

Review Based Research Topic Identification and Analysis on Multi-Level Marketing Business

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *There are many companies who have invested so much of money and do their advertisement to promote or sell their product to the target customers. Multi-level marketing which is also known as direct selling is one which marketing strategy which encourages the customer or the users of the company's product to advertise the product by word of mouth. The customers in large or group constitute certain motivating program to promote the product so that in turn they can earn some commission. The study aims at identifying factors which give opportunities for the customers to start a new business with the company's product and in long run they can be called entrepreneurs.*

Design/ Methodology/ Approach: *The study is based on secondary data gathered from a variety of sources including case studies, journal article, magazines, books and internet searches*

Findings/Results: *The study's main findings shows that many of the people are still confused with the concept of multi-level marketing, it always gets interchanged with the term pyramid scheme or money chain. As per the literature study there is a huge growth and expansion of multi-level marketing in India and other countries. There is an increase of companies who are into multi-level, and also customer tend to use the product of MLM companies once it has gained legal support. The increase in number of MLM companies have provided business opportunities for the people by becoming the product distributor.*

Originality/Value: *The study highlights multi-level marketing strategy and the sustainability of MLM companies and the opportunities provided by the company for the people who join the company as a distributor. Multi-level marketing companies provide sustainable business opportunities for the people.*

Type of Paper: *Literature Review*

Keywords: Direct selling, Multilevel marketing, Pyramid Scheme, Growth and Expansion, Entrepreneurship, Business opportunities, SWOC Analysis

1. INTRODUCTION :

Multi-level marketing is a marketing approach that is adopted by many direct-selling companies. It is also titled network marketing or referral marketing. Direct selling companies use this approach to boost existing distributors to recruit novel distributors who are remunerated a fraction of their recruit's sales [1]. The recruits are the distributor's "down-line." Distributors also earn money through sales of products directly to the customers. Amway is the best instance of a direct-selling company that uses a multi-level marketing approach. Amway trades beauty, health and home care products to the customer converts the customer into a distributor and allow the distributor to create novel recruits under him/her [1]. Multi-level marketing is a well thought philosophical scientific process of marketing goods and services [1]. It means the concept of multi-level marketing has made by conducting many observations, experiments and empirical study.

1.1 Direct selling:

Direct selling states selling commodities or goods directly to the customer in a non-retail environment. Direct sales are distinct from direct marketing. Direct marketing is the process by which goods are sold by ads to the customer. Direct marketing is a promotional way of presenting information about your company, product or service without the use of a publicity intermediary to your target client [1]. Many widespread methods of direct marketing are internet advertising, face-to-face selling, direct mailing, catalogues, tele-marketing, and so on.

Direct selling is classified into two forms:

- (1) Single-level marketing
- (2) Multi-level marketing

1.2 Single-level marketing:

Single level marketing where a single distributor earns money by buying goods from a company and selling them straight to customers. With their individual sales activities, only single level marketing sales representatives are charged. They are not recruiting and earning other sales agents. Revenue is in the form of fee or reward [1].

1.3 Multi-level Marketing:

It is also acknowledged as network marketing. This type of marketing, the direct seller can earn money both from direct sales to customers and by sponsoring new direct sellers and possibly earning commission from their efforts [1].



Fig. 1: The classification of direct selling [1]

The multi-level marketing approach is adopted worldwide by many countries engaged in marketing products and services. It is also termed "Network Marketing" or "Referral Marketing," and is a direct selling method through a network of distributors. These "distributors" are those people who are the initial consumers of the product and who gradually become the distributors. People recruited as independent distributors sell the company's products or services. Their key focus is on recruiting down-lines and selling as much as possible to receive more commission.

1.4 Countries with the Most MLM Distribution Chain:

Table 1 presents the best 10 countries revenue growth rate (in percentage) for markets in 5 years (2015-2020) and Table 2 below presents Top MLM companies in these 10 countries where MLM business is promoted.

Table 1: Revenue growth rate percentage for the market in five years 2015-2020)

S. No.	Country	Revenue Growth (%)
1	United States	5%
2	Japan	19%
3	United Kingdom	-2%

4	Brazil	6%
5	Italy	37%
6	Germany	18%
7	France	11%
8	Canada	29%
9	Taiwan	12%
10	China	11%

Table 2: Top MLM companies in these 10 countries where MLM business is promoted

Countries	MLM Company	MLM Company	MLM Company	MLM Company	MLM Company
USA	Amway	Mary Kay	Avon	Herbalife	Vorwerk
Japan	Nu Skin	Morinda	Shaklee	Oriflame	Nikken
UK	Herbalife	Arbonne International	Utility Warehouse	Avon	Pampered Chef
Brazil	Natura	Yanbal International	Belcorp	Amway	Tupperware
Italy	Vemma Nutrition	Organo Gold	Asea	Evergreen International	Jeunesse
Germany	Lifepius	PM-International	Amway	Triana	Jafra Cosmetics
France	Amway	USA NA	Avon	Forever living	CAN
Canada	Amway	Avon	Herbalife	ACN	Mary Kay
Taiwan	Sam Gui Consulting	Chini Enterprise	Amway	Market America	Herbalife
China	Nu skin	Winalite International	Pro-Health Ltd.	Menard	Nature's Sunshine

In this paper a detailed review on the topic multi-level marketing and also explained the concept of MLM, which involves distributors earning commission not only from direct sales but also by recruiting new distributors to create their "down-line." In addition to that the study differentiated MLM from direct marketing and single-level marketing, and provided a classification of direct selling methods.

2. OBJECTIVES :

A research objective is what a researcher wants to find out or accomplish in their study. It's like a goal or target that guides the research process. Research objectives help researchers stay focused and ensure they're working towards answering specific questions or achieving specific outcomes in their study.

- (1) To study the concept of multi-level marketing approach.
- (2) To study the history of multi-Level marketing approach worldwide.
- (3) To review the available literature on Multi-Level Marketing globally.
- (4) To compare the growth of multi-level marketing approach in India with other countries.
- (5) To find the research gap for further finding and discoveries.
- (6) To identify and analyse various research agendas to select a research topic.

3. METHODOLOGY:

Secondary date: The study is conducted by collecting published research papers on the topic Multilevel marketing business in order to get more knowledge and understanding in the business strategy in direct selling.

4. SCHOLARLY REVIEW OF LITERATURE FOR MULTI- LEVEL MARKETING :

4.1 History of Multi-Level Marketing approach: The Era of Pyramid Scheme:

Avon in 1930 is the first direct selling company to introduce the multi-level marketing strategy and followed by Amway. Nowadays there are many other direct selling companies which following this marketing strategy to occur the market. Multi-level marketing strategy was existed in 1920s also but now also there are disputes in that statement. During the second world war (1939-1945) people used this strategy to transport and supply goods and other necessary to the people. The human supplier became a chain and supply the goods through the human chain. In multi-level marketing the same strategy is followed and subsequently it became a marketing strategy [1].

Multilevel marketing is a lawful business approach, but it has many arguments. This business approach is frequently interrogated by people in order to get clarity on how it is diverse from pyramid schemes. A question in defining the rightfulness of a multilevel marketing company is whether it sells its goods mainly to consumers or to its affiliates, who must recruit new members to buy their goods. If it is the first, the company is likely a genuine multilevel marketer. If it is the latter, it could be an illegitimate pyramid scheme [2].

A research paper written by Rakha Attri et al. [4] says Multilevel Marketing is a definite method of direct selling that experienced substantial global progress in the 1990s. The multilevel marketing approach also identified as "matrix" or "network" marketing is a method of selling goods or services through distributors. This approach generally offers commission if anyone joins as a distributor for both sales of goods or services and those of other persons you absorb to join as distributors. The multilevel marketing approach usually pays commissions through two or added levels of recruits acknowledged as distributors or also recognized as "down-lines" [4]. During the parallel era that is in 1990, there was a consequential surge in the investigation and legal suits on illegal pyramid schemes. Since then, Multilevel Marketing approaches are a constant cause of dispute in the social order. In a legal Multi – Level Marketing company, commissions/income are made only based on the sales. There is no way of making money through recruiting alone. If members are paid first and foremost from money received from new people who joined, then the company is an illegal pyramid scheme [4]. The authors [4] try to swot the ethical problems disturbed in multilevel marketing and the consciousness of the same between the community [4]. The legitimacy of the products offered to the clients to value for money.

The term pyramid scheme is familiar with most of the people as Ponzi scheme. It is one of the infamous sham systems of creating cash based on engaging mounting amount of "investors." [5]

The preliminary promoters employ stockholders, who in turn employ further stakeholders, and so on. The system is termed as "pyramid" because at every stage, the number of stakeholders rises. [5] The tiny cluster of preliminary promoters at the pinnacle necessitate a huge base of future stakeholders to sustain the system by providing revenue to the past stakeholders. Pyramid schemes are illegitimate in New York State [5].

The study made by Yuval Emek et al. [6] in the reward mechanism of multi-level marketing and also mentioned a comparison of Pyramid scheme and MLM. They are clearly mentioned the difference between Pyramid scheme and MLM working procedure. MLM concentrate more on social networks such as mobile phones, e-mail, family, relatives and other business contacts. It very important to maintain all the social networks on check because MLM is a business approach you use your personal contacts to earn money. As Rakha Attri & Sunil Chaturvedi [4] said in their paper that if anyone joins as a distributor for both sales of goods or services and those of other persons you absorb to join as distributors [4]. Yuval and others also discussed the referrals tree model in which the social network that create the basis of the referral method [5]. The paper straightforward put light on the referral model followed by MLM companies and how the initial joiner earns money through this and discussed various model of multi-level marketing. The constraints faced by the marketers in the reward mechanism of MLM is also depends on the type of model the company follows [6].

The paper named "When Should an MLM or Network Marketing Program Be Considered an Illegal Pyramid Scheme?" by Taylor, J. M [7]. In his paper it is clearly mentioned that due to insufficient definition of what constitutes a pyramid scheme, inadequate resources, and/or deficient of prosecutorial will in enforcement of active statutes, enforcement agencies often wind up catching the

minnows, but letting the actually culprits go free. The consequences are huge—millions of clients are cheated. The paper says that pyramid scheme only concentrates on recruiting new distributors without any particular product [7].

Anne T. Coughlan [8] wrote a research paper answering various questions that arises in the minds of consumers and recruiters regarding MLM and pyramid scheme. The paper deals with various questions relating to multi-level marketing and its working. From this research, paper people come to know that MLM is different from Pyramid scheme and their scheme and way of earning money are entirely different.

William W. Keep et al. [9] in their paper explained how retail channel direct selling different from MLM. It also gives the difference between MLM and pyramid scheme. The paper analysed the direct selling prototypical in USA in which the peddlers travelled long distances to sell mainly products which are not branded to customers, direct selling salesmen went “door-to-door” and “house-to-house” to sell branded products in more and more urbanized surroundings. The colleges in USA started to do direct selling through male teachers and transferred to the students and it was discouraged by many recognised universities such as Yale, Williams, Brown, Columbia, Harvard, Dartmouth, Princeton, and MIT [9]. In African America, Annie Turnbo Malone the woman started the trend of selling her hair treatments door to door. It also put light on development of Multi-Level Marketing by shifting the employing, training and mentoring of fresh salespersons onto the sales strength, the parent company converts fixed costs into variable costs. The study says Multi-Level Marketing has two types of monetary benefits one in the form of commission and other in the form of additional commission. It has explained the close description of pyramid scheme and MLM and had made the comparison of various companies which emerged in USA [9].

The paper by Bosley, S et al. [10] identifies aspects that enlarge customer weakness to pyramid system and compares the implications and dynamics of pyramid or Ponzi system. The pyramid system expanded in countries with recognizable parallel clusters [10]. Research finds a probable optimistic connection between education and Ponzi participation. Furthermore, while Ponzi systems might be pro-cyclical, failing during contractions when members seek to extract their cash, this pyramid system displayed counter-cyclical behaviour [10].

A paper written by Peter Vander et al. [11] talks about the marketing fraud and it differentiates the two marketing strategies that is pyramid scheme and MLM. In the paper, MLM is considered as a definite form of direct selling which have a progress all over the world. They have done constant study of different research paper published by another researcher. The surge in the amount of pyramid arrangements and related events called “Ponzi” schemes has inspired novel lawsuit and governing activity. The paper explains the concept of MLM as it a way of selling products or services. The distributors make revenue from their personal retail sales and from retail sales done by their direct and indirect distributors. Pyramid system is designed in chain like style from one fellow to another. The systems were believed illegal because the core benefit to participants was the right to gain monetary payment from employing others into the business.

Stacie Bosley et al. [12] made a study on the real information on the increase of an alleged pyramid organization in Montana. Fortune Hi-Tech Marketing (FHTM) was a MLM company, litigated by six states and eternally close down in 2014. The authors analysed the proposal of FHTM implementation within a diffusion-of innovation context. The discoveries confirm that nearly all implementation results from interpersonal effect (i.e., imitation) and show that participation is higher in countries with larger economic reductions [12]. The authors added to the prevailing guidance about primary indicators of fake activity and discuss involvement and prevention plans that replicate the imitative nature of this circulation procedure.

According to Leonie Schiffauer's study [13], people are managers, victims, and missionaries for pyramid and Ponzi schemes. The promises of financial gain are made in these scams. They actually only help a small percentage of investors, which increases financial hardship for the majority of participants and intensifies social friction. The local manifestation of these economic structures is the topic of this article. It examines make-believe techniques based on an anthropological analysis of a pyramid scheme to demonstrate how regular people become sucked into a financial scam. In the study, they offer insights into how speculative ideas behave in a post-Soviet context, influencing economic realities, societal logics, and creative vistas.

According to the research by Pengyu Mu et al. [14], pyramid schemes are a cancer that prevents social advancement. Based on the characteristics of high-yield, high rebate, hierarchical salary, and text topic variety indicated in the text, this study presents a joint topic model, Paragraph Vector Latent Dirichlet Allocation (PV LDA). The subject distribution matrix of "high interest rate" and "hierarchical salary" is generated by the model from the text of the network pyramid scheme using the paragraph as the minimal processing unit. The "pyramid scheme" topic distribution matrix, which is represented by the two features, is derived using Gibbs sampling and employed by the classifier to process classifications [14]. The network pyramid scheme text can be classified accurately up to 86.25%. The findings demonstrate that the suggested topic model.

The paper by Viorica Puscaciu et al. [15] looks for similarities and differences among various pyramidal designs. The pyramid shape is one thing, but so is the financial purpose for which they are used. They employ pyramid schemes to earn enormous sums of money without having to pay taxes on it. Another significant difference between these actions and those of MLM is that participants in the pyramidal games are not receiving any products in exchange for the money they have contributed. In contrast, participants in the MLM were receiving products like cosmetics and health supplements in exchange for their contributions. Table 3 summarizes the review of the history of multi-level marketing approach.

Table 3: Summary of Review based on the history of multi-level marketing approach

S. No.	Area/focus	Findings/outcome	Reference
1	History, pyramid scheme, ethical issues	The paper discusses the ethical issues in multilevel marketing, the genuineness of products offered, and the perception of multilevel marketing as a get-rich-quick opportunity.	Rakha Attri et al. [3]
	Reward mechanisms in multi-level marketing within social networks	The paper identifies a set of desired properties for reward mechanisms in multi-level marketing within social networks. It shows that geometric reward mechanisms uniquely satisfy the desired properties identified for such reward mechanisms. The paper considers the resilience of these mechanisms against false-name manipulations (where participants create multiple fake identities to gain more rewards). While geometric reward mechanisms fail against false-name manipulations, the paper exhibits other mechanisms that are false-name-proof.	Yuval Emek et al. [6]
2	Reward mechanism, false name manipulation	The paper discusses multi-level marketing, geometric reward mechanisms, false-name manipulations, and introduces the m local mechanism as a simpler alternative.	Taylor, j. M. [7]
3	Illegal pyramid scheme		Coughlan, a. T. [8]
4	Mlm history, pyramid scheme, legal implication	The paper analyzes the evolution of direct selling to multilevel marketing (mlm) and the legal implications of some mlm companies being identified as pyramid schemes.	<u>William W. Keep et al.</u> [9]
5	Recruitment in pyramid scheme	The paper empirically identifies factors that increase consumer vulnerability to pyramid scheme fraud, compares and contrasts dynamics and implications of pyramid and	Bosley, s at al. [10]

		Ponzi fraud, and provides insights for future actions by regulators and consumer protection advocates.	
6	Illegal pyramid scheme	The paper examines the similarities between MLM and illegal pyramid schemes, using a mathematical model to differentiate them and providing key factors for marketers interested in MLM	Nat, p. J. V et al. [11]
7	Diffusion of an alleged pyramid scheme in Montana	The study demonstrates the imitative nature of diffusion in an MLM alleged to be a pyramid scheme, emphasizing the importance of early intervention.	Bosley, s et al. [12]
8	Appeal of pyramid scheme	The study focusses on the impact of pyramid scheme in rural areas of Siberia	Schiffauer, [13]
9	Developing topic modelling using PV_LDA	Study proposes an effective topic modelling approach (PV_LDA) to automatically identify and classify pyramid scheme promotional texts on the internet with a high accuracy rate.	Mu, p et al. [14]
10	Illegal pyramid schemes (pyramidal games) and multi-level marketing (MLM) practices prevalent in certain industries like cosmetics and nutritional supplements.	The paper focuses on the common elements between pyramid scheme and MLM are financial motive, money investment and the contradicting elements are distribution and sale and products.	Puscaciu, v et al. [15]

4.2 Multi- Level Marketing in different Countries:

The study by Kwee-Fah Lee et al. [16] examines the key variables that will govern distributors' loyalty to multilevel marketing firms in Malaysia. The study's principal five backgrounds included the dissemination of business opportunities, perceived superiority of hiring practices; up-line assistance; perceived superiority of training methods; and understanding of products and services. They recommend that MLM firms in Malaysia prioritise product development, actively promote information updates, and offer the proper training to increase distributor competition. A capable distributor will be revered by their subordinates. They also advise that future studies be conducted in comparison with many organisations, each of which may have distinct methods when the MLM industry experiences rapid expansion.

Rekha Choudhary [17] conducted research on how MLM has affected socioeconomic growth. The insurance industry was the subject of the study. Insurance companies in the insurance market are searching for cutting-edge strategies to increase their significance and win the most clients in the shortest amount of time. Numerous MLM businesses that have a sizable market share have partnered with leading insurance firms to promote both their products and a combination of their own. Long-term liabilities are made accessible by the insurance sector for the country's economic growth. A large number of people receive direct economic possibilities and social advancement from MLM at the same time. MLM businesses can be seen as social donations, and they are emerging as a social movement focused on economic prosperity. This editorial examines how MLM, as a tool that may mobilise long-term capital, create jobs, and restore people's quality of life to excellence, collides economically and socially.

N. Ivashkova et al. [18] investigated a paper to test the relationship between multi-aspect distributors' and consultants' involvement based on the popularity of MLM companies (brands) active in the Russian market with business attractiveness (the commercial value of MLM companies' supply) based

on empirical data obtained during the research, and to analyse secondary data and netnographic research findings. Desk research, netnographic research, and a quota survey were all used to conduct the study. The ethnographic research involved keyword-based analysis of statements made in social networks about the MLM companies' activities in the Russian market; these statements also included statements about attitudes toward various forms of selling cosmetic products, including through distributors/consultants of MLM companies. The survey was conducted in Moscow. The survey instrument, the structured questionnaire, since women tend to buy cosmetics most frequently, included 91 respondents who were female (including for men). All respondents fell between the range of 18 to 46 years old in terms of age. The attractiveness of business, the commercial worth of supply, and competitive advantages were used to uncover linkages between emotional, cognitive, and behavioural involvement and brand appeal. The findings of the study reveal that the involvement of current buyers of MLM cosmetic products in the Russian market in conducting business in MLM companies grows depending on the company's brand, the clarity and transparency of the model of compensation schemes, and the adaptation of the well-known methods of marketing research.

A study on the elements influencing long-term competitive advantage for multi-level marketing firms in Malaysia was conducted by Lee Siew Keong et al. [19]. Company reputation, product innovation, leadership, distributor training system, and distributor rewards system are the factors in this study. The data is gathered quantitatively using the judgemental sampling technique. The study's findings indicate that the firm reputation, leadership, distributor rewards programme, and distributor training programme were supported and are elements that influence the MLM companies in Malaysia's ability to maintain a competitive edge. Although product innovation was not supported in the study, this does not mean that it is not significant or crucial in maintaining a competitive edge. By concentrating on the factors that were researched, companies can create long-term competitive advantage.

In their study on the MLM firm Vistege in Odisha, Prafulla Kumar et al. [20] show that the main drivers of both personal and business growth are morality, ethics, commitment, and motivation. In spite of numerous frauds and misrepresentations, corporate growth looks to be ethical. While the few heads of the network system are only successful, the tail becomes the survivor. The case study is being conducted to look into the CSR practises of MLM businesses in Odisha.

In their study, Kwee-Fah Lee et al. [21] looked at the pertinent variables that affect distributors' fulfilment in the direction of multilevel marketing businesses in Malaysia. They looked into six criteria during the process, including how to distribute business opportunities, the said excellence of hiring practises, customer perceptions of goods and services, up-line holdup, the purported excellence of the first four factors had a significant impact on distributors' satisfaction. Only the purported excellence of the training programme had any real impact. Additionally, a one-way analysis of variance revealed that fulfilment was significantly lower for distributors who duplicated MLM actions but had monthly revenue of under RM 1,000 than for those who copied MLM actions but had top monthly income.

Regardless of school level, work availability, age, experience, socioeconomic background, or gender, MLM firms allow independent and casual consultants, which removes all hurdles to expanding their selling networks. Through personal networks, multi-level marketing has room for international expansion, according to William Franco et al. [22]. Even though MLM businesses have caused a lot of controversy, they have extended fast to promising and emerging areas in recent decades. Some of the global corporations that have expanded internationally throughout Latin America and the Caribbean include Yanbal, Amway, and Oriflame. The globalisation of these enterprises was examined in the study using a grounded theory methodology and Colombia as a representative Latin American country. According to the researcher's ethnographic research, a sizable number of multi-level marketing and direct-selling businesses offer prospects for foreign money generation but do not contribute to the creation of more legitimate employment opportunities.

In his study report, Marius Blescu [23] examined the prospects for multilevel marketing growth in the Romanian market. The study claims that while the time it takes to achieve true success varies from firm to firm, it is unquestionably realised through the development of a strong structure rather than via the sale of goods. Some programmes provide excellent prospects for income generation through the sale of goods, but the main goal of the activity must be the construction of a structure in order to truly prosper and become wealthy. As long as MLM businesses adapt to new technology and innovation, the core elements of personal selling (empathy, discussion, and trust) that define any successful MLM system offline may be successfully applied online.

Damien Droney's [24] investigation of Ghana's multi-level selling of health items According to the report, the majority of the products promoted through MLM are health products that are advertised as having transformative health advantages. This paper demonstrates how MLM companies become intimately entwined with Ghanaians' quests for health by giving their distributors the tools to become informal health experts, allowing their distributors to present their products as medicines, and presenting MLM as a path to middle class cosmopolitanism. The paper is based on interviews with MLM distributors in Ghana but focuses on the experiences of one woman. Ghanaian distributors advertise MLM items as having significant medical properties and the sale of these products as a means of achieving prestige and financial gain. As a result, people who are looking for health end up participating in unethical medical practises that take advantage of interpersonal connections. The success of MLM implies that the health sector is at the vanguard of transnational firms' extraction of value from unorganised economies because it uses the characteristics of health markets to monetize interpersonal connections.

The investigation into Utah's MLM capital structure was conducted by Jordan K. et al [25]. Both the quantity of MLM businesses and the proportion of MLM participants in Utah are disproportionate. We contend that MLMs are especially successful in Utah because the state's prominent religious institutions have sparked the development of a social capital structure. The majority of Utah's residents identify as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, making it the state with the most religious uniformity (LDS Church). The structures of the LDS Church provide a system of social capital where (nearly) all of its members have access to and can use social capital in all of its forms. LDS organisations urge members to develop deep interpersonal relationships with other churchgoers in their communities and around the globe that are marked by trust and reciprocity.

Table 4: Summary of Review based on MLM in foreign countries

S. No.	Area/focus	Findings/outcome	Reference
1	Recruitment process, Training	The main predictors for distributor satisfaction were perception of products and services, business opportunity, perceived quality of recruiting process, and up-line support. The perceived quality of training program did not significantly impact distributors' satisfaction.	Kwee-Fah Lee et al. [16]
2	Employment opportunity, Economics and social development	MLM is increasingly utilized in various sectors, including the insurance business, providing employment opportunities, enhancing social status, and offering personal development opportunities. It can have economic and social impacts by generating employment, mobilizing long-term funds, and improving the quality of life of people.	Rekha Choudhary [17]
3	Russian market, Growth of MLM companies, compensation plans	The main finding of the study is that consumer involvement in MLM companies in the Russian market is influenced by the brand, comprehensibility, and transparency of the compensation schemes.	N. Ivashkova et al. [18]
4	Company image, Product innovation, Leadership, Distributors reward system, Distributors training	company image, leadership, distributor rewards, and distributor training as supported factors, while product innovation was not supported in this particular study, though the researchers caution against dismissing its importance entirely.	Lee Siew Keong et al. [19]
5	CSR of MLM companies	MLM companies in Odisha are performing corporate social responsibility (CSR) as per guidelines, which is not missing in society. The growth of business appears ethically	Prafulla Kumar et al. [20]

		irrespective of many frauds, misrepresentation of business plans.	
6	Distributors satisfaction	The study investigated factors influencing distributor satisfaction in MLM companies in Malaysia, finding that business opportunity diffusion, recruiting process quality, product perceptions, and up-line support significantly affected satisfaction, while training program quality did not. Distributors earning below RM1,000 from MLM activities were significantly less satisfied than those earning higher incomes.	Kwee-Fah Lee et al. [21]
7	Internationalization of MLM	multi-level marketing (MLM) and direct sales companies provide international income opportunities in bottom of the pyramid (BOP) markets. However, these companies do not contribute to an increase in formal job creation in these markets.	William Franco et al. [22]
8	MLM in Romanian market, life of MLM	A literature review providing theoretical background on MLM/network marketing and potentially factors related to people's continuity or drop-out. An empirical focus group study with partners/distributors of an actual MLM company (Company X) in Romania to understand their experiences, views, and behaviours related to selling through the MLM model.	Marius Blescu [23]
9	Role of multi-level marketing (MLM) companies in local health markets in Ghana	The paper critically examines how MLM companies leverage local health markets, especially in developing countries like Ghana, by having distributors position themselves as health experts and their products as powerful medicines that can provide transformative benefits. This allows MLM to tap into quests for health and middle-class aspirations to drive product sales through personal networks in an ethically problematic manner. The health focus emerges as a key driver of MLM's global proliferation.	Damien Droney's [24]
10	Social capital structure, multi-level marketing companies (MLMs) in Utah.	Successful MLMs require a social capital structure where members can access and mobilize both strong and weak social ties for selling products and recruiting new members. Utah has an unusually high concentration of MLM companies and participants. The dominant religious institution in Utah, the LDS Church, fosters a social capital structure that is particularly conducive to the viability of MLMs. The LDS Church's institutions encourage members to build meaningful social connections, trust, and reciprocity with other church members locally and globally. This religious social network provides MLM	Jordan K. et al [25]

		<p>participants in Utah with access to both strong (local) and weak (global) social ties that can be leveraged for MLM activities. The high religious homogeneity in Utah, with roughly half the population being LDS, facilitates this social capital structure beneficial to MLMs.</p>	
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4.3 Growth of Multi -Level Marketing:

MLM is a broad notion that many people across the nation use as a business plan. The international corporation Avon, which began operations in the year 1930, introduced the idea of multi-level marketing by building a network of individuals to convey supplies to its customers during the Second World War, which lasted from 1939 to 1945. Many people are engaged in multi-level marketing businesses, which give the populace and the nation substantial incomes. In many nations, multi-level marketing is a phenomenon that is focused on expansion. A study on the multi-level marketing industry's recent trend and quick expansion was conducted by Paul Herbig et al [26]. Direct selling organisations, often known as network marketers or direct marketers, are a topic they cover in their studies. The main distinction between network marketing, which we define as true DSOs, and MLMs, which they also explain, is that in network marketing, the product is predominant and product sales are prioritised, whereas in MLMs, the product is frequently incidental or secondary and the priority is placed on recruiting other salespeople to recruit even more people. When the focus shifts from selling products to finding new salespeople, a DSO becomes an MLM. The MLM phenomenon has not yet been thoroughly studied by academics. This essay explores the history and current state of the multilevel marketing phenomenon and offers predictions for the future.

There is even more multi-level marketing research that supports the study's significance. In their study, Greg L. Stewart et al. [27] concentrated on the idea of self-leadership. The authors take a multilevel viewpoint to analyse this research at both the individual and team levels. Studies repeatedly demonstrate that higher levels of self-leadership are associated with greater affective reactions and better work performance at the individual level. At the team level, the findings are not as consistent. Contextual factors appear to modify the associations between team-level self-leadership and both affective and performance outcomes. Additionally, the writers describe the internal and environmental factors that affect self-leadership. Since self-leadership cannot fully replace external leadership, external leadership is one of these forces that is particularly crucial. In particular, external leadership in the forms of shared leadership and empowering leadership promotes the ability of individuals and teams to lead themselves. The authors also point out some cross-level research topics that show how future studies can profit from examining how self-leadership at the individual and team levels interacts with one another.

According to a study by Mahdalena S. Madjegu et al. [28], North Sulawesi is seeing particularly significant growth in the multi-level marketing industry. One of the advantages of multilevel marketing businesses is the economic growth it promotes; Oriflame is one such example in Manado. Their study's goal is to understand consumer trust in salespeople in the context of direct selling as determined by several trust indicators. Direct selling and consumer trust are two theories that underpin the research. In-depth interviews and an exploratory methodology are used in this qualitative study. The sample for this study consists of 10 Oriflame customers in Manado. According to the findings of this study, Oriflame customers have a high degree of cognitive trust in salespeople but never make a commitment to develop relationships when the goods they receive do not match their expectations. As a result, they have faith in the salesperson. When a customer has affective trust, they respect and appreciate the salesperson, and when they have generalised trust, they never have disagreements with them, which makes the salesperson dependable.

The study conducted by Brian Bloch [29] bears the enraged tone of someone who has been mistreated by the MLM strategy. The "catch," in his opinion, is that in order to be successful in MLM, you must recruit your friends and acquaintances. In order to gain money off of this fact, you must ask them to join as distributors, which is hardly the foundation for a friendship. The truth of this exploitation cannot be concealed by the weasel phrases of MLM companies. The idea that there is an easy way to make a lot of money is one of man's baser tendencies, and MLM takes advantage of it. The authors

and publishers of self-help books, home business opportunities, party plans, and multi-level marketing scam millions of gullible individuals.

The researcher has conducted a number of comparison studies between multi-level marketing and other business techniques. In their research, Zelong Yi et al. [30] examined how customer fairness seeking affects distribution channel choice. They draw comparisons between direct selling and agent selling, noting that with direct selling, a producer can sell their goods directly to customers, while with agent selling, a merchant serves as an intermediary. The article explores to increase his profit, the manufacturer chooses which distribution route to use. The distribution channel structure endogenizes the procurement cost in a news vendor system, which affects customers' perceptions of fairness and willingness to pay. The study demonstrates that when consumers are very fair-minded, it may be in the manufacturer's best interest to adopt agent selling and downward decentralise his distribution route. However, the producer prefers direct selling when consumer concerns about fairness are low. We further demonstrate that, when the downstream competition, the manufacturer's hegemony over retail pricing, and the diversity of consumers' fairness preferences are all considered, the aforementioned qualitative findings remain true.

The sales of music, movies, books, and software are only a few examples of mainstream content distribution marketplaces where digital rights management (DRM) systems that emphasise piracy protection in content distribution have not achieved much traction. The researchers, Pasi Tyrväinen et al. [31], describe a peer-to-peer marketing strategy for content items in this work that combines content security through a DRM system with the multilevel marketing model. To follow the delivery chains of digital products, which in turn serve as the primary technical enabler for peer-to-peer marketing, it is necessary to be able to trace the three phases of a digital license's life cycle.

The multi-level marketing phenomenon and its evaluation are covered in the paper written by Paul Herbig et al. [32]. They talked about multi-level marketing and its two distinguishing characteristics in their article. The history of multilevel marketing is also covered, and it makes the assertion that missionaries and religious extremists were network marketers. Even more, they claim that MLM creates a new business opportunity and a chance to start your own firm. Emotional expression and attachment are explicitly encouraged in MLMs, and they are a regular and expected part of the business environment. The paper addresses the MLM industry's use of the pyramid marketing technique, as well as the businesses that benefit from it and how MLM helps people connect with one another.

Multi-level marketing as a tool for leadership was examined in the paper written by Greg L. Stewart et al. [33]. The research in their article repeatedly demonstrates that multi-level marketing will enhance the leadership capabilities of the individual who has participated in the business. Additionally, the researchers are aware of both internal and external factors that affect self-leadership. Since self-leadership cannot fully replace external leadership, external leadership is one of these forces that is particularly crucial. In particular, external leadership in the forms of shared leadership and empowering leadership promotes the ability of individuals and teams to lead themselves.

Researcher Nuredayu Omar [34] talks about the importance of communication skills in Malaysia's direct selling method. The expansion of direct selling globally has had a significant impact in Malaysia. More than 3.9 million individuals participated as direct sellers in 2016, and 62% of them were women. A deeper understanding of direct selling as a communication process is necessary to address this situation. Eleven informants were chosen for this study from various direct selling situations. This design is flexible enough to accommodate many direct-selling contexts. By using direct sellers' notions of their profession as the point of face-to-face engagement with potential customers, this research used observations and interviews to investigate what constitutes communication competency in the Malaysian direct selling process.

Since the 1980s, Mexican politicians have adopted neoliberal economic policies designed to boost foreign investment, cut government spending, and promote free trade, following in the footsteps of other Latin American nations. The notion that these market-based economic changes enjoy broad support is challenged by recent studies of indigenous movements and popular uprisings, which contend that elites impose them forcibly. The scholar Peter S. Chan [35] makes the case that some non-elite elements of society enthusiastically welcome the reign of the free market by focusing on middle-class Mexicans. The middle class relies on neoliberalism to provide access to the tangible indicators of class standing, despite the fact that they do not directly benefit from unchecked capitalism. Neoliberalism appeals to people who are worried about their purchasing power declining,

as evidenced by the growing popularity of multilevel marketing businesses in Mexico that praise entrepreneurship and laud consumerism. Neoliberalism does not need force to gain favour because it links consumption to globally synchronised free markets.

Researcher Damien Droney [24] focuses on Ghana's health items in this essay. For the purpose of marketing the product in the marketplace, they have chosen multi-level marketing. This essay contends that MLM's participation in regional health markets accounts for much of its worldwide success. Although MLM has received a lot of criticism, few studies have examined the explicit health claims made by MLM distributors. The bulk of MLM items are health-related goods that are advertised as having transformative health advantages. This paper demonstrates how MLM companies become intimately entwined with Ghanaians' quests for health by giving their distributors the tools to become informal health experts, allowing their distributors to present their products as medicines, and presenting MLM as a path to middle class cosmopolitanism. The paper is based on interviews with MLM distributors in Ghana but focuses on the experiences of one woman. Ghanaian distributors advertise MLM items as having significant medical properties and the sale of these products as a means of achieving prestige and financial gain. As a result, people who are looking for health end up participating in unethical medical practises that take advantage of interpersonal connections. The success of MLM implies that the health sector is at the vanguard of transnational firms' extraction of value from unorganised economies because it uses characteristics of health markets to monetize interpersonal connections.

In his work, Detlev Krige [36] examined a noteworthy characteristic of post-apartheid South African society is made up of people's goals for a better life, unwavering optimism, and occasionally irrational aspirations expressed in the framework of marketing and value surveys. In this article, the researcher argues that current risk-taking practises in the fields of formal and informal finance give marginal groups of South African society a means of expressing their expectations (especially of upward social mobility) and dissatisfactions. This fills a gap in the literature. This ambivalence is demonstrated by the rising rates of participation in risky pyramid and money-multiplication schemes. Even while these actions are not wholly new, changes in the banking industry as a whole that have had a significant impact on South Africa's economy and society serve as parallels and even justification for them. In his research paper, he distinguished between the legitimate and illegitimate applications and uses of multilevel marketing; however, it is crucial to keep in mind that many players in Gauteng's vibrant economies are not overly concerned with the legitimacy of any specific money-making plan. He examines the fraudulent and picaresque behaviours of African middle-class Natal residents as a means by which these people attempted to escape their structural dependence inside an oppressive political economy. Members of the African middle classes were able to justify their actions as petty criminals, populists, confidence tricksters, unionists, traditional healers, and ministers—roles that were frequently found in the same person at the same time and in different social class sections of the African population at the time.

A study on the motivations of Malaysians joining and remaining in multi-level marketing firms was conducted by Cecilia Ong See Kiaw et al. [37] Every Multi-Level Marketing organisation, according to their analysis, makes the promise of financial independence and personal freedom. Yet, there are sceptics who argue that the amazing rise of MLM distributors and the industry's phenomenal business turnover over the years are not the actual reality; that in fact, 93%-95% of those involved in MLM lose money or do not make the kind of money that was promised. Millions of Malaysians still participate in various MLM firms despite this. In order to succeed, they must make sacrifices, put in a lot of effort, maintain their moral integrity in the face of abuse from others, and gain experience, strength, and self-assurance.

In this work, William W. Keep et al. [38] analyse how direct selling in the USA changed from being a retail channel that successfully sold goods like cosmetics, radios, and cars to multilevel marketing (MLM), an industry that today appears to be highly dependent on selling to itself. The research considers the similarities between a legitimate MLM model and an unlawful pyramid scheme because courts have declared some MLM businesses to be pyramid schemes. This essay provides a historical examination of the change from a retail-based sector that sold products to all consumers to an MLM one that currently appears to be mainly dependent on selling to itself. It also provides a historical examination of how a business that started out selling products to everyone eventually changed into an MLM model that appears to be highly dependent on selling to itself today.

In this essay, Leonie Schiffauer [39] investigates the moral logics of multilevel marketing in a remote area in Southeast Siberia, examining how Amway is able to prosper by relying on close-knit social ties. It makes the case that people join multilevel marketing schemes for a variety of reasons, including their own desires for enormous money as well as other factors, such as feelings of obligation, hopes for support, and interpersonal pressure.

As a means of making money, multilevel marketing is encouraging those who have been recruited into a programme to keep buying goods and services while also encouraging others to do the same. The researcher examines if multi-level marketing is a long-term enterprise in this report. The goal of the article is to definitively resolve this issue and demonstrate that, when implemented properly, an MLM system may be a successful business. The fact that it is so simple to enter the multilevel marketing distribution system is one of the key issues it faces. An MLM system needs to concentrate on little, long-term benefits rather than big, immediate wins in order to work correctly.

Pyramid schemes, multi-level marketing, and network marketing have also been defined by the researcher Ioana Madalina CIONGRADI [40]. The author explains why multi-level marketing is not sustainable for everyone. According to the report, there are no multilevel marketing businesses that rely only on constant member acquisition. MLM schemes are riskier than obvious pyramid schemes. These are merely identified and shut down, while purportedly legitimate MLM businesses seek out as many victims as they can. To explain the issues with MLM systems, Taylor uses the term "syndrome." The syndrome approach of disease classification enables the physician to recognize particular diseases based on the presence of symptoms. This study examines how long multi-level marketing has been around.

Lee et al. [41] study aimed to identify the major factors influencing the satisfaction of distributors towards multilevel marketing (MLM) companies in Malaysia. Five key antecedents were investigated: up-line support, methods of diffusing business opportunity, perceived quality of recruiting process, perceived quality of training program, and perception of products/services. The results indicated that among the five factors examined, only the perceived quality of training program did not have a significant impact on distributors' satisfaction. On the other hand, the method of diffusing business opportunity, perceived quality of recruiting process, up-line support, and perception of products/services were found to have a positive impact on distributors' satisfaction.

In their research, Joyce Koe Hwee Nga et al. [42] identify the MLM concept. Additionally, they address issues with the service, reward programmes, firm and agent qualities, and faith in MLM companies—i.e., the independent variables of this study. The willingness to pursue MLM as a career is the dependent variable in this study. MLM is referred to be relationship and transactional marketing in their study. According to them, MLM works by establishing compensation plans (including commissions and bonuses) for goods and services provided as well as agent recruiting.

Rekha Attri et al. research's [43] focuses on the new economic potential that emerged in India in the 1990s. A specific type of selling known as multilevel marketing (MLM) saw rapid expansion on a global scale in the 1990s. A strategy for selling products or services through distributors is multilevel marketing, commonly referred to as "network" or "matrix" marketing. These programmes often guarantee that if you join as a distributor, you will get commissions for both your own sales of the products or services offered by the programme and those of individuals you bring on board as distributors. The notion of direct selling in India, the distinction between legitimate multilevel marketing and illegal pyramid schemes, and the variables influencing people's decisions about MLM are all covered in the paper.

Multilevel marketing's legal status in India was covered by R. Rajesh Babu et al. [44] in their article. They have done research on the nation's legal system as it is now being practised. Direct selling is multilevel marketing, sometimes referred to as network marketing, the researchers in the study elaborated. In order to help the public, understand multi-level marketing better, the study provided thorough information about it and its workings. The study also understood and distinguished between multilevel marketing and pyramid and Ponzi schemes by talking about how illegal pyramid schemes are business structures in which only those at the top of the pyramid structure receive money and everyone else below them is deceived. They also looked at the foundation for regulations that

The author of this study focuses on the factors that contribute to distributor turnover in multilevel marketing. Dr. Abdul Assis Koroth [45] wrote a report about his research on direct selling and its creative direct channel method. According to the report, referral marketing, also known as multilevel

marketing, is a strategy for distributing products through independent distributors. By doing so, distributor customers avoid paying exorbitant media advertising and sales promotion costs. The study finds that, despite the fact that direct selling is becoming increasingly popular both as a method of selling and as a career path, sales force turnover is still a significant issue for direct selling organisations. In the United Kingdom and Europe, the typical turnover rate exceeds 100% annually. In this paper, the scholar focusses Antecedents of Distributors Turnover In Multilevel Marketing.

Cantillon's theory of entrepreneurship was applied by Ranelli Williams [46] in a case study to examine the methods employed by three multilevel marketers from three different multilevel marketing firms with operations based in New York. The participants were chosen based on their money made and the number of years they had been involved in multilevel marketing. Open-ended questions are posed to the participants, and company training materials and videos are reviewed. Using a 6-step data analysis process, which includes listing and grouping the collected data, considering all data before reducing or eliminating any, grouping the data by research questions, formulating the data into themes, documenting the experience, and presenting the data findings, any data gathered from the participants has been documented and examined.

G. Bratucu et al. [47] conducted a study to uncover customer behaviour unique to multilevel marketing systems and to analyse the characteristics that motivate consumers to make purchases through these systems. The research's objective was to learn more about how Romanian consumers behaved when purchasing goods from modern distribution systems, as well as their opinions of and satisfaction with the systems, frequency of purchases, budgetary constraints, and how significant these systems are in their daily lives.

Remi Chukwudi Okeke et al. [48] conducted a study to investigate the connection between multilevel marketing accounting fundamentals, income security, and the problem of poverty in Nigeria. According to the research, there is no significant correlation between these characteristics. They developed a theoretical framework based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The study discovered that all demands are unmet at the point where poverty is a challenge. According to the results of their study, multilevel marketing success depends on applying accounting concepts, or accounting fundamentals. The study's findings challenge Nigerian network marketers to view the application of accounting concepts as one of their most important competitive advantages.

According to a study by Onizuka, [49] multi-level marketing hurts the general public's finances and is to blame for societal issues since it appealed to their desire for a secure income. financially, and it has turned into the root of social unrest. The products that distributors or members may provide for sale fall short of those produced by a multilevel marketing company corporation, and the methods by which the distributor or member is paid are limited to those that involve soliciting sales from other members in order to conduct business.

A study on marketing strategy, including market segmentation, product, price, distribution, and promotion plan was conducted by Mary Pasaribu [50]. The interest of Indonesia in multi-level marketing is discussed in the article. They used the Ori flame as an example to investigate the multi-level marketing strategy and its selling technique. The study method employed is a descriptive qualitative method approach, which means that descriptive data are generated as a result of interview questions and observed behaviour. The popularity of multi-level marketing businesses among Indonesians is due to the structure of this company category, which provides a number of revenue streams by simultaneously selling the product. In their article, Daniel Kasenda et al. [51] claimed that multi-level marketing companies provide a second profit potential, allowing members or distributors to increase their earnings by bringing on new members.

The purpose of the study was to determine the differences in customer sentiment about multilevel marketing businesses between young people and adults. They employed a quantitative approach to demonstrate the contribution of social media and mobile usage to e-commerce in small to medium-sized businesses and their clients. The findings indicated that while there were no discernible differences between young people and adults in terms of their feelings regarding encounters with multi-level marketing, there were discernible disparities between their feelings of enjoyment and dread. According to the conclusion above, surprise, disgust, wrath, and sadness are not suggested emotions to use when approaching customers in a multi-level marketing organisation. Instead, enjoyment and fear should be the primary motivators.

The commercial practise of selling goods or services through independent agents who are paid for their sales and may also receive commissions from any sales made by agents below them in the model is known as multi-level marketing (MLM). The modified mechanism of a sales arena for potential Multi-Level Marketing employees has been investigated by Robert D. Mather et al. [52]. According to their study, the target audience's perceptions regarding multi-level marketing were affected by initial, expanded information about distributorship and testimonials. Second, fundamental objective beliefs about multilevel marketing foreshadowed registering for a consultation. Third, perceptions of MLM's perceived sales performance were predicted by attitudes and familiarity with multi-level marketing. Fourth, familiarity with MLM was associated with values for attitude assurance and sales effectiveness.

Multilevel marketing's negative consequences on Indian friendships and relationships are best exemplified by Edward Humphries et al. [53]. The paper explains multilevel marketing, including what it is, where it came from, how people use it to reach customers, and how those customers feel about it. Through independent distributors, multilevel marketing is employed for product distribution. This essay will also examine the many media that these distributors employ and how successful each one is at promoting their goods.

According to MLM research by Yuval Emek et al. [6], social media is a crucial medium for boosting the number of customers. This research establishes the groundwork for the investigation of reward systems in multi-level marketing within social networks at the dawn of the internet era. Social networks have been there since the beginning of the Internet, but they have recently taken on a more physical web-based shape thanks to businesses like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

A study on developing a sustainable competitive advantage for multi-level marketing companies was conducted by V Lee Siew Keong et al. [18]. The goal of this study is to look into the elements that multi-level marketing (MLM) companies in Malaysia use to sustain their competitive edge. Company image, product innovation, leadership, distribution rewards system, and distributor training system are the variables that were chosen for this study. They conducted a quantitative study to discover the solution. The research's conclusions demonstrate that business image, leadership, the distributor rewards system, and the distributor training system were supported and are elements influencing the MLM companies in Malaysia's ability to preserve their competitive advantage.

According to study by Justyna Kazmierczak et al. [54], multi-level marketing is still in its infancy but is already quite popular in western nations and is gaining acceptance from the general public. This editorial's goal is to define Multi-Level Marketing (MLM) and describe how it operates. This paper's primary goal is to identify the multi-level marketing issues.

The study by Michele Friedner [55] examines how the structure of multi-level marketing, which produces the categories of up-lines and down-lines side by side, shatters the sociality of hearing-impaired people in urban India. In a hearing-impaired moral economy where, deaf people share news and information, teach one another sign language, and support one another's growth, hierarchies have always existed. This editorial examines how the neoliberal concept of "community" can become discordant and be produced via disagreements and conversations using the example of deaf sociality as an illustration. One of the business sectors with the quickest growth in China is multi-level marketing. People are increasingly conducting MLM business on social network platforms thanks to the growth of e-commerce and social network applications.

The ethicality of multi-level marketing on social media applications in China was discussed by Wen Liu [56] in his article. Multi-level marketing's morality is a hot topic on WeChat. Multi-level marketing has occasionally been linked to pyramid schemes, which are illegal in China, by the average citizen. Furthermore, a lot of people complain that some of their friends sell things on WeChat, which makes them feel pressed and occasionally forced to buy it. The context of multi-level marketing and its ethical concerns are examined in this study. It makes the case that WeChat's multi-level marketing in China created a number of unique ethical problems and tries to look at potential remedies.

In his article, Loi Kai Yin [57] made a study with the sole goal of examining the relational aspects influencing distributor fulfilment toward multi-level marketing businesses. The determinants include support from above, the way a firm is opened, how well a training programme is perceived, how well the enrolment process is perceived, and how people see the products and services. To determine the distributor satisfaction in this business, these five elements will be put to the test and discussed.

Table 5: Summary of Review based on Growth of MLM companies

S. No.	Area/focus	Findings/outcome	Reference
1	Review of the multilevel marketing industry, its business practices	It provides an overview of how MLM businesses operate, including their compensation structures that involve paying participants based on their own sales as well as the sales of participants they recruit.	Paul Herbig et al. [26]
2	Self-leadership across multiple levels of analysis, including individual, dyadic, team, and organizational levels.	The paper synthesizes research findings across multiple levels, highlighting the potential benefits of self-leadership for individuals, dyads, teams, and organizations. It also identifies gaps in the literature and provides recommendations for future research on self-leadership.	Greg I. Stewart et al. [27]
3	Understanding how trust influences the direct selling activities and performance within oriflame's MLM business model.	The paper likely explores different dimensions or types of trust that are important in the MLM context, such as trust in the company, trust in the compensation plan, trust in uplines (those who recruited you), etc. The findings may shed light on how trust impacts recruitment, distributor motivation, customer relationships, and the overall viability of the MLM model.	Mahdalena s. Madjegu et al. [28]
4	Compensation structure involving recruiting new distributors and earning commissions from their sales.	It critically analyzes potential issues and criticisms associated with the MLM model, such as: Pyramiding concerns (earning more from recruitment than product sales) Deceptive earnings claims or misrepresentations High participant turnover and loss rates Vulnerability of participants to aggressive recruitment practices The findings may highlight the controversial nature of MLMs and question whether the business opportunity is legitimate for most participants. The paper likely examines the incentive structures in MLMs that prioritize aggressive recruitment over product sales. It may discuss regulatory and legal concerns surrounding some MLM companies' practices that have attracted scrutiny.	Brian Bloch [29]
5	Distribution channel strategy, specifically comparing direct selling (e.g., multilevel marketing) versus agent/intermediary selling channels from the perspective of	Paper contributes insights into how consumer fairness seeking tendencies influence preferences and demand patterns for direct selling versus agent-based distribution channels, offering strategic guidance for firms operating in these different channel environments.	Zelong Yi et al. [30]

	consumer fairness perceptions.		
6	Digital marketing, specifically examining a hybrid model that combines peer-to-peer (P2P) marketing techniques with multilevel marketing (MLM) principles for promoting and distributing digital content products while integrating digital rights management (DRM) technologies.	<p>The paper likely proposes a marketing framework or business model that leverages the peer influence and network effects of MLM to drive awareness and adoption of digital content offerings.</p> <p>It may discuss integrating DRM systems to manage content licensing, access controls, and revenue sharing within this P2P/MLM hybrid distribution model.</p> <p>analyses of the potential benefits, challenges, and trade-offs of this approach compared to traditional content marketing and distribution methods.</p>	Pasi Tyrväinen et al. [31]
7	Comprehensive review of the multilevel marketing (MLM) industry and business model	<p>MLMs have faced debates over their legitimacy, with some viewing them as legal businesses and others as illegal pyramid schemes.</p> <p>The compensation structures used by MLMs, including multilevel commissions and recruitment incentives, are discussed.</p> <p>Consumer vulnerabilities and potential for deception in income representations and high costs are highlighted.</p> <p>Regulatory and legal challenges faced by MLMs, including compliance with laws related to product claims and pyramid schemes, are examined.</p> <p>Psychological and sociological factors contributing to the success and appeal of MLMs, such as entrepreneurship and social networks, are explored.</p> <p>Ethical considerations surrounding MLM practices, including exploitation of relationships and high attrition rates, are discussed.</p>	Paul Herbig et al. [32]
8	Comprehensive review of the concept of self-leadership	<p>Self-leadership strategies, such as self-goal setting, self-observation, self-reward, and self-punishment, can help individuals regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to enhance their performance and well-being.</p> <p>At the dyadic level, self-leadership can influence the quality of leader-follower relationships and the effectiveness of leadership processes.</p> <p>In team settings, self-leadership can contribute to team effectiveness by promoting self-management, shared leadership, and team self-regulation.</p>	Greg L. Stewart et al. [33]

		<p>At the organizational level, self-leadership can facilitate organizational change, innovation, and the development of a self-led workforce. The authors identify various antecedents and moderators that influence the effectiveness of self-leadership strategies, such as individual differences, situational factors, and organizational culture.</p>	
9	<p>The relationship between communication competence and the direct selling process in Malaysia</p>	<p>Communication competence, particularly in face-to-face interactions, is crucial for success in the direct selling industry. The study identified several key components of communication competence that are important in the direct selling process, including: a) nonverbal communication skills (e.g., eye contact, body language, facial expressions) b) listening skills c) persuasive communication skills d) adaptability and flexibility in communication</p> <p>Effective nonverbal communication skills, such as maintaining eye contact and using appropriate body language, were found to be essential in building trust and rapport with potential customers.</p>	<p>Nuredayu Omar [34]</p>
10	<p>The phenomenon of multilevel marketing (MLM) in the context of neoliberal economic policies and transformations in Mexico</p>	<p>MLM companies in Mexico have capitalized on the economic uncertainties and limited employment opportunities resulting from neoliberal policies, presenting MLM as an attractive entrepreneurial opportunity. The study found that MLM participants often view their involvement as a means of achieving upward social mobility and acquiring symbolic markers of middle-class status, such as consumer goods and entrepreneurial identities. MLM companies in Mexico strategically target and recruit individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, leveraging their aspirations for economic advancement and social status. The MLM rhetoric of self-empowerment and entrepreneurship resonates with participants, who perceive MLM as a path to financial independence and personal growth.</p>	<p>Peter S. Chan [35]</p>
11	<p>Intersection of multi-level marketing (MLM) and health markets, particularly in the context of developing countries like Ghana.</p>	<p>Multi-level marketing (MLM) business model and its growth, especially in the global South or developing countries. The role of MLM in local health markets and the promotion of health products through MLM networks. The representation and marketing of MLM products as having transformative health benefits and their positioning as alternative medicines.</p>	<p>Damien Droney [24]</p>

		<p>The involvement of MLM distributors as informal health experts and their influence on individuals seeking health solutions.</p> <p>The exploitation of personal relationships and social networks for the distribution and promotion of MLM health products.</p> <p>The interplay between MLM, health markets, and the extraction of value from informal economies by transnational corporations.</p> <p>The impact of MLM on the provision of healthcare, especially in developing countries like Ghana.</p>	
12	<p>The phenomenon of multilevel marketing (MLM) and its connections to Ponzi schemes in South Africa</p>	<p>The study highlights the difficulty in distinguishing between legitimate MLM companies and illegal Ponzi schemes, as both often employ similar recruitment tactics and promise unrealistic financial returns.</p> <p>Ponzi schemes and fraudulent MLM operations in South Africa have proliferated in the post-apartheid era, exploiting the economic vulnerabilities and aspirations of individuals seeking financial independence and social mobility.</p> <p>These schemes often target specific communities, leveraging existing social networks and cultural beliefs to recruit participants and gain legitimacy.</p> <p>The study found that the allure of these schemes is often fuelled by narratives of entrepreneurship, self-empowerment, and the promise of breaking free from economic constraints.</p>	<p>Detlev krige [36]</p>
13	<p>Factors that influence individuals in Malaysia to join and remain involved in multi-level marketing (MLM) companies</p>	<p>Malaysians are motivated to join MLMs by desires for extra income, flexible work, personal development, social influence, perceived low risk, and promises of residual income and financial freedom, but many holds unrealistic expectations.</p> <p>MLM companies' recruitment strategies leveraging social networks and relationships contribute significantly to sustained involvement despite the industry's challenges and high dropout rates.</p>	<p>Cecilia Ong See Kiaw et al. [37]</p>
14	<p>Development and evolution of multilevel marketing (MLM) companies and pyramid schemes in the United States</p>	<p>The study traces the origins of MLM and pyramid schemes in the United States to the early 20th century, highlighting the emergence of companies like the California perfume company and shankhann distributors.</p> <p>It identifies several historical factors that facilitated the growth of these industries, including economic recessions, high unemployment rates, and the appeal of entrepreneurial opportunities.</p>	<p>William w. Keep et al. [38]</p>

		<p>The research highlights the ongoing legal and regulatory challenges faced by MLM companies, as they have often been accused of operating as illegal pyramid schemes, leading to numerous lawsuits and regulatory interventions.</p> <p>The study examines the criticisms and controversies surrounding MLM practices, such as the emphasis on recruitment over product sales, the potential for deception in income representations, and the high attrition rates among participants.</p> <p>Despite the challenges and criticisms, the authors argue that MLM companies have demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability, evolved their business models and leveraged new technologies and marketing strategies to sustain their o</p>	
15	Examines the phenomenon of multilevel marketing (MLM) in Siberia, Russia	<p>The study highlights the appeal of MLM companies in Siberia, as they are perceived as opportunities for financial independence and social mobility in the context of economic precarity and limited employment prospects. Participation in MLM is often framed as a moral pursuit, with narratives of self-improvement, entrepreneurship, and the accumulation of wealth being seen as virtuous endeavours.</p> <p>The author notes that MLM companies in Siberia strategically target and recruit individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, tapping into their aspirations for upward mobility and financial security.</p>	Leonie Schiffauer [39]
16	The multilevel marketing (MLM) industry and its business model, with a focus on the challenges and potential pitfalls associated with mlm participation	<p>The study highlights the controversial nature of MLM, with debates regarding whether it constitutes a legitimate business opportunity or operates as an illegal pyramid scheme. It discusses the high failure rates and financial risks associated with MLM, as the majority of participants often fail to generate significant income or recoup their initial investments.</p> <p>The research points out that the compensation structures in MLM companies heavily favour those at the top of the pyramid, while the majority of participants struggle to earn substantial profits.</p>	Ioana Madalina Ciongradi [40]
17	Factors that drive distributor satisfaction in multilevel marketing (MLM) companies	<p>The study identified several key factors that significantly influence distributor satisfaction in MLM companies, including product quality, compensation plan, company support, and personal development opportunities.</p> <p>Product quality was found to be a crucial determinant of distributor satisfaction, as distributors are more likely to be satisfied when they believe in the products they are selling and perceive them as being of high quality.</p>	Lee et al. [41]

		The compensation plan offered by the MLM company, including the commission structure and the potential for earning residual income, played a significant role in driving distributor satisfaction.	
18	Factors that influence the willingness of young people to pursue multi-level marketing (MLM) as a career option	The study found that the attributes and reputation of MLM companies, such as product quality, compensation plans, and company credibility, significantly influence the willingness of youth to consider MLM as a career choice. The characteristics and behaviours of MLM agents, including their trustworthiness, professionalism, and sales techniques, also play a crucial role in shaping the perceptions and willingness of youth to engage in MLM.	Joyce Koe Hwee Nga et al. [42]
19	Consumer perceptions and attitudes towards products sold through multilevel marketing (MLM) channels	His studies found that consumers generally have a positive perception of the quality of products sold through MLM channels, considering them to be of good quality and value for money. However, there were concerns among consumers regarding the pricing of MLM products, which were perceived as being higher than similar products sold through conventional retail channels. The research identified several key factors that influence consumer perception and purchase intention for mlm products, including product quality, brand reputation, pricing, and the influence of social networks and personal relationships.	Rekha Attri et al. Research's [43]
20	The legal framework and regulatory challenges surrounding multilevel marketing (MLM) operations in India	The study highlights the lack of a clear and comprehensive legal definition of MLM in India, which has led to regulatory ambiguity and inconsistencies in how these business models are evaluated and regulated. It discusses the various legal provisions and guidelines used to assess the legality of MLM operations in India, including the prize chits and money circulation schemes (banning) act, the consumer protection act, and guidelines issued by the reserve bank of India. The research identifies several key factors that are typically used to differentiate legitimate MLM companies from pyramid schemes, such as the emphasis on product sales versus recruitment, the presence of a tangible product or service, and the compensation structure.	R. Rajesh babu et al. [44]
21	Multi-level marketing	Factors related to compensation plans, incentives, or earning potential that influence distributor retention. The role of training, support, and mentorship provided by the company in reducing distributor turnover.	Dr. Abdul Assis Korothe[45]

		<p>The impact of the product line, pricing, or market demand on distributor satisfaction and retention.</p> <p>The influence of the company's reputation, culture, or leadership on distributor commitment.</p> <p>The effects of personal factors like skills, motivation, or work-life balance on distributor turnover.</p>	
22	Multilevel marketing (MLM) or network marketing strategies	<p>Identification of successful strategies used by top-performing MLM distributors or leaders to recruit, train, and motivate their downline (the network of distributors they have recruited).</p> <p>Best practices for building and maintaining strong relationships with downline members, fostering a sense of community, and providing effective mentorship and support.</p>	Ranelli Williams [46]
23	Consumer behaviour within the context of multilevel marketing (MLM) systems	<p>Insights into the factors that influence consumers' decisions to join or participate in MLM companies, such as financial motivations, social connections, or product interests.</p> <p>Identification of consumer perceptions and attitudes towards MLM business models, including potential concerns, misconceptions, or positive experiences.</p>	G. Bratucu et al. [47]
24	Intersection of multilevel marketing (MLM) business models, income security, and poverty alleviation in Nigeria	<p>An examination of the accounting principles and financial aspects of MLM businesses, particularly in relation to income generation and distribution within the Nigerian context.</p> <p>Analysis of the potential of MLM business models to provide income security and economic opportunities for individuals or households in Nigeria, particularly those who may be facing poverty or financial instability.</p>	Remi Chukwudi Okeke et al. [48]
25	Expanding income opportunities and incentives for members in multilevel marketing	<p>Introducing a method or system that enables MLM members to voluntarily register their own products or services to be sold through the MLM network, in addition to the company's primary product line.</p> <p>Establishing a reward or compensation structure that incentivizes members not only for selling the company's products and recruiting new members but also for selling their own registered products or services.</p> <p>Addressing the potential financial risks and social problems associated with the stagnation of MLM businesses and the lack of income opportunities for members who may have joined primarily for earning purposes.</p>	Onizuka, [49]
26	Examining the multilevel marketing (MLM) strategy employed by PT. Oriflame Indonesia,	<p>PT. Oriflame implements a structured MLM marketing strategy with positive and significant influence from uplines (senior members) providing guidance to new downline members.</p> <p>The overall marketing strategy applied by PT. Oriflame, including the various marketing mix</p>	Mary Pasaribu [50]

	specifically in the city of Medan	<p>elements, has a significant impact on attracting and retaining new student members as business beginners.</p> <p>The MLM strategy focused on continuous training, mentorship and support provided to new student members is effective in enabling their success with the MLM business model.</p> <p>The hypothesis that the MLM marketing strategy positively affects the ability to recruit student business beginners as new members was accepted based on the research.</p>	
27	Examining the differences in emotional responses (sad, anger, disgust, surprise, fear, enjoy) towards multilevel marketing businesses between youth and adult consumers in Indonesia.	<p>There were no significant differences in sad, anger, disgust, and surprise emotions towards multilevel marketing experiences between youth and adult consumers.</p> <p>However, there were significant differences in the "enjoy" and "fear" emotions exhibited by youth versus adult consumers in relation to multilevel marketing.</p> <p>The "enjoy" emotion needs to be considered as a key factor when multilevel marketing companies approach potential youth customers/members.</p> <p>Similarly, the "fear" emotion is an important factor to account for when targeting adult consumers with multilevel marketing opportunities.</p> <p>Emotions like surprise, disgust, anger, and sadness are not recommended to be leveraged when approaching either youth or adult customers for multilevel marketing.</p>	Daniel Kasenda et al. [51]
28	Examining the social cognitive factors that influence the receptiveness of potential recruits to persuasive messages used in multi-level marketing (MLM) sales pitches.	<p>Providing increased information about distributorship and testimonials in the sales pitch changed the attitudes of targets towards MLM in a positive manner.</p> <p>Key attitudes held by targets towards MLM were predictive of their likelihood of signing up for an interview with the MLM company.</p> <p>Familiarity with MLM business models and existing attitudes towards MLM predicted the perceived sales utility/viability of pursuing the MLM opportunity.</p>	Robert d. Mather et al. [52]
29	The effects of multilevel marketing on relationships and friendships in India	<p>It discusses how multilevel marketing distributors approach customers and the customers' feelings about it.</p> <p>The paper looks into the various mediums or channels used by multilevel marketing distributors to sell products, and the effectiveness of each medium.</p> <p>The central question explored is whether a firm's relationship marketing approach through multilevel marketing actually pays off by improving business</p>	Edward Humphries et al. [53]

30	Reward mechanisms in multi-level marketing within social networks	<p>The paper identifies a set of desired properties for reward mechanisms in multi-level marketing within social networks. It shows that geometric reward mechanisms uniquely satisfy the desired properties identified for such reward mechanisms.</p> <p>The paper considers the resilience of these mechanisms against false-name manipulations (where participants create multiple fake identities to gain more rewards). While geometric reward mechanisms fail against false-name manipulations, the paper exhibits other mechanisms that are false-name-proof.</p>	Yuval Emek et al. [6]
31	Relationship between multi-level marketing (MLM) distributors/consultants' involvement and the popularity/attractiveness of MLM companies (brands) operating in the Russian cosmetics market.	<p>The study revealed links between emotional, cognitive, and behavioural involvement of distributors/consultants and the popularity of companies (brands), as well as the attractiveness of the business or commercial value of the supply, and competitive advantages.</p> <p>The involvement of current consumers of MLM cosmetic products in the Russian market to conduct business with MLM companies grows depending on the company's brand, the comprehensibility and transparency of the compensation schemes.</p>	V lee siew Keong et al. [18]
32	Examining the phenomenon of multi-level marketing (MLM) businesses and how they differ from traditional marketing approaches	<p>MLM is a hybrid distribution and sales network model that has gained significant popularity in western countries as a secure business model. There is still a lack of awareness and limited scientific research on MLM in Poland. The article aims to highlight the problems, essence, and unique characteristics of MLM compared to traditional marketing methods.</p>	Justyna Kazmierczak et al. [54]
33	Examining how the structure of multi-level marketing (MLM) businesses, through the creation of "uplines" and "downlines," impacts and fractures deaf sociality and community in urban India.	<p>The hierarchical structure of MLM businesses, with "uplines" and "downlines," has led to divisive fractures within deaf sociality and community in urban India. Traditionally, deaf sociality involved sharing information, teaching sign language, and helping each other develop, forming part of a deaf moral economy. However, the intermingling of moral and financial economies due to post-liberalization changes has caused tensions and disharmony within deaf communities. The neoliberal concept of "community" can be disharmonious and produced through tensions and negotiations, as exemplified by the case of deaf sociality. Deaf social, moral, and economic practices demonstrate the potential and actual coerciveness of sociality within communities.</p>	Michele Friedner [55]

34	Exploring the nature and ethical issues surrounding multi-level marketing (MLM) schemes operating on social media platforms, specifically WeChat, in China.	MLM schemes have experienced rapid growth in China, particularly due to the rise of e-commerce and social networking applications like WeChat. There is a lack of academic research examining the ethical implications of MLM practices on social media platforms in China. In China, MLM schemes operating on WeChat face controversial ethical debates, with some accusing them of being illegal pyramid schemes. Individuals often express discomfort and feel pressured when their friends or acquaintances engage in unsolicited product selling through WeChat.	Wen Liu [56]
35	Examining the factors that influence distributor behaviour and satisfaction toward multi-level marketing (MLM) companies.	The research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of distributor behaviour toward MLM companies by studying the effect of the identified five relational factors. Each of the five factors (upline support, diffusing business opportunity, training quality, recruitment quality, and product/service perceptions) will be tested and discussed in detail. The findings are expected to determine the extent to which these five factors influence and predict distributor satisfaction in the MLM industry.	Loi kai yin [57]

4.4 India's Multi- Level Marketing Expansion and Generating Entrepreneurs:

According to a survey by the trade group Indian Direct Selling Association, direct selling in India increased 4.7% in the first half of the pandemic hit 2020-21 to reach total sales of Rs 7,518. This growth was fuelled by increased demand for products in the health and nutrition area. With the advent of the work from home idea, which allowed people to investigate extra sources of income, the direct selling strategy has risen dramatically over the period. 53.18 lakh people have joined the strategy, with a daily average of 29,064 new participants [58].

The study by Kumar et al. [59] focuses on the role of multilevel marketing in the Indian context and how it might help Indians improve their standard of living through self-employment opportunities. This is because the Indian Prime Minister has made it a priority to develop services and self-employment skills through the "Skill India" campaign. The function of MLM businesses, the growth of MLM businesses, and well-known MLM businesses in India are all covered in the study. According to the study, Multi-Level Marketing is a well-known direct-selling business strategy that advances the country's economy and social conditions. As a result, it is suggested that people spread awareness.

Deepali Bhattacharjee [60] examined the Assamese direct-selling consumers in her published research. This study looked at consumers' first preferences for making purchases through direct sales. The study's participants were 650 consumers who bought cosmetics, kitchenware, personal care goods, insurance, and health and wellness products. A stratified sample strategy was used to choose this sample of 650 consumers from across Assam. This business is nothing like the normal Assamese market. Potential buyers decide whether to buy the goods after watching the distributors demonstrate them, or they can use a sample and read the product pamphlet first. the main factor in choosing to buy the product on its quality.

Information about the owner's satisfaction with direct selling is provided in the document. The largest direct selling company in the world, Amway has benefited millions of people throughout the world by providing them with a low-cost, low-risk business opportunity to achieve their goals, according to researcher B Angamuthu [61]. This empirical study focuses on the socioeconomic traits of Amway

business owners as well as their general happiness with the company. Additionally, note the effects of several factors on ABO satisfaction as well as the variance that these factors account for. 100 ABOs were chosen using the purposive sampling approach from a variety of locations in the Coimbatore, Tiruppur, and Erode Districts of the Tamil Nadu state using a self-designed questionnaire. The study's findings indicate that elements such as income production, consumer awareness and responsiveness, product features, buy facilitators, product diversity, and company-provided training are to blame for ABOs beneath Amway India's level of satisfaction.

One of the leaders in this market, Amway was the subject of a research article by Seth, M.R. [62] that examined its business operations. According to the newspaper, Amway is also attempting to get into the insurance market after dominating the nutrition and wellness industries. This indicates that Amway is shifting from being a product-oriented company to one that is more service-oriented. According to the field survey, the majority of Amway distributors were male, between the ages of 25 and 45, and made between Rs. 5,000 and 10,000 a month. It was found that customers frequently favoured nutritional and health products. Age and distributors' level of satisfaction have no relation to one another. Since the concept of direct selling was originally inspired by socioeconomic growth, both the size and the number of direct-selling businesses are expanding quickly in India.

63-year-old Deepali Bhattacharjee [63] spoke about the difficulties and current state of network marketing in Assam. More than 5 million individuals, 60% of them are women, now have the opportunity to work for themselves thanks to network marketing. In this essay, the employment and revenue-generating potential of direct selling and network marketing in Assam, a state in northern India, are analysed. In Assam, direct selling began operating in 1998. The study uses primary data as well as secondary data when applicable, and 650 respondents were chosen from each of the sample companies. Amway India Enterprises, Oriflame India Private Limited, Tupperware India Private Limited, and Max India Insurance are the representative businesses. These representative businesses belong to the Indian Direct Selling Association (IDSA). This essay examines the problem and situation surrounding direct selling in Assam (India). Results show a positive correlation between education and the number of distributors; women are more successful distributors than males are, and direct selling is well-liked by the general public. The issues this industry is facing and the solutions put out by the Indian government.

Vandana Gupta [64] addresses the socio-economic effects of multi-level marketing or direct selling in her study paper. India was the world's 12th-largest consumer market in 2007, and by 2025, it is anticipated to overtake the US, Japan, China, and the UK to become the fifth-largest market. The retail industry in India saw significant changes in tandem with economic development and increased consumption. To serve this expanding market, numerous store and non-store retail models have developed, with direct selling being one such non-store type. One of the non-store retail forms with the fastest and strongest growth is direct selling, which has experienced double-digit growth in the post-reform period. Many Indian and foreign consumers are paying attention to the expanding Indian market. Therefore, the idea of direct selling in India will have a very positive effect in the future and will soon extend to the rural areas of the nation as well, where the majority of Indians currently live.

Juman et al [65] undertook a study of the Amway company's operations in Kerala's Calicut area. The MLM industry's development in India, Amway's global market, and the difficulties the company is currently facing are the main topics of this study. It also demonstrates some beneficial aspects of MLM, such as increased income prospects, female empowerment, the growth of the small and medium business sector, the creation of jobs, Amway's CSR initiatives, and tax contributions to the government. According to the study, the majority of people who work in direct selling are successful, but there are also a lot of unsuccessful direct salespeople. This issue can be resolved if they receive guidance and assistance from their team, as well as encouragement and motivation to attend the provided training programmes.

The study by Jamie Cross [66] examines a state in India to determine whether the nation permits direct selling businesses to establish a market. Considering the ways that stereotypes, differences, and exclusion are formed as multinational corporations build consumer markets in regions of persistent global poverty in rural India. A US corporation distributes solar-powered lights in the Indian highlands of Orissa through a network of young, male sales representatives. The business and its goods demonstrate proximity, attachment, and a sense of connection to India's low caste and indigenous communities. However, the company's salespeople frequently prioritise sustaining structural

advantages, and their tactics highlight caste, class, and gender-based societal divisions. This research suggests that prejudice is a characteristic of markets at the "bottom of the pyramid" rather than being seen as a peripheral effect of expansion and growth in emerging markets.

Direct selling and conventional marketing have been covered by Mary Merlin [67] in India. The complete direct selling activity is included in the paper, along with a comparison of direct selling to traditional marketing. All of India's direct selling businesses have been listed by the researcher to compare these two forms of advertising.

Table 7: Summary of Review based on India's Multi- Level Marketing Expansion and Generating Entrepreneurs

S. No.	Area/Focus	Findings/Outcome	Reference
1	The role of Multi-Level Marketing (MLM) business in the Indian context.	<p>Direct selling, particularly through MLM, has emerged as a significant avenue for employment generation in India, especially for individuals lacking formal skills or access to traditional job markets.</p> <p>MLM businesses have contributed to the enhancement of interpersonal skills among participants, potentially improving their employability and earning potential.</p> <p>The entry of global companies into the Indian direct selling market has brought increased attention and growth to the industry, indicating its potential for further expansion.</p> <p>The MLM model aligns with the objectives of government initiatives like "Skill India," emphasizing self-employment and skill development.</p>	Kumar et al. [59]
2	The impact and significance of direct selling, particularly in the context of network marketing or multi-level marketing (MLM), in the modern economy.	<p>Direct selling, including network marketing or MLM, represents a significant sector of the economy, providing employment opportunities and alternative distribution channels for goods and services.</p> <p>Consumer behaviour plays a crucial role in the success of direct selling, with word-of-mouth marketing being a key strategy utilized in this model.</p> <p>Despite the rise of online shopping and e-commerce, direct selling continues to thrive due to its personal touch and reliance on interpersonal relationships.</p> <p>Network marketing is perceived as a low-investment, high-return business model, attracting individuals seeking entrepreneurial opportunities.</p> <p>Ethical considerations and regulatory scrutiny surround the direct selling industry, particularly concerning issues of consumer protection and fraud prevention.</p> <p>Direct selling offers a unique opportunity for individuals to leverage their personal networks and social capital to generate income, contributing to economic empowerment and social mobility.</p>	Deepali Bhattacharjee [60]

3	Studying the socio-economic characteristics and overall satisfaction of Amway Business Owners (ABOs) in India	<p>The study aims to understand the socio-economic characteristics of ABOs associated with Amway India.</p> <p>It aims to assess the overall satisfaction of ABOs towards the Amway business opportunity.</p> <p>The research identifies several factors that are responsible for the satisfaction of ABOs under Amway India, including Income generation, Recognition and consumers' response, Product features, Purchase facilitators, Product variety, Training provided by the company</p> <p>The results indicate that the identified factors (income generation, recognition, product features, purchase facilitators, product variety, and training) significantly impact the satisfaction of ABOs involved with Amway India.</p>	B Angamuthu [61]
4	Amway's business operations and its expansion into new markets and service offerings, along with insights into the demographics and preferences of Amway distributors in India.	focus on understanding Amway's business strategy, particularly its diversification into new markets and services, as well as gathering insights into the profile and preferences of its distributors in India. Additionally, it touches upon the growth of the direct selling industry in the country, potentially driven by socioeconomic factors.	Seth, M.R. [62]
5	Analyzing the role of network marketing or direct selling in generating income and employment opportunities in the state of Assam, India, and understanding the problems and prospects of this industry in the region.	<p>The study is based on primary data collected from 650 respondents from four sample companies: Amway India Enterprises, Oriflame India Private Limited, Tupperware India Private Limited, and Max India Insurance, which are members of the Indian Direct Selling Association (IDSA).</p> <p>There is a positive relationship between the education level of distributors and their number, indicating that more educated individuals are more likely to engage in direct selling.</p> <p>Women distributors are more involved in direct selling business than their male counterparts.</p> <p>The study found that direct sellers are accepted in society, and the distributors are generally satisfied with their involvement in the industry.</p> <p>The research highlights the problems and prospects of the direct selling industry in Assam, India.</p>	Deepali Bhattacharjee [63]
6	Examining the growth potential and future prospects of the direct selling industry in India, in light of India's economic development, rising	<p>India is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, with an average annual growth rate of 7% in GDP and 5% in per capita income over the past decade.</p> <p>India's consumer market has undergone changes due to economic growth, with a shift in consumption patterns from necessities to discretionary spending.</p>	Vandana Gupta [64]

	<p>consumerism, and the evolution of various retail formats to cater to the growing consumer market.</p>	<p>By 2025, India is expected to be the fifth-largest consumer market in the world, after the United States, Japan, China, and the United Kingdom. The retail sector in India has also undergone significant changes to cater to the growing consumer market, with the evolution of various store and non-store retail formats. Direct selling is one of the fastest-growing non-store retail formats in India, recording double-digit growth in the post-reform period. The growing Indian market has attracted a large number of Indian and foreign direct selling companies. The concept of direct selling in India has a very positive impact and is expected to expand its reach to rural areas, where a significant portion of the Indian population resides.</p>	
7	<p>Based on the information provided, the research area or focus appears to be: Studying the impact and current marketing trends of direct selling companies in Kerala, India, with a special focus on Amway, and examining the benefits and challenges associated with the direct selling industry in the country.</p>	<p>The study aims to analyze the impact of direct selling companies in the state of Kerala, with a particular emphasis on Amway. It focuses on understanding the present and upcoming marketing trends of direct selling companies in the Calicut area of Kerala. The research aims to offer suggestive measures to improve direct selling in the study area. It seeks to highlight the benefits and challenges associated with the direct selling industry in India.</p>	Juman et al [65]
8	<p>An anthropological examination of the direct selling practices employed by a US company to market solar-powered lamps in the rural, unelectrified highlands of Orissa, India.</p>	<p>The research explores the work of direct selling in rural India, particularly the marketing of solar-powered lamps by a US company to unelectrified, poor rural communities in the highlands of Orissa. It reflects on the forms of prejudice, social difference, and exclusion that emerge as multinational companies attempt to create markets for consumer goods in areas of chronic global poverty. The US company sells solar-powered lights through a network of young male sales agents in the region. The company and its products are presented as expressing empathy, proximity, and connection to India's indigenous and low-caste communities.</p>	Jamie Cross [66]

9	An examination of direct selling or multi-level marketing (MLM) as a business model, specifically its compensation structure, recruiting practices, and relationship to referral marketing.	Direct selling is a form of multi-level marketing where the sales force is compensated not only for their own sales but also for the sales made by the people they recruit (their downline). The sales force in direct selling is referred to as "participants" who can receive multiple levels of compensation based on the sales of their recruits. The primary job of a direct selling participant is to recruit others to sell the product and receive a percentage of the sales made by their recruits. This recruiting process continues in a hierarchical manner, with each new recruit expected to recruit more people below them and earn a percentage of their sales.	Mary Merlin [67]
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4.5 Current Status of Multi-Level Marketing:

- (1) Despite the fact that some MLM businesses provide legitimate goods or services, there is ongoing worry about pyramid schemes operating under the cover of MLMs. These illicit businesses place a higher priority on enlisting new members than on making sales of goods; they mostly rely on membership fees and investments from prospective members as opposed to real product sales.
- (2) Training and inspiring distributors or independent representatives is a top priority for many multilevel marketing firms. This frequently entails online training resources, lectures, and workshops. Companies can differ substantially in the calibre and efficacy of these training initiatives; some offer thorough direction, while others could place more emphasis on recruitment strategies than on product expertise.
- (3) The very small initial expenditure needed to become a distributor or representative is one of the draws of multilevel marketing (MLM) companies. People looking for extra income streams or entrepreneurial opportunities are drawn to this low entrance hurdle.
- (4) For individuals prepared to put in the work necessary to assemble and oversee their sales teams, multilevel marketing (MLM) companies present a flexible and potentially lucrative earning option. Individual distributors, however, may not always be successful, and many find it difficult to generate a sizable revenue.
- (5) A mentorship programme, in which seasoned distributors, or "uplines," offer direction and assistance to their downlines, is widely advertised by multilevel marketing businesses. There are wide variations in the calibre and efficacy of this mentorship; some uplines put their personal financial gain ahead of the true benefit to their teams.
- (6) Products from respectable, high-quality manufacturers to expensive or dubious goods are all available through multilevel marketing businesses. The superiority of their products is a major selling feature for legitimate multilevel marketing firms; other companies may place a greater emphasis on the income potential component.
- (7) It has long been a worry whether MLM companies are credible. The sector has been tarnished by multiple instances of dishonest business practices, inflated revenue promises, and accusations of pyramid schemes, even though some organisations have built respectable brands and operations. For the sector, winning back the confidence and trust of customers is a constant struggle.
- (8) The multilevel marketing industry, in general, boosts the economy by creating jobs and revenue opportunities, especially in the direct selling space, notwithstanding the scandals involving certain of its businesses. In addition to supporting entrepreneurship and economic activity, a large number of multilevel marketing distributors also run small businesses as independent contractors.
- (9) A large number of multilevel marketing businesses incorporate goal-setting, leadership development, and personal improvement into their training programmes.
- (10) Laws and regulations governing the multilevel marketing industry have been put in place by regulatory organisations in several nations. Constant efforts are being undertaken to guarantee adherence to legal and ethical requirements, safeguard consumer rights, and improve transparency.

4.6 Desired Status of Multilevel Marketing:

The study focuses on the factors influencing entrepreneurship development through the MLM business model. It will create a sense of belief and credibility for the entire model of MLM and also people may focus more on these kinds of models while starting a business venture. The increase in number of the entrepreneurs not only paves the way for economic growth but also improves personal calibre and development.

5. RESEARCH GAP :

Numerous articles focus on various aspects of multilevel marketing, including the pyramid scheme, firm analysis, MLM in various countries, and the advantages and disadvantages of MLM. Additionally, the relevance of commission gained by consumers while doing MLM business is also highlighted. Moreover, there are areas like MLM business model and compensation structure, consumer behaviour and consumer satisfaction of MLM products, legal and ethical issue of MLM business model, Socio-economic impact, cross-cultural prospective, regulatory study.

The literature evaluation reveals a study gap: MLM companies offer a broader platform for individuals to launch a new business, and the prerequisites for initiating an MLM firm are few. One significant gap found in the research review is the MLM firms' ability to develop or expand entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship development is a broader area and the to find out how MLM model contributes to the development of Entrepreneurship is a pertinent area to research on.

6. VARIOUS POSSIBLE RESEARCH AGENDAS :

- (1) Comparative analysis of MLM regulations across different countries or regions
- (2) Factors influencing the long-term sustainability of MLM business models
- (3) Strategies for effective training, mentorship, and personal development in the MLM context
- (4) Contribution of MLM businesses to entrepreneurship and economic activity
- (5) Factors influencing public perception and trust in MLM businesses
- (6) Challenges and opportunities in the global expansion of MLM businesses

7. ANALYSIS OF CHOSEN RESEARCH AGENDA :

A dynamic business concept that presents chances for entrepreneurship and revenue development is multi-level marketing (MLM). However, a number of variables affect an MLM business's potential to succeed and last. These factors, which range from upline assistance and social skill development to the company's reputation and reward programmes, influence the lifespan and financial stability of multilevel marketing companies. Concurrently, elements including starting capital, understanding of the market, and technology integration impact how a firm develops in the MLM environment. A key component of multilevel marketing, entrepreneurship growth is fuelled by government assistance, thorough training, revenue potential, and strategic planning. Multilevel marketing (MLM) companies may create the conditions for long-term growth, corporate expansion, and entrepreneurial success by comprehending and utilising these critical variables.

Demographic factors: People's interactions with MLM (multi-level marketing) companies can be influenced by demographic criteria such as age, gender, marital status, education, employment, and income. It's critical to comprehend each person's past since it influences their approach to and success in multilevel marketing. For instance, an individual's age may have an impact on how much time they can spend on multilevel marketing activities, and their educational background may have an impact on how well they comprehend the business concept.

7.1 Factors influencing sustainability in MLM business:

Sustainability in MLM businesses can be gauged by assessing various factors: the reputation of the company, which reflects its trustworthiness and longevity in the market; the attractiveness of rewards and bonuses offered, indicating the potential for financial stability and growth; the strength of upline support, crucial for guiding and motivating distributors towards success; the provision of employment opportunities, contributing to long-term viability and community impact; the cultivation of social skills among participants, enhancing networking abilities and interpersonal relationships; and the elevation of employability standards, empowering individuals with valuable skills for future endeavors. Evaluating these aspects collectively provides a comprehensive understanding of the sustainability and effectiveness of MLM ventures.

7.2 Factors influencing Business Development in MLM business:

MLM business development hinges on several key factors: the initial investment required, which determines the feasibility and scalability of the venture; the level of people involvement, indicating the depth of the network and potential for expansion; market awareness, crucial for identifying target demographics and competitive positioning; technological integration, facilitating efficient communication, sales tracking, and product distribution; government support, including regulatory frameworks and incentives, shaping the business environment and market legitimacy; risk assessment and management strategies, essential for mitigating uncertainties and ensuring long-term stability. Together, these elements form the foundation for successful MLM business growth and sustainability.

7.3 Entrepreneurship Development factors:

Entrepreneurship development is shaped by various influential factors: crafting a sound strategy guides business direction and decision-making; a strong company reputation fosters trust and attracts customers and investors alike; comprehensive training equips entrepreneurs with essential skills and knowledge for success; income potential motivates individuals to pursue entrepreneurial ventures and fuel business growth; effective mentoring provides valuable guidance and support from experienced professionals; work flexibility allows entrepreneurs to adapt to market changes and balance personal and professional commitments; nurturing relationships with stakeholders cultivates partnerships and fosters business opportunities; honing interpersonal skills enables entrepreneurs to build rapport, negotiate effectively, and inspire confidence in others; leveraging digital marketing channels enhances visibility, customer engagement, and market reach; while government guidelines and opportunities provide a supportive framework and resources for entrepreneurial endeavours to thrive. Together, these factors contribute to the dynamic and multifaceted landscape of entrepreneurship development.

8. DESCRIPTION OF CHOSEN RESEARCH AGENDA :

The multi-level marketing (MLM) sector has grown significantly on a global scale, providing people with the chance to start their own companies and become entrepreneurs. Even though the industry has come under fire for unethical business methods and pyramid schemes, there is still a need to look into the MLM model's legal channels for entrepreneurship development. We may learn a great deal about the elements that make multilevel marketing (MLM) entrepreneurs successful, as well as the difficulties they encounter and the solutions they use, by delving into this research issue.

In the context of multilevel marketing, entrepreneurship development is a broad subject that includes several topics, including network building, financial management, sales and marketing tactics, leadership development, and personal development. Furthermore, this research topic can provide insight into the socio-economic effects of multilevel marketing, specifically concerning the generation of money, employment opportunities, and economic empowerment. We may learn more about the MLM model's ability to promote entrepreneurship and aid in economic growth by looking at the experiences of successful MLM business owners, particularly in areas with a dearth of traditional employment alternatives.

Furthermore, researching the growth of entrepreneurship in multilevel marketing might add to the current conversations and arguments about the moral and legal guidelines that control the sector. Policymakers and industry stakeholders can benefit from this research by using the ethical and sustainable practices it identifies to support consumer protection, transparency, and the MLM industry's overall reputation.

8.1 SWOC Analysis of Research Agenda:

(a) Strengths of the Research Agenda:

- (1) Low initial investment for distributors
- (2) Emphasis on personal development, goal-setting, and leadership training
- (3) Fostering social connections and networking
- (4) Contributions to entrepreneurship and economic activity

(b) Weakness of the Research Agenda:

- (1) Allegations of pyramid schemes and deceptive practices
- (2) Low success rate for individual distributors
- (3) Varying quality and effectiveness of training programs and mentorship

- (4) Tainted credibility and public scepticism due to unethical practices

(c) Opportunities of the Research Agenda:

- (1) Growing demand for direct selling and entrepreneurial opportunities
- (2) Innovative product development and introduction of unique offerings
- (3) Integration of e-commerce and digital marketing strategies
- (4) Improved regulatory frameworks and guidelines for consumer protection

(4) Challenges of the Research Agenda:

- (1) Negative publicity and loss of consumer trust due to unethical practices
- (2) Competition from established retail channels and e-commerce platforms
- (3) Challenges in recruiting and retaining distributors
- (4) Increased regulatory scrutiny and enforcement actions against pyramid schemes

9. RESEARCH TOPIC BASED ON IDENTIFIED RESEARCH PROBLEM :

Based on through analysis and review of relevant literature this article advises investigating influence of MLM businesses create entrepreneurs

- a) **Proposed title:** Influence of Sustainability and business development factors of multi-level marketing business on Entrepreneurship development
- b) **Geographical Area:** Kerala state, India
- c) **The study's target respondents are:** Multi-level marketing distributors and consumers

10. ABCD LISTING OF RESEARCH TOPIC FOR SYSTEMATIC SCHOLARLY RESEARCH:

10.1 Advantages of Chosen Research Topic:

- (1) Becoming a distributor or representative requires a very small investment.
- (2) Opportunities for flexible compensation for those who successfully establish and lead sales teams
- (3) Access to training resources, lectures, workshops, and mentorship programs.
- (4) Encourages economic activity and entrepreneurship by utilising independent contractors.

10.2 Benefits of Chosen Research Topic:

- (1) Offers extra income streams and entrepreneurial opportunities
- (2) Integrates personal development, goal-setting, and leadership training
- (3) Enhance the economy by creating careers and income opportunities in the direct selling
- (4) MLM companies offer authentic, high-quality products

10.3 Constraints of Chosen Research Topic:

- (1) Continuing worries about pyramid schemes operating under the guise of MLMs
- (2) Fluctuating quality and efficiency of training and mentorship programs
- (3) Uplines to prioritize personal financial improvement over the well-being of their downlines
- (4) Continuous struggle to regain consumer trust and confidence due to past scandals and unethical practices

10.4 Disadvantages of Chosen Research Topic:

- (1) Struggle for individual distributors to generate substantial revenue
- (2) Spoiled reputation due to occurrences of dishonest business practices, inflated income promises, and accusations of pyramid schemes
- (3) Regulatory bodies implementing laws and regulations to oversee the industry, ensuring adherence to legal and ethical requirements
- (4) Distinction among legitimate businesses and those operating as pyramid schemes

11. CONCLUSION :

The paper aims at finding the concept of multi-level marketing internationally. There are various scenarios which explains the history of multi-level marketing, this research work delves into the past formulation of the concept and idea. It also explains the pyramid scheme which was always a constraint for the multi-level marketing strategy to grow further. It gives decent number of review paper that proof the difference between pyramid scheme and multi-level marketing. There are many countries in the world who are encouraging direct selling or multi-level marketing which contributes largely to the economic development of the country and it has become passive source of income for the people. It took a lot of time for India to adopt the concept of multi-level marketing and made a

regulation for the same in the year 2016. This contributed a huge growth in the number of MLM companies and the users of their products. It not only contributed quality products but created passive income, job opportunity, or a start-up idea for the people.

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