

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND THEORIES FOR INDIAN MILLENNIALS WORKFORCE: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The modern workforce is made up of people from several generations, including baby boomers, Generation X, Millennials (Generation Y), and the upcoming Generation Z. Each generation brings its own set of beliefs, work ethics, priorities, and personal approaches to organizations and leaders, offering new problems. As baby boomers retire, millennials are the significant part of the workforce. Understanding their work patterns and picking appropriate leadership styles or management theories are critical for good management. This review study looks at leadership ideas and how they apply to millennials in Indian organizations. According to the literature, transformative, democratic, and empowering leadership styles are the most effective in the Indian context.

KEYWORDS: Millennials workforce, Leadership, Leadership theories, Leadership styles, Indian perspective

INTRODUCTION

As per the UNFPA's State of World Population Report 2023, India is projected to surpass China and become the world's most populous country. By the middle of this year, the population of India is estimated to reach 1.4286 billion, surpassing China's population of 1.4257 billion. The majority of India's population, constituting over 68%, falls within the working-age range of 15 to 64 years, while the age group of 0 to 14 years accounts for approximately 25%. Additionally, there are segments of 18% for ages 10 to 19, 26% for ages 10 to 24, and 7% for those aged over 65 (The Indian Express, 2023).

The projections suggest that India's population will continue to grow, reaching 1.668 billion by 2050. This is significantly higher than China's estimated population of 1.317 billion people by the middle of the century (The Hindu, 2022). This demographic disparity has the potential to have profound consequences on global demographics, economics, and other societal aspects. As such, the projected changes in population dynamics between India and China will be a noteworthy development to observe in the coming years (The Economic Times, 2022).

By the year 2025, millennials, who currently form the majority of the workforce, are expected to hold a significant number of leadership positions within organisations (Fry, 2018; Hernandez et al., 2018). This demographic shift is of great importance because millennials have distinct values, attitudes, and work expectations compared to previous generations, necessitating organisations to adapt and accommodate these differences (Bottomley and Willie Burgess, 2018; Valenti, 2019). Consequently, there has been substantial research on millennials' career aspirations, work values, and motivators to better understand their impact on the workplace (Galdames and Guihen, 2022; Valenti, 2019).

Millennials possess unique attitudes and characteristics, presenting novel challenges for leaders. As they continue to dominate the global workforce (Deloitte, 2019), they will play a crucial role in optimizing organisational capabilities. Consequently, researchers have focused extensively on millennials, studying their traits, attitudes, and behaviours (MacKenzie & Scherer, 2019).

Due to their universal relevance, millennials have been the subject of research on a global scale. By 2025, they are projected to represent 75% of the worldwide workforce (Rubi Khan, Peoplematters 2022). This generation has been dubbed the most "watched over" in history and is often considered "the best generation yet" (Martin & Tulgan, 2001). Millennials were born during a period of economic expansion and prosperity, making them more prosperous compared to previous generations (Allen, 2004).

A Forbes report on managing millennials in 2020 highlighted that a significant portion of today's workforce follows their own path. This revolutionizes workplace culture, and managers must understand millennials' work styles, especially considering that they will comprise 75% of the workforce by 2030. Issues such as the need for flexible work schedules, work-life balance, and challenges with engagement are common concerns faced by managers.

India, with a millennial population of over 440 million, constitutes about 34% of the country's total population (Sharma, 2021). While the Indian context has limited research focusing on the multigenerational workforce, it is

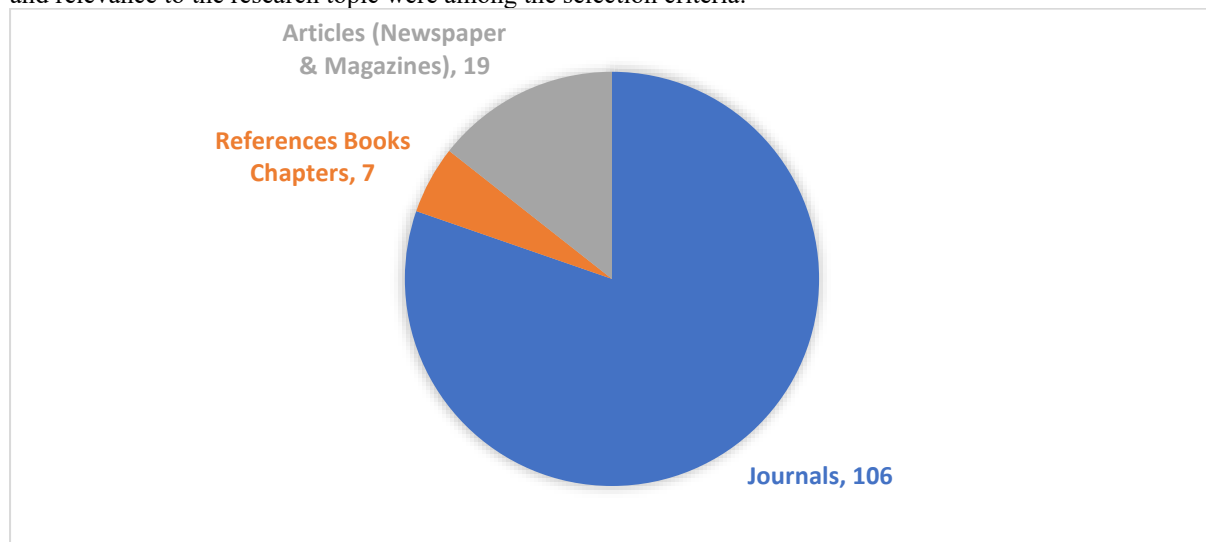
crucial to understand millennials' expectations as they enter the job market. It is essential for leaders to adopt suitable leadership styles to effectively manage millennials in the workplace.

Looking ahead to 2026, 64.8% of Indians will fall between the ages of 15 and 64. With Indian millennials being the largest cohort globally and the country's economy experiencing growth thanks to a wealth of talent, they serve as a valuable talent pool for other nations (Khan, Peoplematters 2022). India's young population, with over half under 25 and more than 65% under 35, presents an opportunity for the country's growth and development. Proper utilization of this youthful demographic can contribute significantly to India's progress. According to official statistics, millennials, born between 1981 and the late 1990s, make up about 34% of India's population, amounting to approximately 440 million individuals (Ahluwalia, 2018).

In summary, the rise of millennials in the workforce presents a crucial shift that requires organisations and leaders to adapt to their distinct values and expectations. As this generation continues to shape the modern workplace, understanding their aspirations and employing suitable leadership styles will be vital for maximizing their potential and contributing to the growth of both businesses and economies.

METHODOLOGY OF REVIEW

SCOPUS and Google Scholar databases were utilised in the research to identify relevant scholarly journals, resulting in the inclusion of 106 journal articles. Seven chapters from reference books were also included. Google was used to find pertinent news articles for the newspaper and magazine articles, resulting 19 articles that were included. Keywords like "Millennials workforce," "Leadership," "Leadership theories," "Leadership styles," and "Indian perspective" guided the search, which focused on works published up until 2023. Publication in English and relevance to the research topic were among the selection criteria.



What is Generation?

The term "generation" refers to a social group with a distinctive collective identity and shared consciousness. This identity and consciousness are shaped by significant events or circumstances that occurred during a specific historical era. Generations are defined by the common experiences, values, and attitudes of their members, which are influenced by the social, political, technological, and cultural context in which they grew up. These shared experiences create a sense of belonging and cohesion within each generation and contribute to their unique characteristics and perspectives (North & Fiske, 2015).

Generations refer to distinct social groups with shared collective identities and consciousness shaped by significant historical events and circumstances during specific historical eras. Howe & Strauss (2000) defined five generations: Silent Generation (1922-1945), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Gen X (mid-1960s to early 1980s), Millennials/Gen Y (1980s to early 2000s), Gen Z (2000 to 2010/2012), and Generation Alpha (born between 2010/2011 and 2024). Each generation exhibits unique characteristics and experiences, influenced by the technological, social, and political contexts of their time.

Additionally, Maan and Srivastava (2022) proposed an integrated design for generation classification in an Indian context. They classified cohorts based on birth years: Baby Boomers (1946-1955), Generation X (1956-1980), Generation Y (1981-1995), and Generation Z (1996-2007). These classifications consider age groups, developmental stages, formative years, significant Indian historical events, and other factors relevant to the Indian context. In summary, generations are social groups defined by specific birth years, shaped by historical events, and characterized by unique values, beliefs, and experiences.

Who are Millennials?

The label "Millennials," also referred to as "Generation Y," "Generation Me," or "Generation Net," pertains to a group of individuals born between 1980 and 1990 who came of age during the new millennium (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Edge, 2014). The term "millennials" is said to have been created by Howe and Strauss in 2000 to describe this generation.

Millennials are frequently described as technologically savvy, highly educated, and socially conscious. They grew up during a period of rapid technological change and globalisation, so they are at ease with digital communication and have a global perspective. They are also more diverse and inclusive in their thinking, placing a premium on diversity and equity in the workplace. According to a Pew Research Centre study, Millennials are also more likely to be politically independent and to value work-life balance over professional advancement (Fry & Parker, 2018). According to Caraher et al., 2015, the millennial generation is a one-of-a-kind generation. Members of this age have very different demands, skills, and employment expectations than earlier generations. The millennial generation is rapidly entering the workforce, and as a result of their demands for changes in employee management over the past ten years, this generation has caught the attention of researchers and administrators. According to Maan and Srivastava 2022, the inclusion of these millennial workers into organisations creates "generational diversity."

According to Lancaster & Stillman, 2002 & 2010, Millennials are more wired and connected than any other generation in history, having grown up with the Internet and smartphones. This generation is possibly the most unusual in contemporary history since they are the first to have grown up in the computerized age. Millennials often received a lot of praise from their parents because they were raised in an era when developing one's self-esteem was given more importance. Many Millennials consequently gained confidence in their capacity to realise their objectives and aspirations. The connectivity of millennials is a main aspect of their identification. As they are the pioneer generation to be raised online, they have had virtually unrestricted admittance to knowledge, modern technologies and digital support (Sessa et al., 2007). According to MacKenzie and Scherer (2019), the formal digital appearance that millennials adopt has shaped their thinking and inspire their desire for lifelong learning from a variety of unconventional sources.

The following table 1 summarises the literature review on the differences between the traits of millennials in western countries and those in India:

Table-1: Characteristics of Millennials, prepared by The Author

Western countries millennials characteristics		Indian millennials characteristics	
Author	Characteristics	Author	Characteristics
Skiba & Barton (2006)	Digital natives, Independent, emotional, innovative, mature, investigative, impatient, empathetic, authentic, family-oriented individuals, value intelligence.	Erickson, (2009)	Impatient, technologically savvy, diverse, democratic, and global- minded.
Partridge & Hallam (2006)	High-achievers, team players, family/community-oriented, pragmatic, optimistic, involved, structured, seeking support, technologically savvy, education-focused, motivated, multitaskers, lifelong learners.	Saundarya & Ekambarm (2014)	Team player, idealistic leadership and guidance needed, pragmatic, optimistic, tech savvy, challenges authority.
Monaco & Martin (2007)	Entitled, naive, looking for shortcuts, self-assured, motivated by teamwork rather than individual success, lacking in self-control and critical thinking, optimistic, multitaskers, seeking immediate gratification.	Dokadia (2015)	This generation, which is materialistic, globally aware, ambitious, self-assured, and technologically inclined, is a part of a fluid society based on consumerism, technology, and strong western cultural influences.
Shaw & Fairhurst (2008)	Educated, tech-savvy, diverse, confident, independent, entrepreneurial, social, approval-seeking, results-driven, work-loving, high-maintenance, institutional-learning, fast learners.	Bansal & Srivastava (2017)	Motivators: Exciting work, favorable circumstances, and a promising future. Job stability, respect, challenges, and responsibility are important. Prefer family, seek an environment that is open, flexible, and supportive. Ask for praise for your work.

Wesner & Miller (2008)	Highly educated, tech-savvy, mobile, achievement-oriented, meaningful work.	Maan & Srivastava (2022)	Entrepreneurial, financially motivated, tech savvy, diverse, assertive, educated, work-life balance, individualistic, short-term jobs, freelancing, adaptable, fearless, value diversity, doubtful of corporate life, and in need of motivating leadership.
Bohl (2008)	Feedback-seeking, success-driven, integrating work and personal life, high standards, altruistic, overachievers, obile/collaborative, and immediate lifestyle.	Mamtha J et al. (2013)	Ambitious, upbeat, change-loving, and have a clear sense of their future.

Millennials at Workplace

According to Chillakuri (2020), millennials are a strong presence in the global knowledge workforce, leveraging their wide mix of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to produce value across multiple industries. Different educational, economic, social, and political settings have moulded millennials differently than earlier generations, impacted by elements such as technology, positive reinforcement, and socio-political upheaval (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Ng et al., 2010).

While research indicates that millennials have distinct views, interests, and expectations, problems about their recruitment, retention, and commitment in organisations persist (Hershatte & Epstein; Twenge, 2010). Fulfilling jobs, work-life balance, and recognition can increase millennial productivity and retention (Twenge, 2010; Corporate Leadership Council, 2010), which is consistent with the findings of Hershatte and Epstein (2010) and Ng et al. (2010).

According to Calk and Patrick (2017), millennials prefer demanding work and are more willing to take career risks than previous generations. Their proclivity for "job-hopping," which is typically motivated by career aspirations, has been seen globally, including among Indian millennials (Holtschlag et al., 2020; Gulyani & Bhatnagar, 2017; Motiram & Singh, 2012). Given the size of the Indian millennial population and workforce (Chavadi et al., 2021; Arora & Dhole, 2019), their decisions have a significant impact on the future of employment (Bijapurkar, Livemint Newspaper, 2019; Kumbla, 2020).

Dave Ulrich (2022) describes the millennial viewpoint on work across multiple dimensions in his work. Millennials value parallel careers as an important component of their job objectives. They value versatility in establishing work-life balance, recognising the importance of juggling several responsibilities outside of work. Millennials value quick and easy feedback, which is made possible by technology. They approach training with a dedication to lifelong learning, seeing it as an essential part of their daily lives. The younger generation finds fulfilment and recognition in meaningful work, and their approach to retirement leans towards recycling, reflecting a fresh take on this life stage.

Millennials' opinions on life aspirations, success criteria, preferred job styles, and motivational factors are explored by Bansal N. and Srivastava D.K. (2017). According to their findings, millennials expect a life filled with power, riches, tranquilly, adventure, societal contributions, growth opportunities, satisfaction, and work-life balance. Millennials see success as happiness, fulfilment, work-life balance, accomplishments, high positions, self-improvement, and functioning as role models with elevated social prestige. Knowledge-sharing, openness, a supportive culture, strong interpersonal ties, innovation, and inspiration characterise the ideal work environment. The primary factors important in their occupations include autonomy, recognition, flexibility, difficulties, gratitude, supervisor support, meaningful work, choice, teamwork, and feeling valued. Engaging duties, favourable working circumstances, competitive earnings, and a bright career are all sources of motivation for millennials.

To summarise, millennials are a significant force in the global knowledge workforce, using their broad abilities and adjusting to changing socioeconomic landscapes. Their pursuit of parallel professions, work-life balance, meaningful participation, and constant learning drives their professional ethos, despite differences in tastes and objectives. Furthermore, their proclivity for employment mobility and reimagined perspectives on success and retirement point to a transformational impact on labour dynamics. Recognising their significance, organisations must match recruitment, retention, and development strategies with these complex beliefs in order to capitalise on millennial potential and drive future work trends.

What is Leadership?

The idea of leadership is complicated and challenging, as many academics have recognised (see, for example, the works of Alblooshi, Shamsuzzaman, and Haridy (2020), Ford and Polin (2021), Sousa and van Dierendonck (2021), and Uhl-Bien (2021). As stated by Chemers (2014), Laohavichien, Fredendall, and Cantrell (2009), and Stewart (2006), this is particularly noticeable in management studies in general and trait research in particular. One of the first to suggest that leadership is the product of a continuous process of self-discovery and personal development rather than a set of fundamental traits was Warren Bennis (2014).

Maxwells (2018) has his own leadership philosophy, which centres on the notion that leaders are created, not born. He emphasises that anyone with the necessary skills and qualities can become a leader. Maxwell believes that the effectiveness of leadership begins with trust, integrity, and character. According to Maxwell, the capacity to influence others is leadership. He defines leadership as "influence, nothing more, nothing less." According to Maxwell, leadership is more about the capacity to inspire and motivate subordinates to work towards a common objective than it is about titles, positions, or authority.

Leadership in today's organisations is complex and involves many stakeholders. Although leadership is defined in a variety of ways, it ultimately entails guiding processes from goal conception to goal execution. Leadership can be defined as a leader's capacity to influence their team towards agreed organisational goals. Multiple authors, including Ali (2012), France (2008), Hirtz et al. (2015), Stewart (2006), Ulle and Kumar (2014), and Vilegi-Peters (2010), agree on this viewpoint.

Different researchers have defined the idea of leadership in different ways. Following are some definitions of leadership given by some eminent scholars:

- As per Nazarian et al. (2017), leadership the ability to guide a group of people and influence team members to achieve a set of goals.
- Dartey-Baah (2015) defines leadership as "taking the initiative, exerting influence, achieving common goals, and working in teams."
- Odumeru & Ifeanyi (2013) states that, Leadership is an important factor that contributes to the organisation's well-being).
- Northouse (2007) defines leadership is the process of influencing a group of people to accomplish a common objective.
- Yukl (2006) describes it as a process of encouraging people to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how to do it, and facilitating individual and group efforts to achieve common goals.
- Buchannan and Huczynski (1997) define it as a social process where one person influences another's behavior without using force or threat of force.
- Kouzes and Posner (1995) view it as an art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations.
- Jaques and Clement (1994) state that it is a process where one person establishes the goal or direction for one or more other people and motivates them to move forward with skill and dedication.
- Rost (1993) defines it as an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.
- According to Cohen (1990), Leadership is the skill of inspiring others to perform at their highest level in order to complete any task, objective, or project.
- Jacobs and Jaques (1990) view it as a process of giving purpose to collective effort and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve purpose.
- Batten (1989) defines it as the development of a clear and complete system of expectations to identify, evoke, and use the strengths of all resources in the organisation, particularly people.
- Hersey and Blanchard (1988) describe it as the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation.
- Hollander (1978) views it as a process of persuasion between a leader and his or her followers. Thus, leadership is a process, an art, an influence, a relationship, and a purpose, as per the above-mentioned definitions.

Overview of Leadership Theories:

Over the years, leadership theories have evolved from an emphasis on innate leader abilities and traits to a focus on situational factors, as discussed by Nawaz and Khan (2016). Earlier theories centered on leader traits like intelligence, confidence, and decisiveness. Subsequent theories shifted their focus to situational elements such as follower characteristics, task nature, and organizational culture and structure.

A. The Trait Approach to Leadership: According to the trait theory, certain innate traits or qualities are necessary for effective leadership. It is also suggested that some personal traits are inherited and help people perform well in leadership positions. Daft (2018) defines these characteristics as distinguishing traits that leaders possess, including intelligence, honesty, self-confidence, and appearance. According to the theory, certain people possess specific characteristics that enable them to become successful leaders (Robbins, Judge, Vohra, 2022).

B. Behavioural School Theories: These theories concentrate on how leaders behave and the actions they take to impact their followers. According to these theories, leadership can be acquired and enhanced the experience and training rather than being determined solely by personality traits or inherent features.

- The Ohio State University Studies: The Ohio State University conducted extensive leadership research and identified two fundamental behaviours that leaders can use to address the common needs of their groups (Daft, 2018). These behaviours, which focus on a leader's task and people-orientedness, are initiating structure and considering others. Initiating structure denotes proactive, goal-oriented behaviour, whereas consideration denotes a leader's emphasis on developing relationships with their followers. According to the research, successful leaders are those who can effectively balance both of these behaviours without favouring one over the other. (Robbins, Judge, Vohra, 2022).

- McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y: According to Theory X, individual is naturally lethargic and disinterested in work, so they must be strictly managed, guided, and motivated by outside forces like rewards and punishments. Theory X leaders are authoritarian and hierarchical in their approach, focusing on rules and procedures to secure compliance. Contrarily, Theory Y holds that people are naturally self-driven, imaginative, and responsible and do not need constant oversight or control. Theory Y leaders are more participative and democratic in their approach, encouraging the followers to take responsibility for their own work and to apply their abilities and creativity to achieve their goals (Stoner J. et al., 2018).

- Managerial Grid by Blake and Mouton's: A framework developed in the 1960s by management consultants Robert Blake and Jane Mouton. A manager's leadership style is evaluated using the model on two dimensions: both concern for the needs of the people and output. The horizontal axis symbolises a concern for people, which mention to a leader's level of interest in their employees' needs and well-being. Concern for production, represented by the vertical axis, refers to a leader's focus on achieving organisational goals and results (Stoner J. et al., 2018).

C. The Contingency or Situational School: Effective leaders, in this theory, are those who can alter their leadership tactic depending on the demands of their subordinates and the conditions.

- Fiedler's Contingency Model: Effectiveness of leadership depends on matching the leadership style with the specific situation. Three determinants assess the suitability of a leadership style for a given situation: leader-member relations, task structure, and leader's formal power. Task-oriented leadership suits situations with positive leader-member relations and well-structured tasks, allowing clear instructions. Relationship-based leadership is effective in situations with strained leader-member relations and less defined tasks, promoting trust in subordinates and a productive environment (Robbins, 2022).

- Hersey-Blanchard Model of Leadership: Four leader philosophies are used in situational leadership, depending on the preparedness of their followers: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. In order to determine appropriate leader behaviour, this model takes into account follower maturity as well as relationship- and task-oriented behaviours. Rather than age or emotional intelligence, maturity factors include commitment, competencies, and life experiences. It takes a flexible leader to change their approach to fit the situation and the needs of their followers. Psychological maturity is related to willingness to work, whereas work maturity is related to skills and competencies. Moderate follower maturity facilitates the effectiveness of selling and participating styles. The significance of situational leadership is highlighted by the need for leaders to modify their actions to correspond with the maturity level of their team and to demand cooperation (Cherry, 2018; Daft et al., 2010).

- Tannenbaum and Schmidt's Leadership Continuum: The Leadership Continuum model suggests that effective leadership involves finding the right balance between leader control and team freedom. It ranges from manager-cantered (high leader control) to subordinate-cantered (high team control) styles. Leadership styles include Tell, Sell, Consult, Join, and Delegate. The most effective style depends on factors like team knowledge, decision importance, and leader-team trust and communication (Robbins, Judge, Vohra, 2022).

- Path-Goal Theory: Robert House's 1971 theory outlines four key leadership behaviours. Directive leadership provides guidance, supportive leadership shows care, participatory leadership involves followers in achievement-oriented leadership and decision-making sets high performance expectations. These behaviours help leaders assist their followers in reaching their goals and achieving top performance (Robbins, Judge, Vohra, 2022).

D. Process Leadership Theories: Process leadership theories, as opposed to other leadership theories that focus on the traits or behaviours of effective leaders, emphasis on the interactions between leaders and their subordinates, and how these interactions shape the leadership process.

- Leader-Member Exchange Theory: It is a process-based theory that looks at how leaders and followers interact. A theory that looks at endogeneity and exogeneity is the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (Stoner J, 2018). In relation to the leader-member exchange, LMX classifies human resources as either inner-group or outer-group resources. The communication between managers and their subordinates is greatly influenced by the types of leadership styles they use. As a result of these interactions, subordinates determine whether they are an inner-group member or an outer-group member (Ruzger N. 2018).

- Charismatic Leadership: It focuses on the characteristics and behaviours of charismatic leaders. These leaders are thought to possess exceptional qualities such as confidence, charm, and persuasiveness, which allow them to motivate their followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes. Charismatic leaders are known for creating a compelling vision or mission that resonates with their followers, inspiring them to work tirelessly towards it. They are effective communicators, able to effectively communicate their vision to their subordinates while earning their respect and trust through their charisma and personality (Robbins, Judge, Vohra, 2022).

- Transactional Leadership: According to Tuan (2022), transactional leadership and leader-member exchange have been studied in relation to predicting employee performance, while transactional leadership style has been found to be a positive predictor of follower performance in organisations. Military platoons, on the other hand, tend to exhibit transactional leadership behaviours that are associated with increased soldier performance, as observed by Bayighomog and Arasli (2022). According to Stollberger et al. (2019), it is only weakly related to performance in political organisations. According to González-Cruz et al. (2019), it is more dominant than transformational and laissez-faire leadership approaches. Lin et al. (2022) discovered that awareness, friendliness, and personality traits are associated with transactional leadership.

- Transformational Leadership (TL): Hoang et al. in (2022) and Russell et al. (2018) expanded on the concept of TL, that leaders' capacity to inspire and motivate followers to achieve organisational goals rather than focusing solely on their own self-interest. Intellectual stimulation, idealised influence, individual consideration, and inspirational motivation are four key features of transformational leaders identified by Russell et al (2018). The capacity of a leader to create and communicate a vision while also setting challenging goals for employees is referred to as inspirational motivation. Idealised influence fosters an environment in which followers admire and trust their leader. Individual consideration entails leaders focusing on their followers' individual needs and acting as a mentor or coach. Leaders stimulate their minds by challenging assumptions, habits, and beliefs in order to recommend new ideas and approaches to tasks According to Lorena and Bilawal (2022), transformational leaders can inspire and care for their subordinates individually through their charisma and supportive work structures. In conclusion, the value of leaders inspiring and motivating their followers to achieve organisational goals is emphasised in this leadership theory.

E. Other Leadership Theories based on Leaders and Followers:

- Authentic Leadership Theory: According to Farid et al. (2020), the topic of authentic leadership has gained significant consideration in the field of organisational behaviour over the last decade. This leadership style focuses on the status of the leader's self-awareness, transparency, and ethical behaviour. Authentic leaders work to create a supportive workplace culture that inspires employee collaboration, trust, and open communication.
- Servant leadership Theory: Servant leadership prioritizes the well-being and growth of subordinates, emphasizing their needs and interests over personal success. Servant leaders build trust, respect, and empathy with followers, create an encouraging and empowering environment, and encourage followers to take responsibility for their development. They provide guidance, coaching, and mentoring to help followers develop skills and achieve their goals (Holley, Maxwell, 2022).
- Participative Leadership: Participative leadership, similar to democratic leadership, involves engaging employees in decision-making and management. This approach uses strategies like open communication, collaboration, and shared responsibility to align personal and organizational goals (Jing et al., 2017). It empowers employees, encourages active participation, and requires key management tasks for effectiveness. It fosters collaboration and problem-solving between leaders and employees (Huang et al., 2021; Chan, 2019).
- Visionary Leadership: A visionary leader, as defined by Corinne McLaughlin (1987), forges a new future through intuition, imagination, passion, and courage. Visionary leadership involves creating, communicating, and implementing concepts and ideas that align with the organization's future aspirations, often through collaborative efforts (Adriansyah, 2015). Such leaders view challenges as opportunities for organizational growth and are social innovators, change agents, and strategic thinkers who focus on the big picture (Dimiyati, 2014).
- Nurturing -task Leadership: According to J.B.P. Sinha's (1984), NT (nurturing-task) leadership concept, an effective leader should be both nurturing and task-oriented. The nurturing aspect of leadership is demonstrated by a leader who treats their subordinates with consideration and compassion. It's worth noting that NTL is not one of the leadership models mentioned by NB & Ly 2020 in their study as being conceptualised in a non-Western world. NLT, however, is a leadership approach that emphasises on the significance of both nurturing and task-oriented leadership behaviours, and it may have been influenced by non-Western leadership perspectives. The concept of NTL is informed by a leader's love for followers and followers' respect for the leader. (Peus et al. 2015)

Leadership Style

Leadership style is defined as the way they approach leading, directing, and supporting their followers or team members. It is the way a leader exercises their authority, makes decisions, interacts with their team, and affects the behaviour and actions of their followers.

- Autocratic Leadership: A leadership approach characterised by exercising complete individual control over each group member's actions and requiring little participation. Decisions made by autocratic leaders frequently reflect their beliefs and judgements rather than taking follower suggestions into account, requiring complete and authoritarian control over the group (Cherry, 2019). These leaders assumes that their subordinates will obey their command (Al Khajeh, 2018). In emergency situations with a uniform workforce, autocratic leadership may be advantageous if the leader is wise, fair, and understanding of the followers (Armstrong, 2012).
- Democratic Leadership: Giving clear and explicit directions to employees and ensuring that they understand the policies, regulations, and procedures in place to guide their work are examples of directive leadership. This leadership style is distinguished by a focus on providing specific instructions and establishing clear expectations for compliance with those instructions (Li et al., 2018; Lonati, 2020). They encourage open communication, debate, and discussion among team members and value and respect the opinions of their team members. This strategy places a focus on improvement of both individual and organisational outcomes, change, and visionary leadership. According to MacBeath (2005), this leadership style has proven to be more effective than autocratic leadership because it allows members to take participation in process of making decisions and develop their leadership skills and abilities.
- Laissez-faire Leadership Style: This leadership is distinguished by the leader's disinterest in the strategic vision and organisation's problems (Puni et al. 2014; Al Khajeh 2018). The leader takes a hands-off approach in this

leadership style, delegating decision-making and problem-solving to the team. Laissez-faire approach is frequently regarded as appropriate for teams with high levels of expertise and self-motivation, as it enables group members to take ownership of their work and innovate independently. It can also be useful in creative fields where individual autonomy is essential for coming up with new ideas. A leader with a laissez-faire leadership style does not directly supervise their team and does not prioritise regular communication or feedback. This approach gives team members complete autonomy and self-rule in assignment decision-making (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003; MacBeath, 2005).

- **Benevolent leadership Style:** According to Huang, Jui-Chieh (2022), it is a leadership approach in which managers show consideration for the professional and personal lives of their staff members. Several empirical studies have found inconsistencies between benevolent leadership and employees' voluntary behaviours. It emphasises on the leader's concern for the well-being of their followers, as well as their willingness to provide support, guidance, and mentorship to help their followers grow and develop. Benevolent leaders strive to foster a positive work environment in which their subordinates feel valued and appreciated, as well as a sense of collaboration and teamwork. They are frequently distinguished by their empathy, compassion, and comprehension of their followers' needs and perspectives (Stephen, 2022).
- **Empowering Leadership Style:** It illustrates a leader's capacity to support their team members' psychological emancipation, which gives them a sense of control over their work (Maynard, Gilson, & Mathieu, 2012). It has four elements: (1) emphasising the importance of work, (2) involving team members in decision-making, (3) expressing confidence in their ability to perform well, and (4) eliminating bureaucratic constraints (Ahearne, Mathieu, & Rapp, 2005). Employees are more likely to be engaged, productive, and have a positive work environment when they feel empowered. They are also less likely to leave the company (Sreenivas, 2014).

Millennials & leadership

In Indian organizations, the work environment is characterized by its diversity, which varies across different sectors and industries. Rana (2018) highlights the cultural dimensions of India based on Hofstede's framework. India exhibits a high-power distance culture, emphasizing a hierarchical society that places authority at the forefront. Additionally, India scores high on collectivism, emphasizing communal cohesion over individualism. Its masculinity score falls in the moderate range, reflecting a blend of assertive and nurturing behaviors. Furthermore, India's uncertainty avoidance score is low, indicating a greater tolerance for ambiguity. While traditional values emphasize hierarchy and seniority in the Indian work culture, globalization and the emergence of a younger workforce are pushing organizations toward a more collaborative and team-oriented approach (Kumar S., 2018). To adapt to this evolving work culture, companies are introducing policies like flexible working hours and remote work to enhance work-life balance. Employee engagement and well-being have also become central concerns, with organizations investing in training, development, and wellness programs, including benefits such as health insurance (Shukla & Pandey, 2022).

Putriastuti and Stasi (2019) point out that millennials, a significant part of the Indian workforce, have distinct preferences when it comes to leadership. They value leaders who prioritize developing interpersonal relationships, actively listen, demonstrate excellent communication skills, and have faith in their employees' capabilities. The quality of the working relationship between millennials and their leaders is contingent on these factors. Valenti (2019) notes that millennials favor leadership styles that embrace subordinates' perspectives, including their input in decision-making, communication, and feedback processes. While still adhering to established work practices, this generation seeks opportunities to realize their potential and actively participate in organizational decision-making (Solaja & Ogunola, 2016).

Past research has utilized various research methods to explore millennials' leadership preferences. While many of these studies employed quantitative research methods, Dulin (2008) stands out for using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, conducting extensive focus group interviews. This study identified five major themes in millennials' leadership preferences: competence, interpersonal relationships, management of others, self-management, and communication. Millennials particularly favor leaders who are intelligent, professional, and knowledgeable (Dulin, 2008; Michalek & Long, 2013).

Axten (2015) emphasizes that millennials are social creatures who grew up in an era of widespread mobile phone use. Consequently, they expect the same level of communication from their leaders. Long (2017) asserts that millennials prefer leaders who prioritize their team members' well-being over personal objectives or goals. Maier et al. (2015) state that employees highly value leaders who prioritize building relationships with their team members rather than focusing solely on task completion. Meaningful relationships are a critical element of effective leadership for millennials (Medyanik, 2016). Folarin (2021) suggests that millennials are driving a new trend in leadership that prioritizes guidance over command and favors inclusive over authoritarian leadership styles.

According to multiple sources in the literature, including Lamsan et al. (2018), Grubbstrom and Lopez (2018), Maier et al. (2015), Sledge (2016), and Axten (2015), millennials hold specific expectations for their leaders. They see leaders as role models who empower and guide their subordinates, expecting them to be charismatic and provide motivation, comfort, and encouragement. Inclusive and collaborative leaders who are committed to their leadership style are favored by millennials. They seek trust, authority, and the opportunity to use their skills for

the organization's benefit. Furthermore, millennials have specific expectations from their leaders, including quick feedback, effective training, and timely rewards. They value workplaces that offer opportunities for career advancement and want their performance to be acknowledged. As a result, leaders who inspire and motivate their teams through goal-setting, mentoring, and rewards are deemed effective in leading this generation.

Arsenault (2004), Salahuddin (2010), and Sessa et al. (2007) suggest that millennials value characteristics such as honesty, competence, determination, loyalty, ambition, inspiration, caring, forward-thinking, self-confidence, imagination, self-control, listening, focus, encouragement, optimism, dependability, trustworthiness, creativity, experience, and supportiveness in their leaders. Additionally, millennials prefer leaders who are approachable, friendly, respectful, and provide constructive feedback. Creating a positive work environment is essential, and leaders must exhibit control over their behavior and emotions, acting as role models (Dulin, 2008). Effective communication is another key theme, with millennials valuing leaders who speak confidently, passionately, and persuasively. A quantitative survey conducted as part of the study significantly confirmed these core themes (Dulin, 2008).

Pattnaik and Sahoo (2021) suggest that transformational leadership has a direct and positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and supportive management. The study recommends that leaders adopt a supportive management style, consistently offer feedback and recognition, and provide millennials with opportunities for both personal and professional growth.

In a study by Mohammad (2022) focused on India, it was found that empowering leadership, which involves empowering employees to make decisions, is the most effective leadership style for managing millennials. Leaders should demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in their leadership styles to accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of millennials.

In summary, the work environment in Indian organizations is characterized by its cultural diversity, with collectivism and high-power distance playing a significant role in shaping the hierarchical and communal work culture. As India adapts to globalization and a younger workforce, the organizational landscape is shifting toward collaboration and flexibility, with an emphasis on employee well-being. Millennials, a prominent part of the Indian workforce, have distinct leadership preferences, valuing leaders who prioritize interpersonal relationships, communication, and inclusive decision-making. Effective communication, recognition, and empowerment are key themes in leadership preferences for this generation. To effectively manage millennials in India, leaders should adopt empowering and flexible leadership styles that align with these preferences.

DISCUSSION

Millennials have distinct traits, ideals, and demands for their work environments. Leaders in India may find it difficult to manage millennials because of their various work habits and expectations (Bansal & Srivatsava 2017). A thorough body of research has shown that millennials value transformational leadership, democratic leadership and empowering leadership, according to the review of literature (Lamasan & Oducado, 2018; Maier et al., 2015; Medyanik, 2016; Sledge, 2016). The most effective leadership style for managing millennials in India is democratic, empowering, and transformational leadership. Employees in this leadership style take participation in decision-making and are empowered to deliver positive contribution to achieve organisation's objectives.

Indian millennials possess distinct values, attitudes, and behaviours shaped by their upbringing, education, and exposure to globalization. Understanding these traits is vital for effective management of this demographic. To manage Indian millennials successfully, organizations should implement specific strategies aligned with their unique characteristics. Providing flexible work schedules acknowledges their need for work-life balance, enhancing job satisfaction and well-being. Offering clear career advancement opportunities, skill development, and growth pathways aligns with their career aspirations, strengthens commitment, and reduces turnover.

Recognition and appreciation for employees' contributions are crucial. Regular feedback, praise, and rewards motivate millennials, foster loyalty, and instil pride. Cultivating a supportive managerial style promotes open communication, mentorship, and guidance. Leaders actively engaging, providing direction, and enabling skill growth are highly valued, boosting job satisfaction and idea sharing. Inclusion and empowerment matter to Indian millennials; they want a voice in decision-making. A democratic leadership style involves them in decision-making and fosters collaboration, enhancing their sense of belonging and engagement. Transformational, democratic, and empowering leadership styles delegate responsibilities, provide feedback, and encourage learning and growth, increasing employee satisfaction and retention. India's millennial workforce is diverse, with varying needs and preferences. A flexible and adaptable leadership approach accommodates these differences. Democratic leadership is effective, promoting inclusion, empowerment, collaboration, and positive workplace culture. Overall, it aligns with Indian millennials' desires for flexibility and adaptability, making it a suitable leadership style for managing them.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, in order to effectively manage Indian millennials, strategies such as flexible work schedules, defined career paths, acknowledgment of contributions, and supportive leadership must be tailored to their unique

preferences. In today's changing workplace, organisations must successfully adjust to these distinctive traits and goals. In line with their desire for inclusiveness, participation in decision-making, and growth opportunities, Indian millennials respond favourably to transformational, democratic, and empowering leadership styles. Organisations should offer flexible work schedules to promote work-life balance, clear pathways for skill development and career advancement, and a supportive leadership style that fosters candid communication and mentoring in order to effectively manage this demographic. Democratic leadership has a lot of promise because it emphasises empowerment, cooperation, and flexibility.

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