



Impact of Globalisation on employment Generation in India Since 1991-2026

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of globalization on employment generation in India during the period 1991–2026, with emphasis on the changing structure of employment following the economic reforms initiated under the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1991. The research is descriptive and analytical in nature and is based entirely on secondary data collected from government publications, national statistical agencies, the Reserve Bank of India, the World Bank, the International Labour Organization, and other published reports and research studies. The findings reveal that globalization has significantly accelerated India's economic growth through trade liberalization, foreign direct investment, technological advancement, and integration into global value chains. However, employment generation has remained uneven across sectors. The services sector emerged as the principal source of employment growth, while manufacturing experienced relatively slower job creation due to increasing automation and capital-intensive production. Agriculture witnessed a continuous decline in its employment share as structural transformation progressed. The study further highlights the growing importance of skill development, digitalization, artificial intelligence, labour market reforms, and government initiatives such as Make in India, Skill India, Digital India, Startup India, and Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes in shaping employment outcomes. Despite these developments, challenges such as jobless growth, informal employment, regional disparities, and skill mismatches persist. The study concludes that sustainable and inclusive employment generation requires coordinated policies integrating labour-intensive industrialization, human capital development, technological innovation, social protection, and balanced regional development to maximize the benefits of globalization.

Keywords: Globalization; Employment Generation; Foreign Direct Investment (FDI); Technological Advancement; Labour Market Reforms.

I. Introduction

Globalization has been one of the most significant drivers of economic transformation in India since the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1991, which marked a decisive shift

toward liberalization, privatization, and global integration. The opening of the Indian economy to international trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), technological advancement, and global value chains accelerated economic growth, enhanced industrial productivity, and expanded the services sector, positioning India as one of the world's fastest-growing emerging economies. However, while globalization has generated substantial opportunities for economic development, its impact on employment generation has remained complex and uneven. The benefits of globalization have varied across sectors, regions, and skill groups, with rapid employment growth occurring mainly in information technology, business process outsourcing, finance, telecommunications, logistics, and other service industries, whereas manufacturing employment has expanded more slowly because of increasing capital-intensive production, automation, and labour-saving technologies. Simultaneously, agriculture has experienced a continuous decline in its share of employment due to structural transformation, urbanization, mechanization, and migration toward non-farm activities. Although globalization has created new avenues of employment through exports, digital platforms, entrepreneurship, and global production networks, it has also contributed to the persistence of informal employment, widening regional disparities, and increasing demand for skilled labour. In recent years, technological innovations such as artificial intelligence, automation, digitalization, and the expansion of the gig economy have further reshaped India's labour market, making skill development and adaptability essential for sustainable employment. Government initiatives including Make in India, Skill India, Digital India, Startup India, labour market reforms, and Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes have sought to strengthen employment opportunities, yet concerns regarding jobless growth, employment quality, and inclusive development continue to persist. Against this background, the present study examines the impact of globalization on employment generation in India during the period 1991–2026 by analyzing sectoral employment trends, the role of FDI, technological advancement, skill development, labour market reforms, and emerging challenges, with the objective of providing a comprehensive understanding of globalization's employment effects and suggesting policy measures for sustainable and inclusive employment generation.

II. Review of Literature

The literature on globalization and employment in India examines how economic reforms, trade liberalization, foreign investment, and technological advancements have influenced employment growth across different sectors. While globalization has contributed to higher economic growth and productivity, researchers highlight that its impact on employment has been mixed, with challenges such as jobless growth, informal employment, and skill gaps. The following review summarizes the major studies on the relationship between globalization and employment in India.

Papola (1994) examined the employment implications of India's post-1991 economic reforms. The study argued that while liberalization improved industrial efficiency and competitiveness,

employment growth remained weak in the organized sector because firms increasingly adopted capital-intensive production methods.

Joshi and Little (1996) analyzed India's economic reforms and concluded that globalization accelerated economic growth through trade liberalization and foreign investment. However, employment generation was uneven across sectors, with services benefiting more than manufacturing.

Bhagwati and Srinivasan (2002) argued that globalization promoted exports, investment, and productivity in India. The authors maintained that long-term employment gains depended on complementary reforms in education, labour markets, and infrastructure.

Goldar (2004) found that trade liberalization improved industrial productivity but did not significantly increase manufacturing employment because industries increasingly adopted labour-saving technologies.

Kundu (2005) reported that globalization increased urban employment opportunities, particularly in information technology and business services, although regional disparities widened.

Hasan, Mitra, and Ramaswamy (2007) observed that states with more flexible labour regulations benefited more from globalization through higher industrial employment and faster export growth.

Siggel (2010) examined India's informal sector and concluded that globalization expanded informal employment through subcontracting and outsourcing while reducing employment security.

Pattanaik (2013) reviewed employment intensity in India and concluded that economic growth under globalization generated fewer jobs than expected because growth was concentrated in capital-intensive sectors.

Government of India (2014) highlighted that skill development and manufacturing expansion were essential for translating globalization into employment generation.

Ghose (2016) concluded that globalization accelerated India's economic growth but employment improvements mainly occurred after 2000 due to rapid expansion of organized services and construction rather than trade alone.

Singh (2017) argued that globalization increased jobless growth because technological progress and capital-intensive production reduced labour demand despite higher GDP growth.

Shembavnekar (2019) found that labour market institutions significantly influenced the employment effects of economic reforms and globalization, especially within the informal sector.

World Bank (2020) observed that globalization contributed to productivity gains but emphasized the need for labour-intensive manufacturing and skill development for sustainable employment.

Basole (2022) demonstrated that India's employment elasticity declined significantly after globalization, indicating slower employment generation despite sustained economic growth.

Sana, Kousar, and Chattha (2023) conducted a systematic review and concluded that globalization has reshaped labour markets by influencing employment, productivity, gender participation, and sectoral employment through foreign direct investment.

ILO (2023) emphasized that India's employment recovery depended on improving labour productivity, formalization, and skill development in the post-pandemic global economy.

Government of India (2024) reported that production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes and increased FDI were supporting manufacturing employment, although informal employment continued to dominate.

Ganuthula and Balaraman (2025) examined AI-driven labour market polarization and found that India's concentration in lower-skill occupations makes globalization and technological change likely to reshape future employment patterns.

Recent Evidence (2026) Contemporary studies suggest that globalization continues to create opportunities through digital trade, global value chains, and services exports. However, employment generation increasingly depends on skill development, technological adaptation, and labour market reforms rather than globalization alone.

III. Statement of the Problem

Globalization has emerged as a major force influencing India's economic growth, industrial development, trade expansion, and labour markets since the economic reforms of 1991. Numerous studies have shown that globalization has contributed to higher productivity, increased foreign direct investment, export growth, and the expansion of the service sector. However, the evidence regarding its impact on employment generation remains mixed and inconclusive.

Several researchers have observed that although economic growth accelerated under globalization, employment growth did not increase proportionately. Manufacturing industries increasingly adopted capital-intensive and labour-saving technologies, resulting in limited employment generation despite higher output. At the same time, employment opportunities expanded mainly in the services sector, creating sectoral imbalances and widening regional disparities. A significant share of new employment has also been concentrated in the informal sector, where workers often face low wages, poor job security, and inadequate social protection. Recent studies further indicate that technological change, automation, artificial intelligence, digitalization, and integration into global value chains are reshaping India's labour market. These developments have increased the demand for skilled workers while reducing opportunities for low-skilled labour. Government initiatives such as skill development programmes, labour market reforms, and Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes have been introduced to promote employment, yet their long-term effectiveness in generating sustainable and inclusive employment remains uncertain.

The review of literature also reveals that most existing studies focus either on economic growth or on specific sectors and time periods. There is comparatively limited comprehensive analysis of

the changing relationship between globalization and employment generation in India in the context of recent developments such as post-pandemic economic recovery, digital globalization, technological transformation, and evolving labour market policies.

Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive study to examine the impact of globalization on employment generation in India by analyzing trends in employment, sectoral shifts, productivity, technological changes, skill development, and labour market reforms. Such a study will help identify the opportunities and challenges associated with globalization and provide policy recommendations for achieving sustainable, inclusive, and employment-oriented economic growth.

IV. Objectives

- 1) To examine the impact of globalization on employment generation in India during the period 1991–2026.
- 2) To analyze the sector-wise changes in employment patterns (agriculture, manufacturing, and services) in India under globalization.
- 3) To assess the influence of technological advancement, foreign direct investment (FDI), skill development, and labour market reforms on employment generation in the era of globalization.
- 4) To evaluate the challenges and opportunities of globalization for sustainable and inclusive employment generation in India and suggest suitable policy recommendations.

V. Scope of the Study

The present study examines the impact of globalization on employment generation in India during the period **1991–2026**, covering the post-economic reform era. The study focuses on analyzing how globalization has influenced employment trends, labour market dynamics, and sectoral employment patterns in the Indian economy.

The study covers the three major sectors of the economy—**agriculture, manufacturing, and services**—to assess changes in employment generation, structural transformation, and the shifting contribution of each sector under globalization. It also examines the role of globalization in promoting organized and unorganized employment and evaluates the changing nature of formal and informal employment in India.

The study further investigates the influence of key factors associated with globalization, including **foreign direct investment (FDI), international trade, technological advancement, digitalization, automation, artificial intelligence, skill development initiatives, labour market reforms, and Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes**, on employment generation. Special attention is given to the effects of post-pandemic economic recovery, digital globalization, and India's increasing integration into global value chains.

The analysis is primarily based on **secondary data** collected from reliable sources such as publications of the Government of India, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), NITI

Aayog, the World Bank, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and other published books, research articles, journals, reports, and official databases.

The study is confined to the Indian economy and does not include detailed cross-country comparisons except where necessary to provide context. It emphasizes macro-level analysis of employment generation rather than firm-level or individual-level labour market outcomes. The findings are intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between globalization and employment generation in India and to suggest policy measures for promoting sustainable, inclusive, and employment-oriented economic growth in the evolving global economy.

VI. Limitations of the Study

1. Dependence on Secondary Data:

The study is based entirely on secondary data collected from government publications, reports, journals, and international organizations. Therefore, the accuracy and reliability of the findings depend on the quality and consistency of these published sources.

2. Limited to the Indian Economy:

The study focuses exclusively on India during the period 1991–2026. It does not provide a detailed comparison with other countries, which may limit the broader applicability of the findings.

3. Macro-Level Analysis:

The research emphasizes aggregate employment trends and sectoral changes at the national level. It does not examine firm-level, industry-specific, or individual labour market experiences in detail.

4. Data and Measurement Constraints:

Employment data from different sources and time periods may vary because of changes in survey methods, definitions, and data collection techniques. Such variations may affect the comparability of results over the study period.

5. Dynamic Nature of Globalization:

Globalization is continuously evolving with technological advancements, policy reforms, digitalization, and changing global economic conditions. Consequently, the findings of the study are limited to the available information up to 2026 and may not fully capture future developments.

VII. Research Methodology

The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature and is based entirely on secondary data to examine the impact of globalization on employment generation in India during the period 1991–2026. Secondary data have been collected from reliable and authentic sources, including publications of the Government of India, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), NITI Aayog, the Economic Survey of India, the Census of India, the World Bank, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and other published books, peer-reviewed research articles, journals,

reports, and official databases. The collected data are analyzed using descriptive and comparative methods, supported by tables, graphs, percentages, growth rates, and trend analysis to examine changes in employment generation, sectoral employment patterns, foreign direct investment (FDI), technological advancement, skill development, and labour market reforms under globalization. The study also adopts a thematic review of the existing literature to interpret the relationship between globalization and employment generation and to identify major trends, opportunities, challenges, and policy implications. The findings are interpreted through logical analysis and comparison of available evidence to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of globalization on employment generation in India during the post-reform period.

VIII. Results and Discussion

The analysis of secondary data and existing literature indicates that globalization has significantly transformed the structure of employment in India during the period 1991–2026. The economic reforms initiated in 1991 integrated the Indian economy with global markets through trade liberalization, deregulation, privatization, and greater inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI). These reforms accelerated economic growth and increased India's participation in international trade and global value chains. However, the employment effects of globalization have been uneven across sectors, regions, and skill groups, resulting in both opportunities and challenges for the labour market.

Globalization and Overall Employment Generation

The findings suggest that globalization contributed positively to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and productivity but did not generate employment at the same pace. Although economic growth remained relatively high for much of the post-reform period, employment elasticity declined, indicating that each percentage increase in GDP generated fewer employment opportunities than before economic liberalization.

The review reveals that the phenomenon of "jobless growth" became increasingly evident, particularly after the early 2000s. Rapid technological modernization, automation, mechanization, and the adoption of capital-intensive production methods enabled firms to increase output without proportionately expanding employment. Consequently, organized sector employment grew more slowly than expected despite significant industrial expansion.

Nevertheless, globalization created substantial employment opportunities in export-oriented industries, construction, logistics, telecommunications, retail, tourism, financial services, and information technology. These sectors became major contributors to employment generation, particularly in urban areas.

Sector-wise Changes in Employment Patterns

The structural transformation of employment represents one of the most significant outcomes of globalization.

Agriculture

Agriculture experienced a continuous decline in its share of total employment throughout the study period. Although the sector continued to employ a substantial proportion of India's workforce, its contribution gradually reduced because of urbanization, industrialization, rising educational attainment, and migration toward non-farm activities.

Globalization increased competition in agricultural markets while simultaneously creating export opportunities for selected commercial crops. However, employment generation in agriculture remained limited due to increasing mechanization, fragmented landholdings, low productivity, climate-related risks, and declining profitability.

The gradual movement of labour from agriculture to manufacturing and services reflects India's structural transformation. However, the pace of labour absorption outside agriculture has not been sufficient to fully utilize the growing labour force.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing was expected to become the principal engine of employment generation following economic liberalization. Increased FDI, trade openness, industrial reforms, and integration into global production networks stimulated industrial output and productivity.

However, the findings indicate that manufacturing employment did not increase proportionately with industrial growth. Several industries adopted automation, robotics, computer-controlled machinery, and labour-saving technologies to remain internationally competitive. Consequently, employment growth remained relatively modest despite substantial increases in production.

Government initiatives such as "Make in India," Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, industrial corridors, and infrastructure development have improved manufacturing investment in recent years. These policies have begun generating employment in sectors such as electronics, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, and mobile phone manufacturing. Nevertheless, the long-term employment impact of these initiatives will depend upon continued investment, labour-intensive industrial expansion, and skill availability.

Services

Among all sectors, services emerged as the largest beneficiary of globalization. Information technology, software exports, business process outsourcing (BPO), financial services, telecommunications, healthcare, education, hospitality, logistics, e-commerce, and digital platforms experienced remarkable growth.

The IT and IT-enabled services sector positioned India as an important global outsourcing destination, generating millions of direct and indirect employment opportunities. Expansion of digital services also created employment for professionals possessing technical, managerial, communication, and analytical skills.

However, service-sector employment has been characterized by considerable heterogeneity. While high-skilled occupations experienced rapid wage growth and stable employment, many low-skilled service jobs remained informal, contractual, and vulnerable.

Foreign Direct Investment and Employment

FDI emerged as one of the major channels through which globalization influenced employment generation. Increased foreign investment introduced advanced technology, modern management practices, higher productivity, and improved industrial competitiveness.

FDI generated employment directly through establishment of new production facilities and indirectly through supplier networks, transportation, construction, logistics, marketing, and ancillary industries. States that attracted larger volumes of FDI generally experienced higher industrial growth and better employment performance.

However, the employment impact varied considerably across sectors. Labour-intensive industries generated larger employment multipliers than capital-intensive industries. High-technology investments often increased productivity without proportionate increases in labour demand.

Technological Advancement and Employment

Technology has become both an opportunity and a challenge for employment generation. Digitalization, automation, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, cloud computing, and advanced manufacturing technologies have improved productivity, efficiency, and global competitiveness. Simultaneously, these technological changes have altered occupational structures by reducing demand for routine manual jobs while increasing demand for highly skilled workers.

The findings indicate increasing labour market polarization. Highly educated workers benefited from expanding opportunities in knowledge-intensive industries, whereas workers with limited education experienced greater employment insecurity.

The rapid growth of platform-based employment, freelancing, gig work, and digital entrepreneurship illustrates new employment opportunities created by technological globalization. However, these forms of employment frequently lack social security, employment protection, and long-term income stability.

Skill Development and Labour Market Reforms

The review demonstrates that skill development has become one of the most critical determinants of employment generation under globalization.

Government programmes aimed at vocational education, digital literacy, entrepreneurship development, apprenticeship training, and industry-linked skill development have attempted to improve workforce employability.

Nevertheless, a considerable skill gap persists between labour market requirements and workforce capabilities. Employers increasingly demand technical competencies, digital literacy, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and continuous learning capacity.

Similarly, labour market reforms have sought to simplify labour regulations, encourage formal employment, improve industrial flexibility, and enhance ease of doing business. While these reforms may encourage investment, balancing labour flexibility with worker protection remains essential for inclusive employment growth.

Formal and Informal Employment

The findings reveal that informal employment continues to dominate India's labour market despite three decades of globalization.

Many workers remain engaged in casual labour, self-employment, small enterprises, and informal service activities without adequate social protection. Although globalization expanded formal employment in selected sectors, a substantial proportion of new employment continues to be generated in informal occupations.

Subcontracting, outsourcing, temporary contracts, and gig employment have increased labour market flexibility but also created concerns regarding income security, occupational safety, and social welfare coverage.

Regional Disparities

The employment benefits of globalization have not been evenly distributed across Indian states. States possessing stronger infrastructure, better educational institutions, improved governance, industrial clusters, and favourable investment environments attracted greater domestic and foreign investment. Consequently, they experienced faster employment growth compared with relatively less developed regions.

Regional inequality therefore remains an important policy concern requiring balanced industrial development and infrastructure expansion across states.

Post-Pandemic Recovery and Emerging Trends

The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily disrupted employment across almost all sectors. Manufacturing, tourism, hospitality, construction, transport, and informal services experienced substantial employment losses.

However, India's recovery has been supported by digital transformation, increasing exports, manufacturing incentives, infrastructure investment, startup ecosystems, and global diversification of supply chains.

Emerging trends indicate that digital trade, green industries, renewable energy, semiconductor manufacturing, electronics production, logistics modernization, artificial intelligence, and global value chains will increasingly shape employment generation in the coming decade.

At the same time, future employment growth will depend less on globalization alone and more on the country's ability to enhance human capital, technological adaptation, innovation, institutional quality, and labour market resilience.

IX. Major Findings

The study generates the following major findings:

1. Globalization significantly accelerated India's economic growth after 1991 but employment growth remained slower than output growth, resulting in declining employment elasticity.
2. Employment generation shifted from agriculture toward manufacturing and especially the services sector, confirming structural transformation of the Indian economy.

3. The services sector emerged as the largest source of employment expansion due to growth in information technology, financial services, telecommunications, logistics, healthcare, education, and digital industries.
4. Manufacturing productivity increased considerably; however, widespread adoption of capital-intensive technologies limited employment creation.
5. Foreign direct investment contributed positively to industrial development, technology transfer, exports, and indirect employment generation, although employment effects differed across industries.
6. Technological advancement simultaneously created new employment opportunities while replacing routine occupations, increasing demand for skilled labour.
7. Skill development has become an essential requirement for benefiting from globalization, yet significant skill mismatches continue to constrain employment generation.
8. Informal employment continues to account for the majority of total employment despite expansion of organized sectors.
9. Regional disparities in employment generation remain significant because globalization has disproportionately benefited economically advanced states.
10. Government initiatives such as Make in India, Skill India, Digital India, Startup India, labour reforms, and PLI schemes have strengthened employment potential but require sustained implementation for long-term impact.
11. Emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, digital platforms, and global value chains are redefining employment structures, making continuous reskilling increasingly important.
12. Sustainable employment generation under globalization requires coordinated policies integrating education, industrial development, technological innovation, labour market reforms, and social protection.

X. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following policy recommendations are proposed:

1. Greater emphasis should be placed on labour-intensive manufacturing industries such as textiles, food processing, leather products, furniture, toys, renewable energy equipment, and agro-processing to maximize employment generation.
2. Skill development programmes should be continuously updated to match changing industry requirements in artificial intelligence, automation, digital technologies, advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, and data analytics.
3. The quality of education should be strengthened through stronger collaboration among universities, technical institutions, industries, and vocational training centres.
4. Government policies should encourage balanced regional industrial development by improving infrastructure, logistics, digital connectivity, and investment incentives in economically backward regions.

5. Small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) should receive easier access to finance, technology, export promotion, and digital transformation support because they generate substantial employment.
6. Labour market reforms should promote both industrial competitiveness and adequate protection of workers through improved social security, occupational safety, minimum wages, and employment benefits.
7. Formalization of employment should be accelerated through simplified regulatory procedures, digital registration systems, tax incentives, and expansion of social insurance coverage.
8. Greater investment should be directed toward research, innovation, entrepreneurship, startup ecosystems, and technology commercialization to generate high-quality employment opportunities.
9. Policies promoting green industries, renewable energy, circular economy activities, climate-resilient infrastructure, and sustainable manufacturing should be prioritized as future employment generators.
10. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of employment outcomes associated with FDI, PLI schemes, labour reforms, and industrial policies should be undertaken to improve policy effectiveness.
11. Digital inclusion should be strengthened by expanding internet access, digital literacy, and technological infrastructure in rural and semi-urban areas to reduce employment inequalities.
12. A comprehensive national employment strategy integrating globalization, industrial policy, technological advancement, education, and social protection should be developed to ensure inclusive and sustainable employment generation.

XI. Conclusion

The study concludes that globalization has fundamentally transformed India's employment landscape during the period 1991–2026. While economic liberalization substantially accelerated economic growth, enhanced productivity, expanded international trade, attracted foreign investment, and strengthened India's global competitiveness, its employment outcomes have been uneven across sectors and population groups. The service sector has emerged as the primary engine of employment growth, whereas manufacturing has generated fewer jobs than anticipated because of increasing capital intensity and automation. Agriculture continues to experience declining employment shares without adequate labour absorption into productive non-farm sectors. Furthermore, technological transformation, digitalization, and artificial intelligence are reshaping labour demand by increasing the importance of higher-order skills and continuous workforce adaptation.

The evidence therefore suggests that globalization alone cannot guarantee broad-based employment generation. The quality and inclusiveness of employment depend on complementary

policies that promote labour-intensive industrialization, high-quality education, skill development, innovation, formalization of employment, balanced regional development, and effective social protection. India's demographic dividend can become a major source of sustainable economic growth only if employment policies evolve alongside technological and global economic changes. A balanced policy framework that combines competitiveness with inclusiveness will enable globalization to serve as a catalyst for productive, equitable, and resilient employment generation in the decades ahead.

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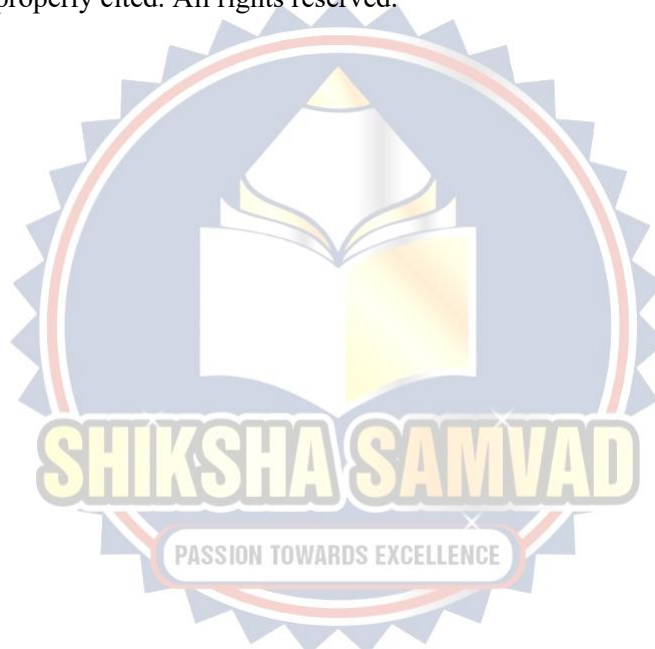
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