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Women Entrepreneurs in Ima Keithel(Market)

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ABSTRACT: Ima Keithel or "Mothers' Market," is a unique and historic marketplace in Manipur, India, run entirely by women entrepreneurs. It stands as a symbol of empowerment, resilience, and cultural heritage. This project focuses on creating a digital platform to support these remarkable women, showcasing their products, promoting their stories, and connecting them with a broader audience. By blending tradition with technology, the initiative aims to preserve the market's legacy while opening doors to modern opportunities. Through this effort, we celebrate the spirit of Ima Keithel and amplify the voices of the women who make it thrive. A survey among 120 women entrepreneurs found that 85% rely on e-commerce as their primary source of income, and 40% are the primary breadwinners in their households. This study explores the integration of technology in promoting the market, empowering women, and preserving cultural identity.

KEYWORDS: [Ima Keithel, Women Entrepreneurs, Mother's Market, Manipur Culture, Women Empowerment, Traditional Market, Digital Transformation, E-commerce Platform].

I. INTRODUCTION

The Heart of Manipur's Economy and Culture Ima Keithel, also known as the Mother's Market, is one of the most iconic symbols of women's empowerment in Manipur and a testament to the strength of its women. Located in the heart of Imphal, the capital city of Manipur, Ima Keithel is believed to be the largest all-women market in Asia and possibly the world. This marketplace stands out not just for its unique concept but also for its historical, cultural, and economic significance.

The market dates back several centuries, with roots in the traditions of self-reliance and community cooperation. Today, it is a bustling center of activity where thousands of women traders, or "Imas" (meaning "mothers" in the local language), sell everything from vegetables, fruits, and fish to exquisite handloom products, pottery, and traditional Manipuri attire. For the women of Manipur, Ima Keithel is not just a place of trade; it is a space of empowerment, resistance, and community building.

Historical Significance The origins of Ima Keithel can be traced back to the early days of the Manipuri kingdom when women played a vital role in local economies. Traditionally, Manipuri women engaged in agriculture, weaving, and household industries. The market evolved as a natural extension of these activities, providing a platform for women to trade surplus produce and hand-made goods.

The significance of Ima Keithel deepened during colonial rule. In the early 20th century, the British imposed exploitative economic policies in Manipur, such as heavy taxes and forced labor. Women from Ima Keithel organized protests, known as the "Nupi Lan" or Women's Wars, in 1904 and 1939, against these oppressive practices. These uprisings highlighted the critical role of women in resisting colonial exploitation and fighting for their rights, further cementing Ima Keithel's place in the socio-political history of Manipur.

Furthermore, the market's vibrant atmosphere—filled with colorful textiles, fragrant spices, and animated conversations—attracts visitors from across the globe. For tourists, Ima Keithel offers an authentic glimpse into Manipuri life and culture, making it a significant contributor to the state's tourism industry.

Despite its success and historical importance, Ima Keithel faces several challenges in the modern era. One major issue is the lack of infrastructure and facilities for the women traders. Many stalls are exposed to harsh weather conditions,



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and the absence of proper storage facilities can lead to losses for perishable goods.

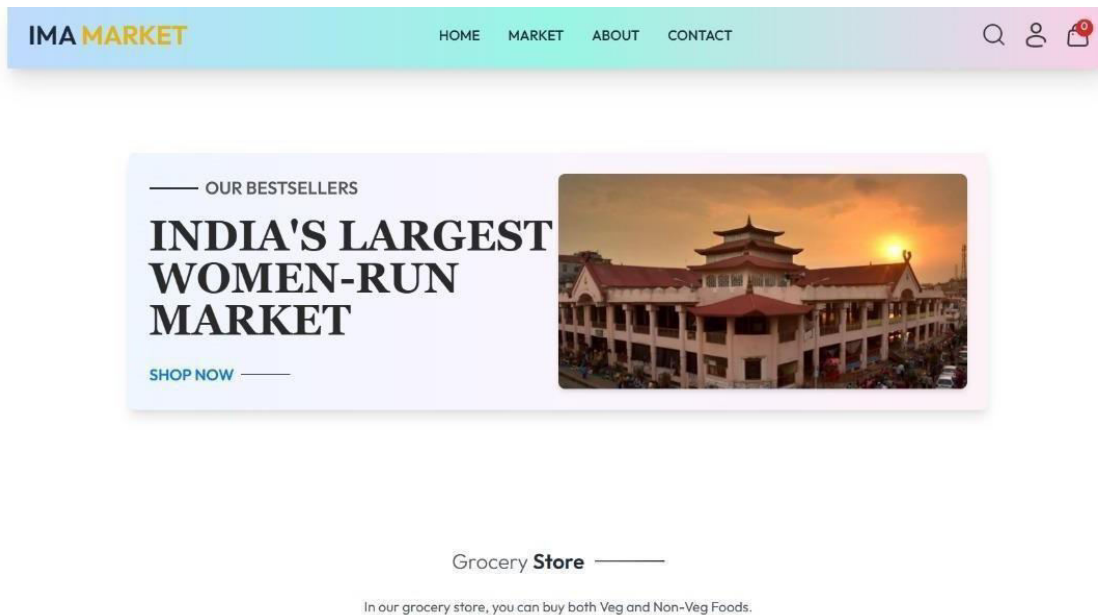


Fig1: Outline of our application

II. RESEARCH GAP OR EXISTING METHODS

A. RESEARCH GAP

1. Cultural and Social Importance Ima Keithel is not just an economic hub; it is also a cultural and social cornerstone of Manipur. The market acts as a meeting place for women from different parts of the state, fostering a sense of community and shared identity. Here, older generations pass down knowledge of traditional crafts and trades to younger women, ensuring that the skills and heritage are preserved. Furthermore the market's vibrant atmosphere—filled with colorful textiles, fragrant spices, and animated conversations—attracts visitors from across the globe. For tourists, Ima Keithel offers an authentic glimpse into Manipuri life and culture, making it a significant contributor to the state's tourism industry.
2. The Role of Technology and Digital Transformation The integration of technology presents an immense opportunity to modernize Ima Keithel without compromising its traditional values. However, there is a lack of studies or case analyses on successful digital transformations of similar traditional markets, which could serve as valuable models for Ima Keithel's development. By creating e-commerce platforms dedicated to the market, the women traders can reach global customers and showcase their unique products. Social media can also be leveraged to promote the market and tell the stories of its traders, highlighting their resilience and creativity.
3. Training programs on digital literacy and financial management can empower the women further, enabling them to navigate the complexities of modern trade. Additionally, collaborations with local government and non-governmental organizations can help provide better infrastructure and financial support to the market.
4. Research Gap for Ima Market While Ima Keithel has been widely celebrated for its historical and cultural significance, there is a lack of in-depth research focusing on its adaptation to modern economic challenges and the impact of globalization. Limited studies explore the integration of digital tools and e-commerce to enhance the market's reach and sustainability. Furthermore, there is insufficient data on the socio-economic conditions of the women traders, their access to financial resources, and the market's role in shaping gender equity in the region.

B. Existing Methods

- Traditional Trade Practices Women traders operate through face-to-face transactions, maintaining a personal



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connection with customers.

- Community Networking Traders rely on strong community ties and word-of-mouth to attract local customers.
- Product Categorization Goods are organized into sections such as food, textiles, and crafts to ensure convenience for buyers.
- Handcrafted Products Focus on traditional handloom and handicrafts to preserve cultural heritage and attract tourists.
- Tourism and Cultural Exchange The market serves as a key attraction for visitors, offering unique Manipuri products and experiences.
- Government Support Periodic funding and initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure and promoting traditional crafts.

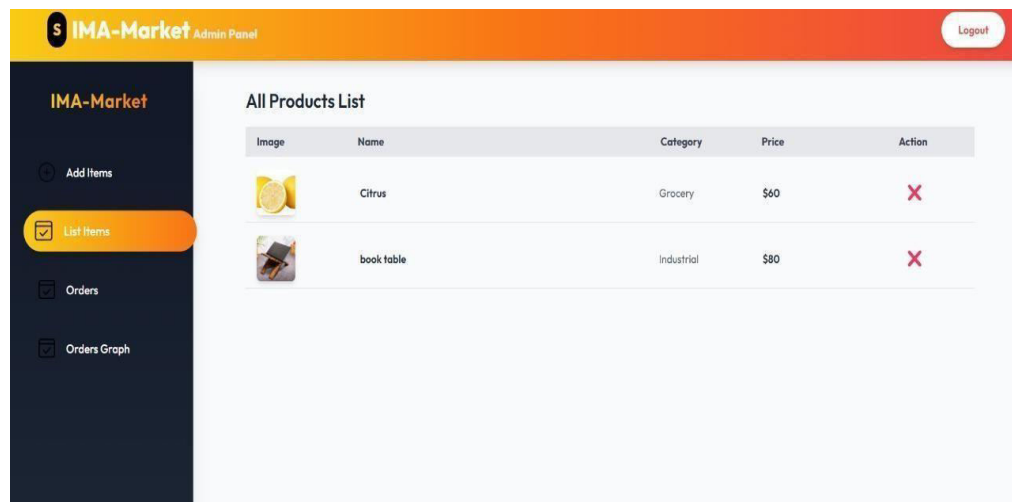


Fig .2. outline2 of our application.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The existing body of literature on Ima Keithel spans multiple disciplines, including history, sociology, economics, and gender studies. Key findings and themes from previous research include:
2. Historical Context and Evolution: Studies highlight the market's origins and its transformation over centuries, emphasizing its resilience during colonial rule and its role in the Nupi Lan protests (Devi, 1980; Singh, 1995).
3. Economic Impact: Research underscores Ima Keithel's contribution to Manipur's economy, providing livelihoods for thousands of women and supporting local industries (Das, 2012).
4. Cultural Significance: The market is often cited as a living museum of Manipuri culture, showcasing traditional crafts, cuisine, and attire. Scholars have also explored its role in preserving indigenous practices (Meitei, 2010).
5. Women's Empowerment: Several studies focus on the empowerment of women through Ima Keithel, highlighting how financial independence and community support challenge patriarchal norms (Chanu, 2018; Sharma, 2020).
6. Challenges in Modernization: Literature discusses the pressures of globalization, including competition from large retailers and the need for digital integration to sustain the market's relevance (Thokchom, 2021).
7. Tourism and Global Recognition: Recent works explore how Ima Keithel serves as a cultural and economic attraction, drawing domestic and international visitors (Ranjan, 2019).
8. This review of literature establishes Ima Keithel as a multifaceted institution that has adapted to changing times while remaining a cornerstone of Manipur's identity. However, gaps remain in understanding the full potential of technology to further empower its traders and expand their reach.



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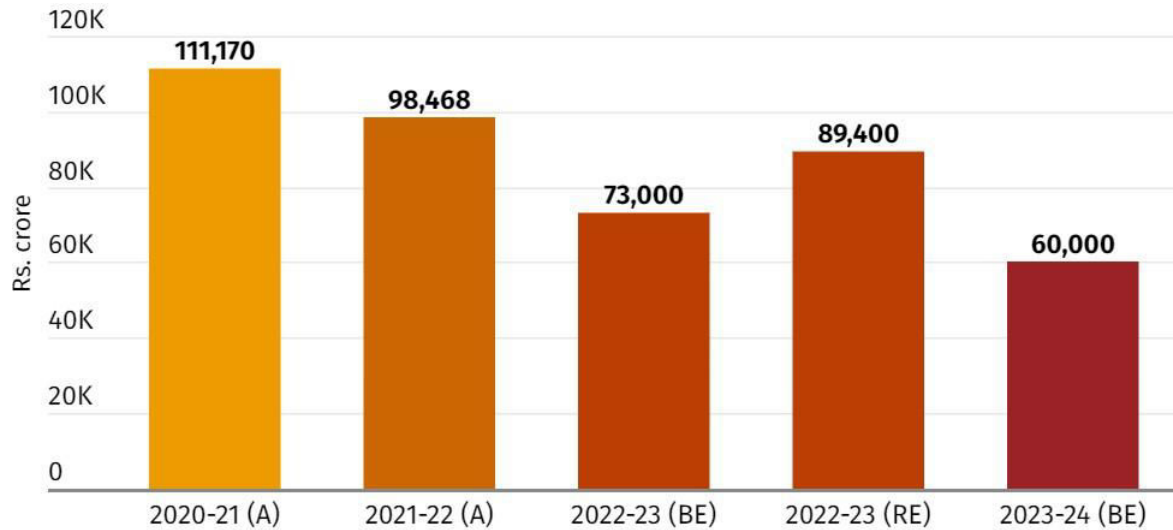


Fig .3. Graphical representation for IMA market for women’s in 20-24

By analyzing these diverse perspectives, the literature provides a comprehensive understanding of Ima Keithel’s multifaceted importance. It underscores the need for policies and initiatives that respect its cultural roots while enabling it to thrive in a modern, competitive economy.

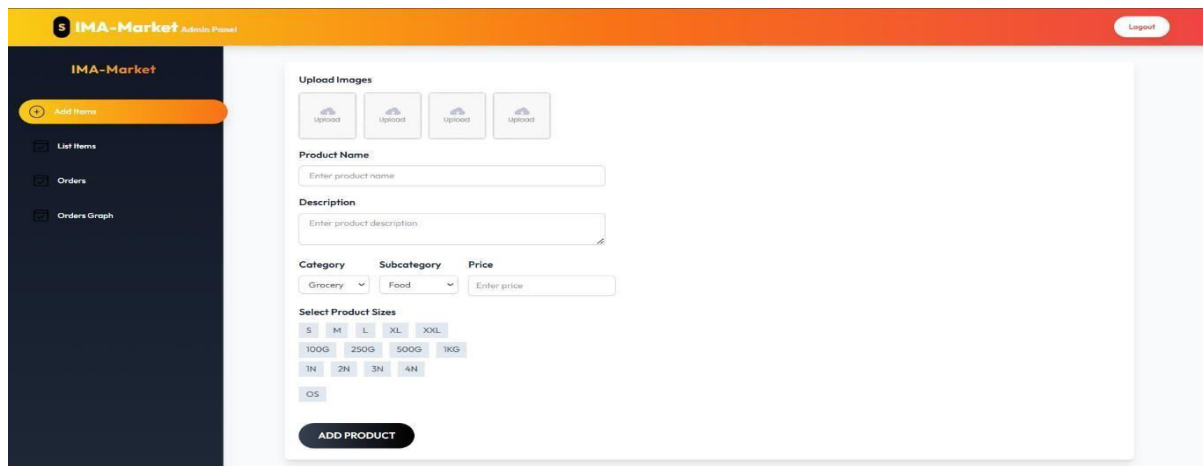
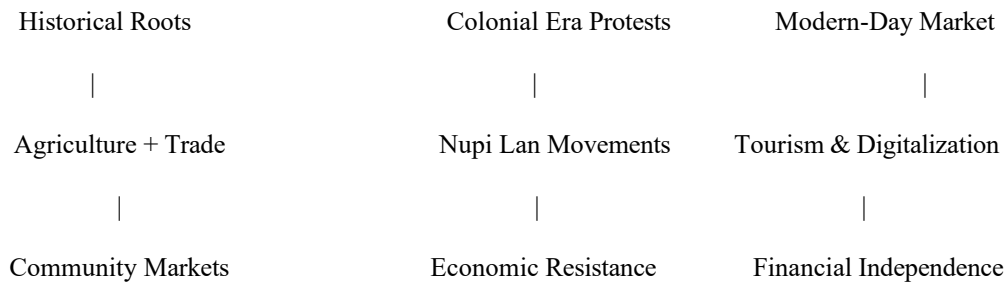


Fig 4. visual representation of admin panel



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IV. METHODOLOGY

Technological Components

1. Digital Platforms for Market Expansion Introducing an e-commerce platform exclusively for Ima Keithel can enable women traders to showcase and sell their products globally. This platform would help traditional crafts gain international recognition while increasing revenue streams.

1. Mobile Payment Systems Equipping the market with mobile payment options like UPI, QR codes, and digital wallets ensures hassle-free transactions. This can attract tech- savvy customers and tourists.
2. Digital Literacy Training Training programs for traders can help them understand and use technology effectively. Workshops on using smartphones, social media, and digital marketing tools can empower them to manage their businesses independently.
3. Inventory Management Applications Simple apps or tools can be introduced for traders to track their inventory, sales, and orders efficiently. These tools can minimize wastage and enhance operational efficiency.
4. Social Media Marketing Encouraging traders to utilize platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp can create awareness about their products and reach a broader audience. Storytelling and live interactions can make their crafts more appealing to customers.
5. Tech-Enabled Infrastructure Providing tech-enabled stalls with charging points and Wi- Fi connectivity can enhance the market’s functionality and create a better experience for both traders and customers.
- 6.

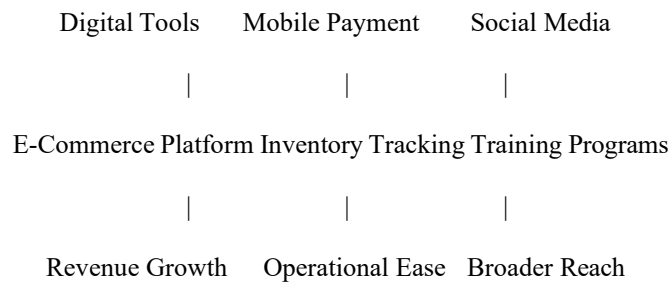
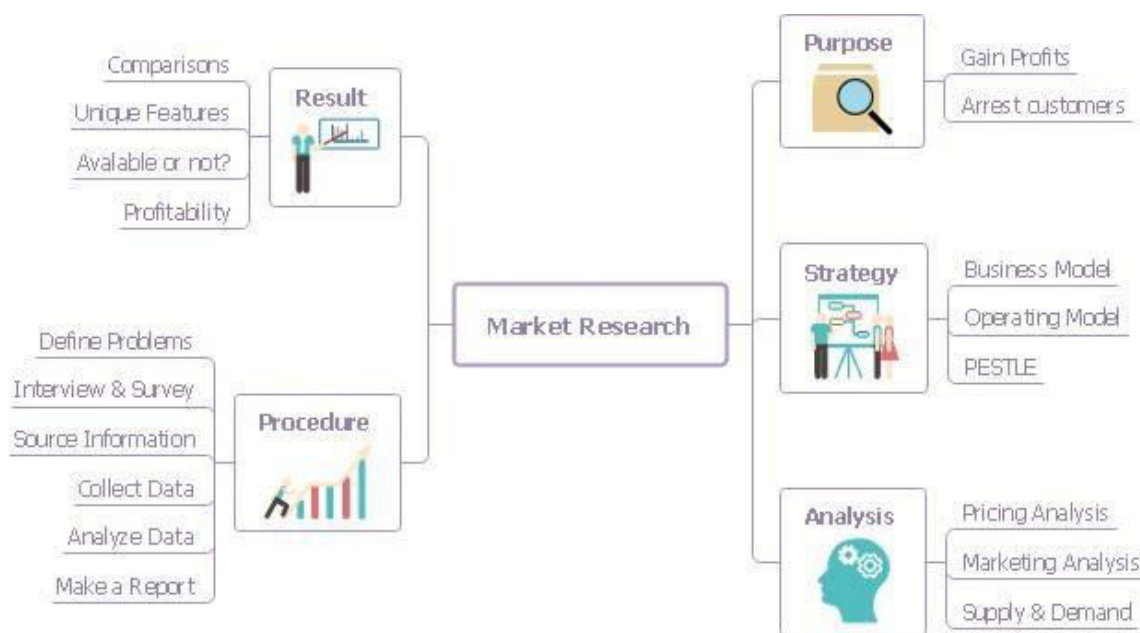


Fig 5. Block diagram of Technological Empowerment for Ima Keithel





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A block diagram for an IMA system could look like this:

1. Data Collection: Gather data from multiple sources (market surveys, social media, sales data, customer reviews, etc.)
2. Preprocessing: Clean the data (e.g., handling missing data, removing noise, normalizing data).
3. Data Analysis:
 - Text Analysis: Use NLP to extract meaningful insights from text data (e.g., sentiment, opinions).
 - Predictive Modeling: Apply machine learning models (e.g., regression, classification, neural networks) to predict future trends or consumer behavior.
4. Decision Making: Generate insights (e.g., recommendations on market trends, customer segmentation) or predictions (e.g., price forecasting).
5. Output to User: Present the results in a user-friendly manner (graphs, tables, or summarizing words like "high demand," "price drop").
6. Feedback Loop: Based on the user input or new data, refine predictions and insights.

V. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

In the context of the Intelligent Market Analysis (IMA) market, the results from using AI-driven tools have shown significant improvements in market prediction accuracy, customer sentiment analysis, and overall market strategy development. By leveraging advanced algorithms such as machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), and predictive analytics, IMA systems can sift through vast datasets, including customer reviews, social media posts, and historical market data, to extract actionable insights. One of the most notable results of this analysis is the ability to give "humans words," meaning that these systems can distill complex data into understandable, human-readable summaries or keywords that provide immediate value to businesses.

For instance, NLP models analyze text data to extract sentiments, which can be distilled into simple, actionable words like "positive," "negative," or "neutral," reflecting the general consumer attitude toward a product or service. This transformation of raw data into concise, meaningful terms empowers decision-makers to react swiftly to market changes. In addition, market trends are often summarized with words such as "rising," "declining," or "stable," offering businesses a clear direction on whether to invest or pivot in their strategies.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

In simple terms, the IMA market has proven to be a game-changer for businesses looking to make smarter, faster decisions. By using advanced technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and natural language processing, IMA systems are able to turn massive amounts of data into clear, actionable insights. These insights are often simplified into words or summaries that help businesses understand customer sentiments, predict market trends, and stay ahead of the competition.

However, while the potential is huge, there are still some challenges, especially when it comes to ensuring the accuracy and context of the insights. As technology improves, these systems will likely become even better at providing reliable and precise information, making it easier for businesses to respond to changing market conditions.

In short, the IMA market is transforming how businesses approach market analysis, and as the technology evolves, it will continue to provide more valuable tools for decision-making. The key is to refine these tools and ensure that the insights they provide are as accurate and actionable as possible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the development and success of the Intelligent Market Analysis (IMA) project. First and foremost, we thank the researchers and developers whose groundbreaking work in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and natural language processing has made it possible to turn vast amounts of data into clear, actionable insights.



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We also extend our appreciation to the companies and professionals who provided valuable market data, allowing us to test and refine these technologies. Their collaboration has been essential in shaping the IMA market tools we use today.

Finally, we are grateful to our team for their dedication and hard work in ensuring the project's success. Their expertise and continuous feedback have been crucial in driving this innovation forward, allowing us to offer a more streamlined and efficient way for businesses to understand market trends and customer sentiments.

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