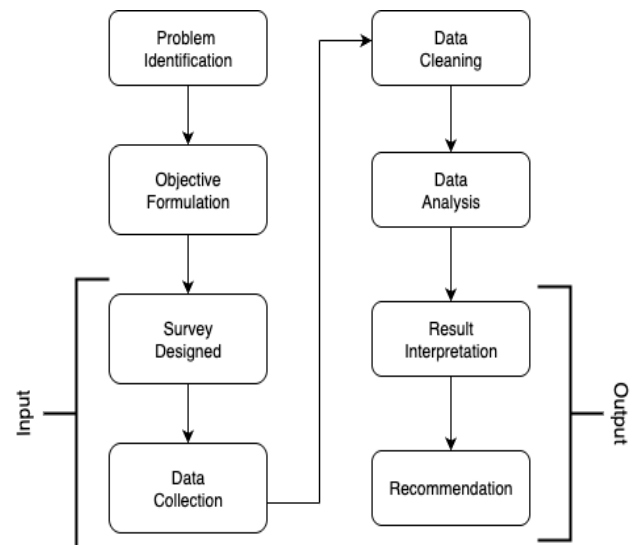
During the survey, all the participants were informed about the academic intent of the study. Participation was performed entirely voluntarily, and responses were collected with guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. Before analysis, the data was cleaned and validated, with incomplete or duplicate responses being excluded to maintain the quality and integrity of the dataset.

### 4. Experimental Method

The study investigates the patterns and preferences related to soft drink consumption across different regions of West Bengal. A structured questionnaire was designed, consisting of closed-ended, Likert-scale, and short open-ended questions aimed at capturing a wide range of information, including basic details (like, age, gender, occupation), frequency of soft drink consumption, influencing factors (such as advertisements, peer influence, or lifestyle), and preferred purchasing sources (local stores, supermarkets, online platforms, etc.).

The survey was conducted online to ensure inclusivity. One Google form was prepared to conduct the study, and then it

was spread via social media. This approach helped to collect the responses from different types of people.



A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to reach respondents across various age groups, professions, and residential locations (urban and rural). The data collection was carried out over three months. In total, 12,500 valid responses were gathered, out of which incomplete or duplicate entries were removed through a careful data cleaning process by using Python.

The validated data was processed and analyzed using Python (Pandas, NumPy, and Matplotlib libraries). Descriptive statistical techniques were applied to summarize the data, and findings were represented using bar charts, pie charts, and frequency tables for better visualization and interpretation. This systematic procedure allowed the study to draw reliable conclusions on key aspects such as gender and age-wise consumption trends, factors influencing soft drink consumption, and common retail sources among consumers in West Bengal.

### 5. Results and Discussion

The collected data was carefully analyzed to understand various aspects of soft drink consumption behavior across West Bengal. The results are discussed in accordance with the four major research objectives: gender-wise consumption, age group preferences, influencing factors, and preferred purchase sources.

#### 5.1 Gender-Wise Consumption Patterns

The analysis revealed that male respondents consumed soft drinks more frequently compared to females. While both genders reported regular consumption, the frequency was noticeably higher among males, particularly in the younger age categories. From my analysis, out of 10K responses, 3455 were female who prefer energy drinks, and 6038 were male who prefer energy drinks.

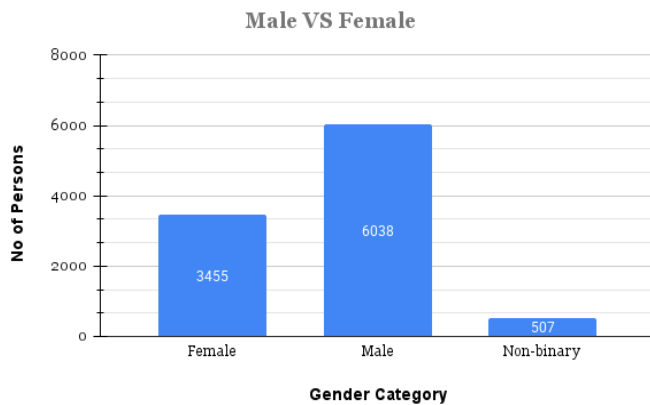


Figure 1. Gender-Wise Consumption Comparison

A similar type of observation was also done by another study [2], a cross-sectional analysis based on data from India's National Family Health Survey-4 (conducted in 2015–16) found that 6.4% of men reported daily aerated soft drink consumption, compared with 4.9% of women, while weekly consumption was 24% for men versus 19% for women. The study also highlighted that males, individuals in higher wealth quintiles, and those regularly exposed to media (TV, newspapers) were more likely to consume soft drinks than their female counterparts.

## 5.2 Age Group Preferences

Among the surveyed age groups, individuals aged 19 to 30 years emerged as the highest consumers of soft drinks. This age group, often referred to as Gen Y or Millennials, is more exposed to digital media, fast food culture, and social influences that promote soft drink consumption. Consumption rates declined with increasing age, with individuals above 50 reporting minimal intake. This trend supports the understanding that younger populations are more likely to indulge in sugar-based beverages due to lifestyle and cultural factors.

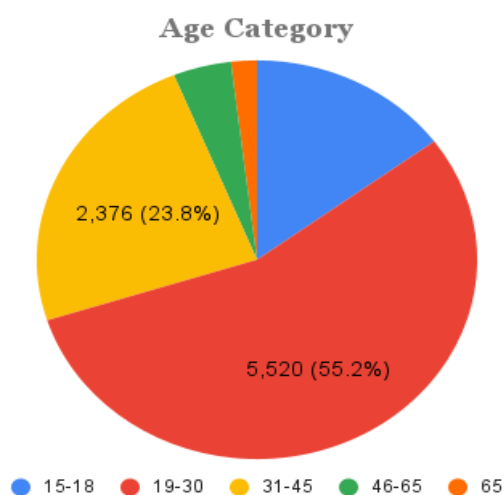


Figure 2. Age-Category Analysis

Also, a study conducted in Kolkata [4], focusing on individuals aged 20–30 years, found that nearly one-third of respondents consumed soft drinks weekly, reinforcing the dominant consumption trends within the younger age group.

Similarly, a recent Australian study [12] found that among 18–to 30-year-olds, soft drinks were the most consumed discretionary beverage, with men consuming more than women in this demographic.

## 5.3 Influencing Factors Behind Consumption

From the survey conducted with a total of 10,000 respondents, various sources of promotional influence were analyzed to understand their impact on soft drink consumption behavior. The findings revealed that online advertisements emerged as the most significant factor, influencing 40.2% (4020 out of 10,000 respondents) of the total respondents. This highlights the growing dominance of digital platforms in shaping consumer preferences, particularly among younger demographics who are more engaged with social media and internet-based content.

In contrast, television advertisements influenced 26.88% (2688 out of 10,000 respondents) of the participants, indicating that traditional media still retains a considerable share in promotional outreach, especially in semi-urban and rural segments where TV remains a primary medium of entertainment.

Furthermore, print media such as newspapers and magazines accounted for 8.41% (841 out of 10,000 respondents) of the influence. This relatively low figure reflects a decline in the effectiveness of print-based promotions, possibly due to reduced readership and the shift towards digital consumption of news and content.



Figure 3. Marketing Trends

In addition to these, 12.25% (1225 out of 10,000 respondents) of the respondents reported being influenced by other promotional avenues, including word-of-mouth, in-store promotions, event sponsorships, and billboard advertising.

## 5.4 Preferred Locations of Purchase

In analyzing the preferred purchase locations for soft drinks among respondents, it was observed that supermarkets and large retail outlets remain the most favored choice, cited by a significant portion of the participants. These venues are often perceived as reliable and convenient, offering a wide variety of beverage options, frequent promotional deals, and accessibility in both urban and semi-urban areas of West Bengal. The availability of chilled products and the ability to compare multiple brands side-by-side make supermarkets a primary point of purchase for many consumers.

The second most common source of purchase identified in the study was convenience stores, such as local kirana shops or small neighborhood retail outlets. These stores cater to immediate consumption needs and are typically located within close proximity to residential areas, making them ideal for impulse purchases. Their long operating hours and familiar neighborhood presence contribute to their steady consumer base.

In addition to traditional brick-and-mortar options, a growing number of respondents indicated that they also buy soft drinks through online retail platforms, including e-commerce websites and grocery delivery apps. Although this segment is comparatively smaller, it reflects an emerging trend towards digital shopping behaviors, especially among the younger and tech-savvy demographic. The convenience of doorstep delivery, digital payment options, and app-exclusive discounts are factors contributing to this shift.

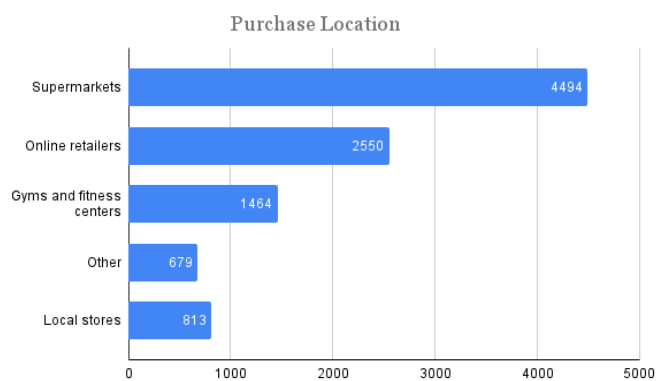


Figure 4. Preferred Purchase Location

Moreover, a modest yet notable portion of participants mentioned food delivery applications as a source for soft drink purchases. These orders are often bundled with meals, indicating a rise in situational or complementary beverage consumption through platforms like Swiggy and Zomato. However, despite the increase in online purchasing habits, the dominance of physical stores—particularly supermarkets—remains strong, suggesting that offline retail continues to play a central role in beverage consumption habits in West Bengal.

### 5.5 Reasons to Buy

An important insight derived from the study indicates that approximately 40% of the respondents consume soft drinks primarily as a means to boost their energy levels and enhance mental focus. This finding reflects a growing perception among consumers—especially within the younger demographic—that soft drinks serve purposes beyond mere refreshment or taste satisfaction. The high sugar and caffeine content found in many carbonated beverages may contribute to a temporary feeling of alertness or invigoration, which could explain why a significant portion of individuals associate these drinks with increased productivity or mental stimulation.

For students, working professionals, and individuals engaged in physically or mentally demanding tasks, soft drinks are often perceived as a quick and accessible energy source. This

behavioral pattern suggests that soft drinks are sometimes used as a functional substitute for energy drinks or coffee, particularly during periods of fatigue, long working hours, or academic preparation. The preference for such beverages to counter tiredness and maintain concentration underscores a potential shift in the role of soft drinks from recreational consumption to functional usage.

However, this trend also raises concerns about consumer awareness regarding the long-term health implications of relying on sugar-sweetened beverages for energy. While short-term effects such as increased alertness may be experienced, the high caloric content, combined with excessive sugar and caffeine, can contribute to energy crashes, addiction, and metabolic disorders when consumed regularly without moderation.

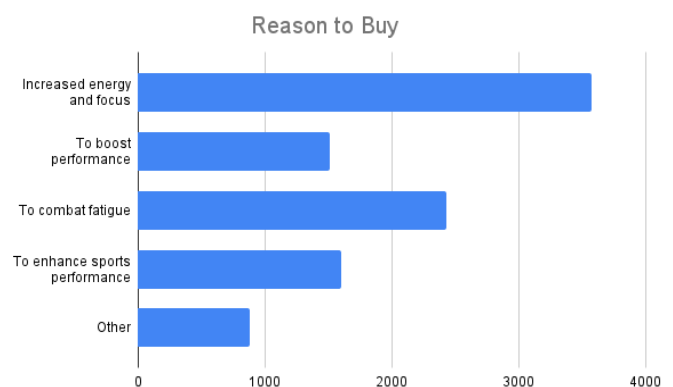


Figure 5. Reasons to Buy Soft Drinks

Overall, the finding highlights a critical motivational factor influencing purchasing behavior and consumption patterns. It emphasizes the need for further investigation into consumer beliefs around energy-boosting beverages and calls for targeted awareness campaigns to promote healthier alternatives for maintaining energy and focus.

Summary of key findings on soft drink consumption in West Bengal:

Table 1. Summary of Key Findings

Research Parameter	Observation/Result
Sample Size	12,500
Age-group with consumption	19-30 Years
Gender-based consumption	Male > Female
Motivation of consumption	To boost energy (~40%)
Influencing Factor	- Online Ads (~40.2%) - TV Channels (~26.88%) - Print Media (~8.41%) - Others (~12.25%)
Preferred Location	Supermarkets
Most Popular Types	Carbonated flavored
Awareness of Health Impacts	Moderate
Frequency of Consumption	~(2-3 times per week)
Cultural and Social Influence	Festivals
Marketing Impact	Digital marketing
Key Recommendation	Need for awareness campaigns.

## 6. Conclusion and Future Scope

Based on the study, it is concluded that:

### 6.1 Conclusion

The present study investigated the consumption patterns, influencing factors, and purchasing behavior associated with soft drinks among individuals across various regions in West Bengal. The primary outcome of this research reveals that soft drink consumption is particularly high among young adults aged between 19 and 30 years, with males consuming more frequently than females. The research also highlights that consumer behavior is largely influenced by taste, peer pressure, and promotional techniques. Online Ads, especially those involving celebrities and sports personalities, along with vibrant packaging and promotional offers, were found to significantly impact the decision-making process of consumers, especially among the younger demographic. The data also highlights that soft drinks are commonly purchased from supermarkets and small retail outlets, although a noticeable shift toward online platforms is gradually emerging, particularly in urban areas. This trend indicates a growing demand for convenience and variety, suggesting opportunities for expansion in modern trade channels.

This study holds relevance for marketers, health policymakers, and food product developers. The findings provide valuable insights for beverage companies to design more targeted marketing campaigns while also drawing attention to the potential health implications of excessive soft drink consumption, including obesity, diabetes, and other lifestyle-related diseases.

The limitation of this study lies in its reliance on self-reported survey data, which may carry inherent biases or underreporting. Moreover, the sample, while diverse, may not fully capture the rural and remote populations of the state, which could present varying trends.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that awareness campaigns and educational programs be initiated to inform consumers about the nutritional content and potential health risks of frequent soft drink consumption. At the same time, policymakers could consider the implementation of clearer product labeling, regulation on marketing to vulnerable groups such as children and adolescents, and incentives for promoting healthier alternatives.

### 6.2 Future Scope

Looking ahead, this study can be significantly expanded by encompassing a more extensive and demographically diverse sample across multiple regions, including rural and semi-urban districts, to enhance the generalizability of the findings across various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Incorporating participants from underrepresented geographic zones will provide a broader understanding of regional disparities in soft drink consumption behavior and will allow researchers to identify localized factors influencing purchasing decisions. Additionally, by integrating actual health metrics and clinical data such as body mass index (BMI), blood glucose levels, or records of non-communicable

diseases, future studies can examine the direct correlation between soft drink consumption patterns and specific health outcomes. This would help establish a more concrete link between dietary habits and the risk factors associated with frequent intake of sugar-sweetened beverages.

Furthermore, longitudinal research designs could offer valuable insights into how individual consumption habits change over time in response to evolving lifestyle trends, economic conditions, or public health interventions. Repeated observations over extended periods would allow for the identification of persistent behavioral patterns and the long-term effects of marketing exposure or educational campaigns. In addition to observational approaches, future work could also incorporate behavioral intervention strategies such as awareness programs, incentive-based modifications, or regulatory measures to study their effectiveness in reducing soft drink intake among high-risk groups, particularly adolescents and young adults. Combining such interventions with digital tools like mobile health apps or personalized feedback systems could provide more interactive and scalable solutions to promote healthier beverage choices.

Overall, advancing this line of research with a multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary approach could contribute meaningfully to both public health policy and consumer behavior science, ultimately leading to better-informed strategies that address the growing health concerns linked to the excessive consumption of sugary beverages.

### Data Availability

The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. All data used in this research were collected through structured surveys and are stored in a secure format. Due to privacy and ethical considerations involving respondent confidentiality, the raw data are not publicly accessible. However, de-identified data may be provided to qualified researchers for academic purposes upon approval.

### Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research paper. All contributions were made solely for academic and research purposes without any financial, personal, or professional interests that could have influenced the outcomes of the study.

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### Author's contribution

Author 1 took the lead in conducting the overall research, performing an in-depth review of existing literature, and drafting the manuscript. Authors 2 and 3 were primarily responsible for data cleaning, analysis and generating the results. Additionally, Author 3 played a key role in designing and executing the survey, ensuring relevant and reliable data



collection for the study. All authors reviewed the final manuscript and approved it for submission.

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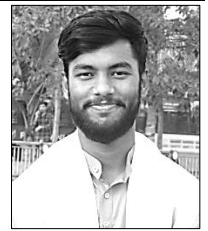
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He recently added to his academic credentials by successfully qualifying for the UGC NET examination for the post of Assistant Professor and Ph.D. eligibility, affirming his commitment to academic and research excellence. Further showcasing his research work, one of his research papers has been published in the prestigious IEEE Xplore digital library.

With a focus on delivering high-quality education, Subhankar actively engages in curriculum design, student mentorship, and bridging theoretical concepts with practical applications. He strives to close the gap between classroom learning and real-world industry demands, cultivating an environment of growth, curiosity, and lifelong learning.

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