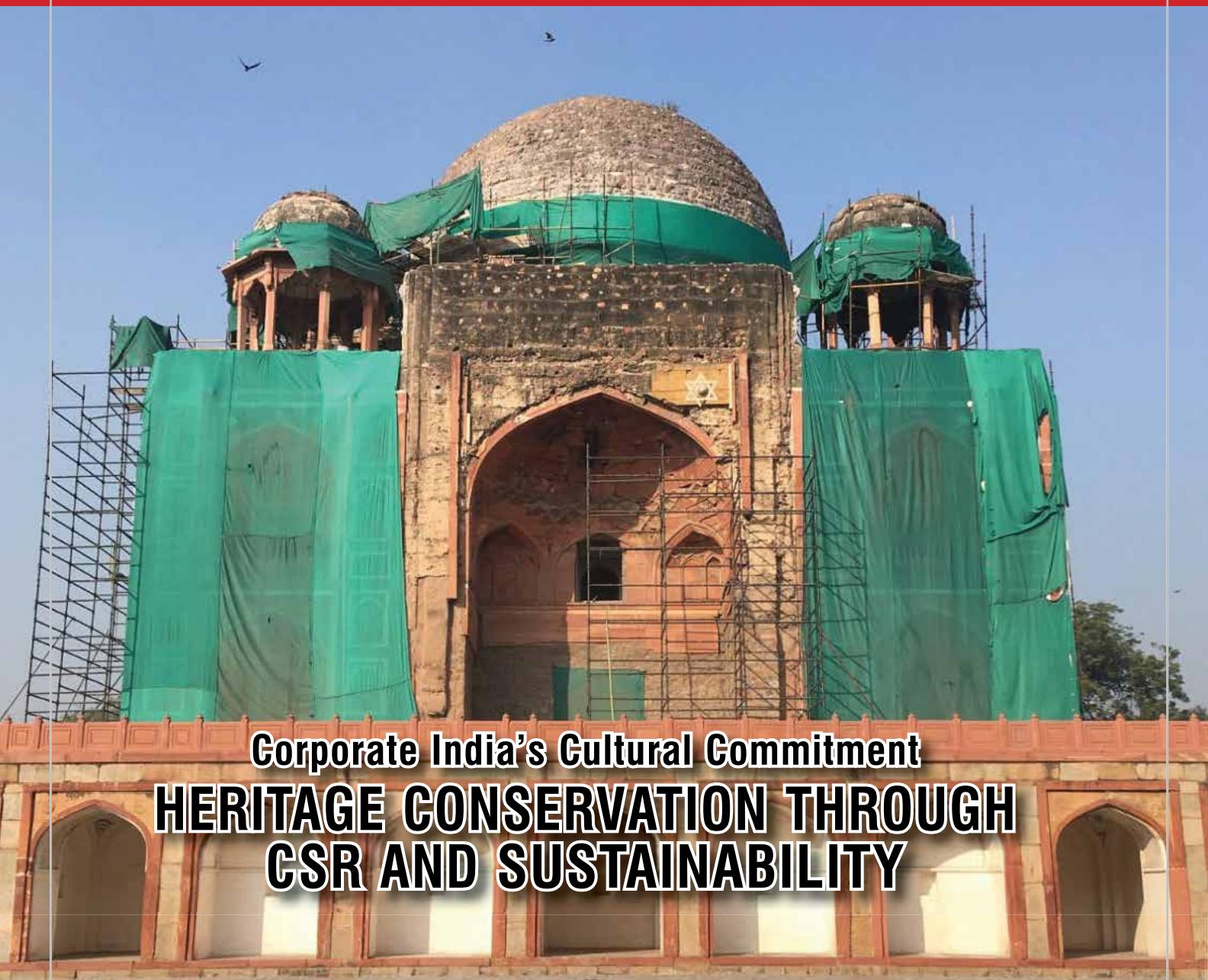


CSR TIMES

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INDIA'S NO. 1 CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MAGAZINE



Corporate India's Cultural Commitment
**HERITAGE CONSERVATION THROUGH
CSR AND SUSTAINABILITY**



**HARNESSING
CREATIVITY: A PATH TO
BETTER MENTAL
HEALTH AND INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITIES**



**FROM TRASH TO
TREASURE: HOW
ECO-ART
IS REIMAGINING
WASTE AS WONDER**



**DIWALI AND THE
AIR WE BREATHE:
A FESTIVAL'S
CALL FOR ECO-
CONSCIOUSNESS**

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PRASHANT DAS
EDITOR

Art also heals. As we mark World Mental Health Day this month, we spotlight how painting, music, and storytelling serve as therapy—especially for those navigating trauma, isolation, or stress. In a world that often feels fragmented, art offers connection, compassion, and coherence.

Art, Culture, and Heritage of India — Symbolising India's Progress

In a nation as ancient and diverse as India, art is not merely an aesthetic pursuit—it is a living testament to our civilisational journey. From the intricate carvings of Khajuraho to the vibrant strokes of Madhubani, from the soulful strains of Hindustani classical music to the kinetic energy of street art, India's cultural expressions have always mirrored its evolution. Today, as we stride into the future, these traditions are not relics—they are catalysts of progress.

India's heritage is vast, layered, and resilient. It has survived invasions, migrations, and modernisation, not by resisting change but by absorbing it. Our temples and forts, our textiles and terracotta, our dance forms and dialects—all carry the imprint of centuries of adaptation. In this sense, heritage is not static—it is dynamic, and deeply democratic.

What makes this October issue especially timely is the convergence of cultural celebration and social responsibility. Corporates like JSW Foundation, Infosys Foundation, and Tata Trusts are not just funding conservation—they are redefining it. By supporting artisans, restoring monuments, and digitising archives, they are ensuring that heritage becomes a shared asset, not a forgotten legacy.

Art also heals. As we mark World Mental Health Day this month, we spotlight how painting, music, and storytelling serve as therapy—especially for those navigating trauma, isolation, or stress. In a world that often feels fragmented, art offers connection, compassion, and coherence.

India's progress cannot be measured by GDP alone. It must be seen in the revival of folk art, the preservation of endangered dialects, the globalisation of yoga, and the respectful showcasing of our traditions on international platforms. As we enter the festive season, let us remember: our culture is not just our past—it is our promise. A promise to honour diversity, celebrate creativity, and build a future where progress is rooted in identity.

Let this issue be a tribute to that promise.

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PERSPECTIVE



India's legacy is a timeless blend of the vibrant hues of art, culture, and heritage. Not just constituted by remnants and relics of the past, the Indian identity is forged with the fluidity of a living and breathing identity.

A close look at each mural, melody, monument, and motif would reveal a civilizational journey deeply rooted in its origins yet one that remains unbroken and constant, a journey that continues to evolve and progress.

The wide Indian canvas is painted with the wonder of intricate carvings of Khajuraho, the melodious rhythmic beats of Kathakali, the poetic hues of Madhubani paintings to the vibrant energy of tribal dance forms. India's cultural landscape celebrates a unique combination of distinct fields promoting multiplicity. Its mega saga is dotted with stories of resilience—of communities that have maintained their uniqueness by preserving their traditions through centuries of change—retaining their identity and regional uniqueness yet showing no hesitation in blending seamlessly into the broader national spirit.

The Indian heritage has recently received a new lease of life, donning a new robe that is embellished with eco-art, sustainable craft practices, and digital preservation efforts. In keeping with the spirit of progress, the artists and curators are collaborating to combine traditional wisdom with modern sensibilities, ensuring that cultural continuity aligns with environmental and technological progress. With digital as the new reality, initiatives in digital heritage documentation and virtual museums are unveiling India's cultural treasures to the world.

The uniqueness of the Indian spirit which reflects brilliantly in India's rich cultural narrative is its extraordinary ability to adapt while retaining authenticity. Displaying a winning combination of tradition and modernity on one hand, a centuries-old temple is restored using traditional materials while on the other a digital exhibition of indigenous crafts is showcased. While the soul of India's artistry remains intact and unchanged, it is constant—creative, inclusive, and timeless.

For the citizens of India progress comes with the dual responsibility of celebrating the legacy and also protecting it. India's cultural persona shines as a guiding light exemplifying the beautiful coexistence of progress and tradition. Underscoring the importance of harmony, that can add depth and enrich humanity's collective story.

Dr Shabnam Asthana

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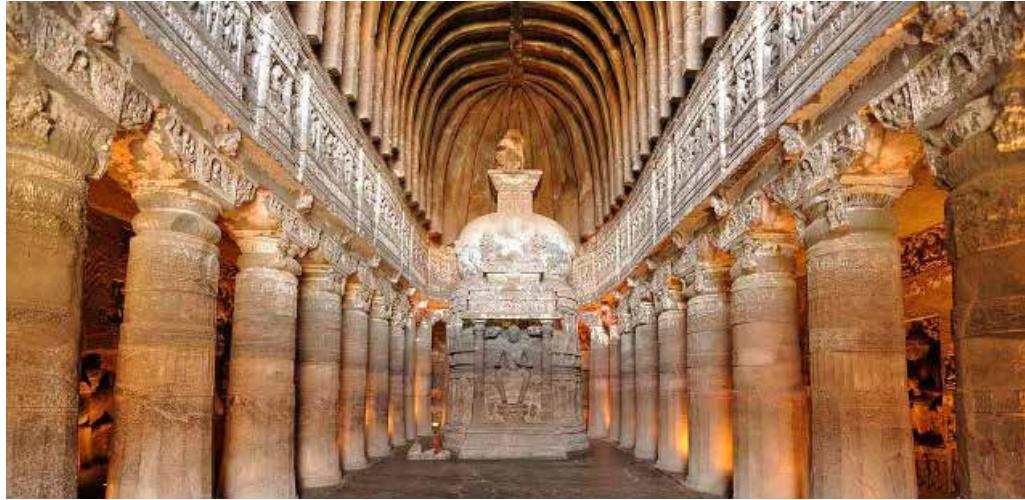
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World Mental Health Day: Raising Awareness and Building a Compassionate Society



DR. SHABNAM ASTHANA



October 10th, each year comes as a timely reminder to humanity to observe World Mental Health Day. This day also issues an unwritten mandatory acceptance of the fact that mental health is not to be viewed as a luxury but as a fundamental component of human well-being. This day gives a clarion call for action, compassion and collective responsibility.

The 2025 theme "Mental Health is a Universal Human Right," emphasizes this objective, urging individuals, organizations and governments to facilitate access, understanding and empathy in all walks of life.

In recent years, much progress has been made in understanding mental health, and it has been widely discussed, yet it still occupies a paradoxical space, where despite this it is

still deeply misunderstood. There is a stigma attached to mental health conversations that prevents people from seeking help in times of need.

The recent pandemic years took a heavy toll on the mental health and resilience of individuals. It exposed the fragility of the human mind and its accompanying emotions. Mental health became a subject for boardroom discussions, policy debates and

most importantly household concern. Realization dawned on us though, that mere awareness is not enough. We need to translate our empathy to deliver results through sustained societal action.

The Increasing Need for Awareness

A World Health Organization study reveals that depression affects over 280 million people globally, while a leading cause of death among young adults is attributed to suicide. While this is seen as alarming, there is a deeper chasm that sucks in individuals who suffer silently, or grapple with anxiety, loneliness, burnout, and trauma. In India, open discussions on mental health issues pose a strong challenge due to societal and familial pressures which often demand emotional restraint. The expression or acknowledgment of mental health challenges is still considered taboo and frequently masked as "fatigue," "nervousness," or even "weakness."

Therefore, there is a strong need to raise awareness and begin this by normalizing conversations. We should aim at the objective of humanizing the issue. A wide section of society including leaders, educators, public figures who have been subjected to mental health issues need to be vocal and speak about their experiences with stress and therapy.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives are very crucial in playing a transformative role in amplifying awareness about mental health issues. This can be done through long term engagement programs and not

merely token campaigns. The programs need to be well planned with a focus on integrating mental health into employee welfare, education and community development.

Comprehending Corporate Responsibility and Compassionate Leadership

In modern times, mental well-being is listed as a key determinant of productivity and retention. Yet it is still not given the importance it deserves. Many professionals still consider "Mental Health Day" as a small pause in their relentless schedule. The true significance of a compassionate work culture will commence when leaders prioritize empathy over efficiency, care over competition and conversation over command.

A recent notable development in the corporate scenario is of forward-thinking organizations investing in employee assistance, mental wellness workshops, counselling access and psychological safety protocols. These initiatives are no longer ornamental accessories, but strategic imperatives that sustain innovation and morale.

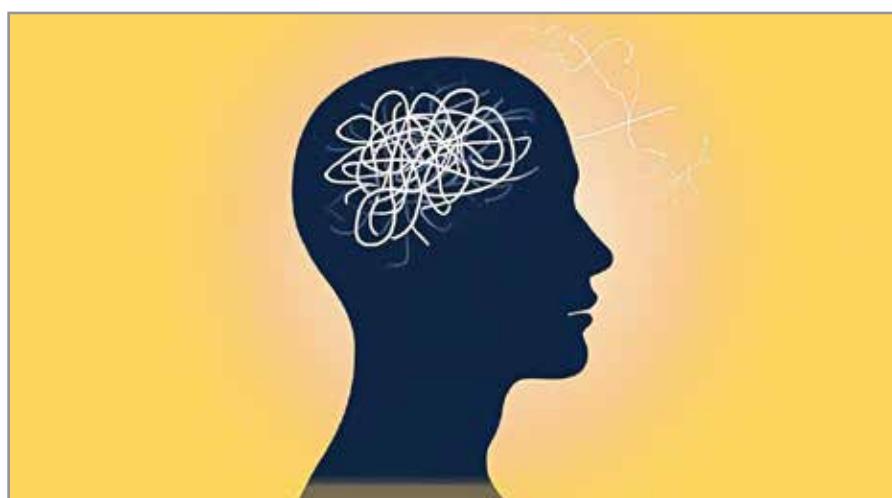
Mentally healthy employees are being viewed beyond being just productive resources to being creative, motivated and loyal contributors to organizational growth.

Transcending corporate boundaries and the office walls to move beyond its confines is what true CSR conversations must aim at. The offer of genuine support, through sponsorship awareness campaigns, partnering with NGOs that work in the area of mental health and providing easy access to underserved communities to affordable counselling will be the true benchmark of CSR efficacy.

When businesses realize that community well-being is an integral part of corporate success they will enact their role as real agents for social change with excellence.

Why building a Compassionate Society is important

An ideal and utopian society will be compassionate when compassion is regarded not as a soft virtue but as the foundation of social cohesion. A society that is compassionate is not



judgmental, offers support without pity, and stands together during times of crisis or struggle. So how does one build such a society? Education and early sensitization are imperative as building blocks. The school curriculum must include emotional literacy along with academics. It is equally important to educate and train parents, teachers and caregivers to recognize the early signs of distress and comprehend and respond in a prompt and rational manner instead of being critical and judgmental.

Communities must strive towards becoming safe spaces, both in the physical and digital sense. It should be a safe haven for individuals to express their vulnerabilities without fear of being criticized or social stigma attached. In modern times of social media overload, digital empathy is a scarce resource. The digital space is teeming with filtered reality that often amplifies feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. Practicing and encouraging digital empathy therefore becomes very crucial. Ongoing campaigns must not just form a checkbox in the list of CSR activities trending for a day or two but must develop and evolve after due discussion with thought leaders, experts, counsellors and citizen volunteers.

Contemplating the role of Policy and Governance

The Government has established important milestones like India's National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) and Tele-MANAS helpline. The success and effectiveness of these is hugely dependent on accessibility,

funding and social acceptance. The perspective of the policymakers needs to be broadened to accommodate mental health not as an expense but as an investment. This investment has the potential to impact national productivity, education outcomes and social harmony.

The rural area pockets where there is a limitation in terms of access and awareness need targeted interventions. The vital bridge and link between those who need mental health the most and mental support facilities are the community health workers and NGOs. This process can be further accelerated by Public-Private partnerships that combine the reach of the state with the efficiency of the corporate sector.

The crucial step from Awareness to Action

The first step in this mission is to generate awareness but that forms only a part of it, for true transformation to begin, it must be combined with the requisite action. Every individual has the capability regardless of what role or position he occupies to contribute to a mentally healthier world. Small gestures like encouraging someone to seek help, listening without interrupting can create profound impact.

Organizations must key in a system of measurable impact and mental impact must evolve from symbolic observance to that. Mental health metrics must be integrated into sustainability reports and supporting therapy access and funding community counselling centers must also be included.

The key responsibility of the

media lies in portraying mental illness with sensitivity and accuracy, debunking myths and countering fear or misunderstanding that arise out of stereotypes and mindsets that promote biases.

A Collaborative Effort and Shared Responsibility

A society's progress is ultimately measured by how it treats the most vulnerable and not by its GDP or technology. The journey on this path is not linear, one needs to infuse it with empathy, patience and courage. The important aspect is to begin with even one conversation, one initiative and an act of kindness and gradually multiply those to come closer to a world where no one suffers in silence.

This **World Mental Health Day**, would truly acquire its true meaning if we pledge to move beyond awareness to action, inclusion, and compassion. When we determine to take firm measures to create ecosystems – in families, schools, workplaces and communities that nurture and facilitate psychological safety and emotional growth we will be on the correct path of translating the true significance of this day for the common good.

This World Mental Health Day we must move beyond thinking of it just as a date on the calendar or an impersonal awareness event. We must consciously make a decision to shift our perspective and recognize and realize that mental well-being is a shared responsibility. The moment we do that; it stops being someone else's problem — and meaningful action begins with each of us!



UNGCNI Western Regional Convention 2025

SHAPING THE FUTURE WITH ESG, AI & INNOVATION

FROM DIALOGUE TO ACTION: UN GCNI GUIDES BUSINESSES TOWARD ESG EXCELLENCE

Shaping the Future with ESG, AI & Innovation: UN Global Compact Network India's Regional Convention Highlights Urgent Need for Sustainable Business Practices

The **UN Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI)**, the country's official arm of the **United Nations Global Compact (UNGC)**, successfully hosted its **Regional Convention – West** on October 10, 2025, themed "Shaping the Future with ESG, AI, and Innovation." The



landmark gathering brought together over 200 industry leaders, policymakers, and youth advocates to examine how ESG principles, artificial intelligence, and cutting-edge innovation can converge to drive progress toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The convention opened with a dynamic AI-powered video, celebrat-

ing the balance between technology and human welfare, followed by a welcome from **Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Verma, Vice President (West), UN GCNI and Head- Environment, Health & Safety, Grasim Industries Ltd (AM)**, emphasizing the urgency of collaboration to advance sustainable business practices.

Vaishali Nigam Sinha, President of UN GCNI and Co-Founder of Renew, addressed the audience virtually, underscoring the critical role of ESG, AI, and innovation in shap-



ing the global economy. She emphasized that **sustainability is no longer optional but central to business strategy**, urging companies and stakeholders to **double or triple efforts** to meet the **2030 SDG targets**. “*The time to act decisively is now; innovation and responsible practices must define the path forward*,” she stated, inspiring participants to integrate sustainability at the core of their operations.

Dr. Angela Lusigi, UNDP Resident Representative in India, delivered the inaugural address, stressing that **innovation must be human-centric, ethical, inclusive, and sustainable**. She shared a stark global perspective: only **17% of SDG targets are on track**, 35% are showing modest progress, and 47% are stagnating or reversing. “We must focus on environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and governance to drive meaningful change,” she urged, calling on businesses and stakeholders to **align innovation with ethical and sustainable practices**.

Prabhoda Acharya, Convenor of the Regional Convention and Chief Sustainability Officer, JSW Group, provided an overview of the event,

highlighting the **Western region's leadership in industrial and environmental transformation in India**. He emphasized the convention's goal of **fostering collaboration to accelerate SDG implementation through corporate action**, urging businesses, policymakers, and innovators to **work together to translate sustainability commitments into measurable impact**.

Ratnesh, Executive Director of UN GCNI, shared insights into the organization's 25-year journey, highlighting its growth from 44 founding companies in 2000 to over 20,000 participants across 167 countries. “This convention is a platform for fostering collaboration and accelerating progress toward sustainability goals,” he remarked.

Key Highlights:

- Innovation Meets ESG:** *Dr. Nitin Dumasaria, Treasurer, UN GCNI & Founder, Growlity Inc* highlighted India's ESG reporting gap, with only 1.32% of Environmental Product Disclosures (EPDs) reported, signaling a signifi-

cant opportunity for sustainable growth.

- Workshops & Labs:** The ESG Tech Lab led by *Mr. Prasanna Rao, from Nirantara Ecoventures Pvt. Ltd.* showcased AI applications in ESG, from predictive modeling for occupational health and safety to advanced data protection strategies, emphasizing **ethical and responsible AI**.
- Sustainable Finance:** Panels explored how financial institutions like **Kotak Mahindra Bank** and **IDFC First Bank** are integrating ESG into lending, with electric vehicle financing up 66%, demonstrating how **finance, AI, and sustainability intersect**.
- Green Chemistry & Carbon Capture:** Industry leaders from **UPL Limited** and **Veolia Carbon Clean India** shared breakthroughs in sustainable chemical practices and carbon capture technologies for hard-to-abate sectors.
- Empowering Youth:** Students from **Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation schools** demonstrated AI and robotics innovations, proving that **next-generation thinkers are already redesigning the future**.

The event concluded with inspiring addresses from *Ms. Jaivee Kagalwala, Young SDG Ambassador*, and *Mr. Alok Vijayvergiya, Group CSO, Hinduja Group*, who summarized the day in a poetic **call to action** for ethical innovation, conscious collaboration, and shared responsibility.

ONGC

ENERGY: Now AND Next



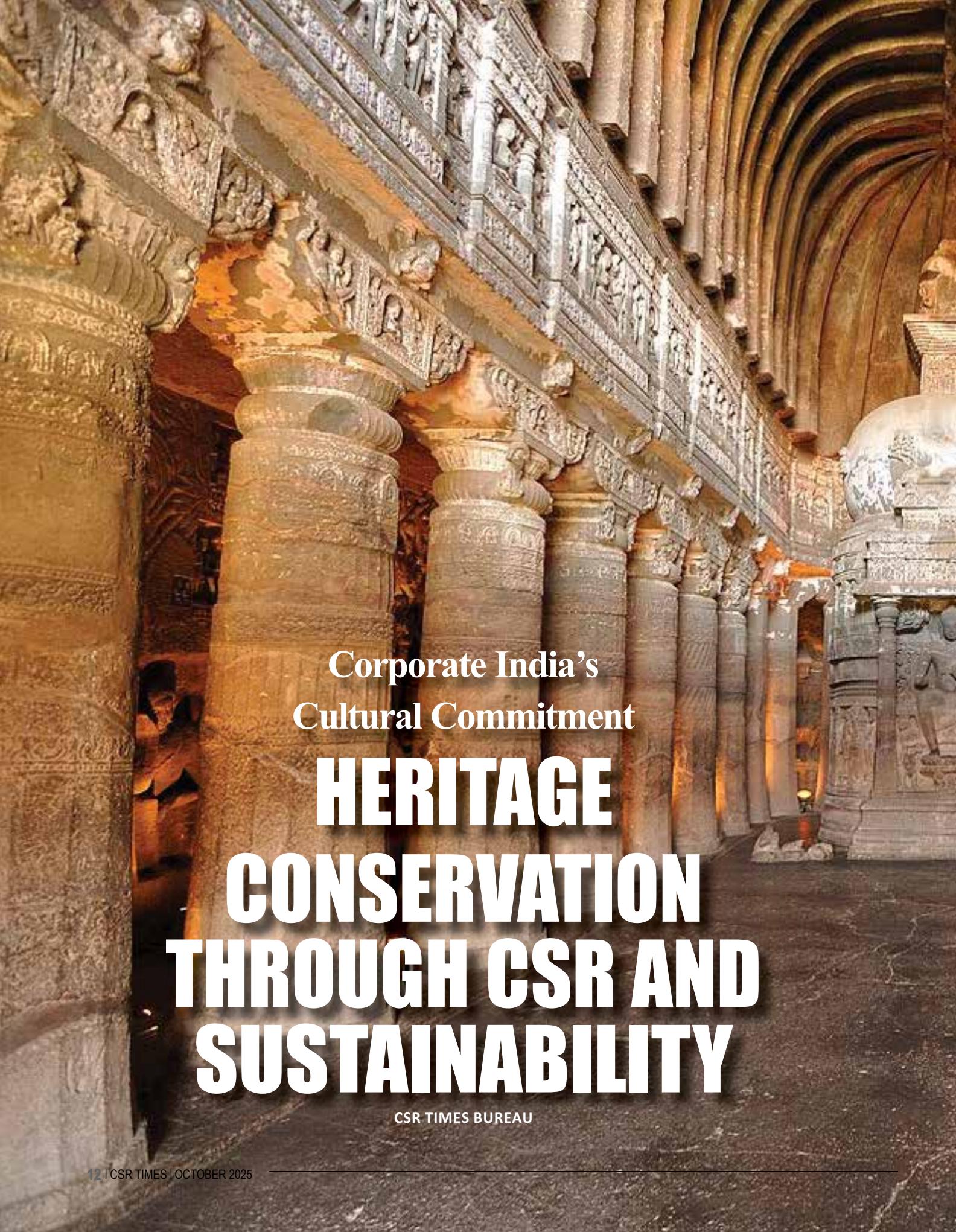
Innovating **Now**
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We are **ENERGY** Now and Next





Corporate India's
Cultural Commitment

HERITAGE CONSERVATION THROUGH CSR AND SUSTAINABILITY

CSR TIMES BUREAU



India's cultural heritage is not merely a collection of monuments, manuscripts, and melodies — it is the soul of the nation. From the sandstone forts of Rajasthan to the bamboo crafts of Assam, from the chants of Varanasi to the murals of Madhubani, India's heritage is vast, diverse, and deeply intertwined with its people. Yet, in the face of rapid urbanization, globalization, and climate change, this legacy is under threat. Fortunately, a new wave of corporate responsibility is helping preserve and promote India's cultural wealth.

Through **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** and sustainability initiatives, companies are investing in heritage conservation — not just as philanthropy, but as a strategic contribution to India's development goals, including the vision of *Viksit Bharat* by 2047. This article explores the significance of India's heritage, the role of corporates, the need for youth engagement, and the responsibilities of government and citizens in safeguarding this legacy.

Why Heritage Conservation Matters

India's heritage is both tangible — temples, forts, textiles — and intangible — music, dance, rituals, languages. It reflects centuries of innovation, resilience, and cultural exchange. Preserving this heritage is essential for several reasons:

- **Cultural Identity:** Heritage fosters a sense of belonging and pride, especially in a diverse nation like India.
- **Economic Value:** Cultural tourism, handicrafts, and heritage festivals generate employment and income, particularly in rural areas.
- **Sustainability:** Traditional practices often use eco-friendly materials and techniques, contributing to low-carbon development.
- **Social Inclusion:** Many heritage custodians belong to marginalized communities. Supporting them promotes equity and empowerment.
- **Education and Innovation:** Heritage inspires creativity and offers lessons in design, ecology, and community living.

As India moves toward its centennial of independence, heritage conservation must be part of the blueprint for *Viksit Bharat* — a future that is economically strong, culturally rooted, and socially inclusive.

JSW Foundation: Restoring Monuments, Reviving Communities

The JSW Foundation has emerged as a frontrunner in heritage conservation, combining architectural restoration with community development. JSW Group played a key role in restoring a historic Jewish temple, the 135-year-old Keneseth Eliyahoo synagogue in the Kala Ghoda area, more popularly known as the Blue Synagogue, in Mumbai. Their 20 months of relentless work helped return the monument to its original glory and vibrant color. In Hampi, Karnataka, JSW, in partnership with the Global Heritage Fund, supported the preservation of ancient temples and sculptures, like the Chandramaulleshwara Temple, Soumya Someshwar Temple and the Krishna Temple, not only to preserve Hampi's historical significance but also revitalise its local community by creating jobs and supporting cultural revival.

What sets JSW apart is its **community-centric model**. Local artisans are trained and employed in restoration

work, reviving traditional skills while generating livelihoods. The foundation also supports folk artists and performers, integrating cultural revival with economic empowerment. These efforts align with **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

KPMG India: Heritage Through Education and Youth Engagement

While KPMG India's CSR focus is primarily on education and skill development, the firm has recognized the value of **cultural literacy** in shaping responsible citizens. Through partnerships with NGOs and schools, KPMG has supported **heritage walks, storytelling sessions, and cultural festivals** that introduce students to India's historical landmarks and artistic traditions.

These initiatives are part of KPMG's broader **10by30 strategy**, which aims to economically empower 10 million youth by 2030. By embed-



ding heritage awareness into education, KPMG fosters a sense of pride and responsibility among young Indians — a crucial step in ensuring long-term conservation.

Though not directly involved in monument restoration, KPMG's approach reflects a **systems-level understanding** of sustainability, where cultural preservation is woven into social development.

Infosys Foundation: Temples, Traditions, and Talent

The Infosys Foundation, under the leadership of Sudha Murty, has made significant contributions to heritage conservation. The foundation has funded the **restoration of ancient temples**, such as the **Lakshmi Narayan Temple in Karnataka** and the **Somanatheshwara Temple in Tamil Nadu**, preserving architectural marvels that date back centuries.

Beyond physical structures, Infosys Foundation supports **classical music and dance festivals**, scholarships for young artists, and docu-



Badi Baoli, Qutb Shahi Heritage Park, Hyderabad restored by Aga Khan Trust for Culture in partnership with Tata Trusts



ASI-NCI-INFOSYS Foundation

mentation of oral traditions. These efforts ensure that both tangible and intangible heritage are preserved and passed on.

Infosys integrates cultural preservation into its **sustainability ethos**, recognizing that heritage is a pillar of social equity, education, and community resilience — all essential for a truly developed India.

Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages: Craft Revival and Cultural Tourism

Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB) has adopted a unique approach to heritage conservation by focusing on **craft revival and cultural tourism**. In regions like Rajasthan and Odisha, HCCB has partnered with local artisans to promote traditional crafts such as **blue pottery, Pattachitra painting, and tribal jewelry**.

Through skill development workshops, digital literacy programs, and market linkages, HCCB empowers artisans to sustain their craft and reach wider audiences. The company also supports **eco-tourism initiatives** that highlight cultural heritage while pro-

moting environmental stewardship.

These efforts contribute to **rural development, women's empowerment, and sustainable livelihoods**, aligning with SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work), and 12 (Responsible Consumption).

Godrej Consumer Products Limited: Innovation Meets Tradition

Godrej Consumer Products Limited (GCPL) has taken a contemporary route to heritage conservation through the **Godrej Culture Lab** — a platform that explores urban heritage, contemporary art, and cultural storytelling. The lab hosts **talks, exhibitions, and performances** that spotlight India's evolving cultural landscape.

GCPL also supports **heritage mapping projects** in Mumbai, documenting lesser-known sites and traditions. By fostering dialogue between tradition and innovation, Godrej's approach reflects a **modern model of conservation** — one that's inclusive, experimental, and deeply rooted in community engagement.

This strategy aligns with GCPL's sustainability goals, where cultural preservation is seen as a driver of **social inclusion and creative economy**.

Tata Trusts: A Legacy of Cultural Stewardship

Tata Trusts have long been champions of heritage conservation. Their initiatives span **monument restoration, craft revival, and cultural documentation**. One of their flagship projects includes the **restoration of the Mughal-era tomb of Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana in Delhi**, in collaboration with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

Tata Trusts also support **folk artists, weavers, and performers** through grants, training, and exhibitions. Their work in reviving handloom traditions in states like Odisha and Assam has helped preserve endangered crafts while boosting rural economies.

From a sustainability perspective, Tata Trusts exemplify **heritage-led development**, where culture becomes a catalyst for economic inclusion, envi-



ronmental awareness, and social cohesion.

Heritage and *Viksit Bharat*: A Shared Vision

India's vision for *Viksit Bharat* by 2047 is not limited to economic growth — it encompasses **cultural pride, social equity, and environmental sustainability**. Heritage conservation contributes to this vision in multiple ways:

- **Cultural Identity:** Preserving heritage fosters national pride and unity in a diverse country.
- **Economic Growth:** Cultural tourism, crafts, and festivals generate jobs and income, especially in rural areas.
- **Sustainability:** Traditional practices often use eco-friendly materials and techniques, contributing to low-carbon development.
- **Social Inclusion:** Many heritage custodians belong to marginalized communities. Supporting them promotes equity and empowerment.

Corporate India's involvement ensures that heritage conservation is not just a government responsibility but a

shared societal mission. By aligning CSR with sustainability and cultural stewardship, companies help build a future that honors the past while embracing progress.

Engaging the Youth: Heritage as a Living Classroom

India's youth are the torchbearers of its future — and its heritage. Yet, many young people remain disconnected from traditional arts and history. To bridge this gap:

- **Educational Integration:** Schools and colleges should include heritage studies in curricula, combining history with hands-on learning in crafts, music, and architecture.
- **Digital Storytelling:** Platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and podcasts can be used to share folk tales, artisan journeys, and cultural trivia in engaging formats.
- **Internships and Fellowships:** Programs that allow students to work with museums, NGOs, and artisan clusters can foster deeper understanding and appreciation.
- **Youth-Led Campaigns:** Initiatives



The re

like heritage walks, clean-up drives at historical sites, and cultural festivals organized by students can build ownership and pride.

Young creators and influencers can play a vital role in making heritage "cool" again — by remixing folk music, showcasing crafts in fashion, or creating reels that celebrate local legends.

The Role of Government: Policy, Protection, and Promotion

While corporates and communities play a vital role, government support is indis-



Training course in the conservation and restoration of paper, focussing on manuscripts and miniature paintings, supported by Tata Trusts



restored Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue, Mumbai, revitalised by JSW Group

pensable. Key measures include:

- **Strengthening ASI and INTACH:** The Archaeological Survey of India and Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage need more funding, staffing, and autonomy to manage conservation projects effectively.
- **Incentivizing CSR in Heritage:** Tax benefits and recognition for companies investing in cultural preservation can encourage more participation.
- **Heritage Tourism Circuits:** Developing infrastructure around lesser-known sites can boost tourism and local economies.
- **Digital Archives and Mapping:** Creating accessible databases of monuments, crafts, and traditions can aid research and awareness.
- **Protecting Artisan Rights:** Policies that ensure fair wages, intellectual property protection, and market access for traditional artists are crucial.

Government schemes like *Guru Shishya Parampara*, *Ambedkar Hastshilp*, *Vikas Yojana*, and *TRIFED* offer support,

but need better implementation and integration with CSR efforts.

Public Participation: A Shared Responsibility

Heritage conservation is not the sole responsibility of governments or corporates — it's a collective mission. Citizens can contribute in many ways:

- **Respect and Protect:** Avoid littering or vandalizing heritage sites. Participate in clean-up and maintenance drives.
- **Support Local Artisans:** Choose handmade products, attend folk performances, and promote traditional crafts.
- **Volunteer and Advocate:** Join NGOs, heritage clubs, or online campaigns that work toward preservation.
- **Educate and Share:** Talk about heritage with children, share stories with friends, and use social media to spread awareness.

Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), schools, and local businesses can organize heritage festivals, exhibitions, and storytelling sessions to build community pride.

Heritage and Viksit Bharat: A Shared Vision

India's vision for *Viksit Bharat by 2047* is not limited to economic growth — it encompasses cultural pride, social equity, and environmental sustainability. Heritage conservation contributes to this vision in multiple ways:

- **Cultural Identity:** Preserving heritage fosters national pride and unity in a diverse country.
- **Economic Growth:** Cultural tour-

ism, crafts, and festivals generate jobs and income, especially in rural areas.

- **Sustainability:** Traditional practices often use eco-friendly materials and techniques, contributing to low-carbon development.
- **Social Inclusion:** Many heritage custodians belong to marginalized communities. Supporting them promotes equity and empowerment.
- **Global Recognition:** India's cultural richness enhances its soft power and global influence.

Corporate India's involvement ensures that heritage conservation is not just a government responsibility but a **shared societal mission**. By aligning CSR with sustainability and cultural stewardship, companies help build a future that honors the past while embracing progress.

India's heritage is not just a collection of monuments and manuscripts — it's a living legacy carried by communities, craftspeople, and artists. As corporates step into the conservation space, they bring resources, innovation, and visibility that can transform preservation efforts.

From JSW's architectural restorations to Infosys's temple projects, from Godrej's cultural labs to Tata's craft revival — each initiative adds a thread to the tapestry of *Viksit Bharat*. Together, they weave a narrative of **responsible growth, cultural pride, and sustainable development**.

In the years ahead, heritage conservation will not just be about saving the past — it will be about shaping a future that's inclusive, resilient, and deeply Indian.

A Journey Through Time: Kashmir's Spiritual Legacy - 'Revival, Preservation & Sustainability of Cultural Heritage'



MAJ GEN (DR) RK RAINA



A Journey Through Time and Spirit

Cradled in the lap of the Himalayas, Kashmir is more than a landscape—it is a living chronicle of faith, art, and intellect. Its misty valleys echo with ancient chants, and its rivers carry whispers of sages who once shaped the very essence of Indian spirituality.

Through the lens of history and mythology, Kashmir stands as a luminous thread in the vast tapestry of Indian civilization. The *Ramayana* recounts its emerald forests where vanaras searched

for Mata Sita; the *Mahabharata* venerates it as a land as sacred as Sindh or Gandhara. Kalhana, the celebrated historian, called Kashmir “the land loved by the gods.” Such reverence in scripture affirms the valley’s place not merely as geography, but as a seat of divine inspiration.

The Birthplace of Spiritual Synthesis

Kashmir has always drawn seekers from across lands and faiths—Hindus, Buddhists, and later, Sufis from Central Asia and Persia—each leaving an indelible mark on its soul. This confluence of ideas, rituals, and philosophies gave rise to *Kashmiriyat*—a living ethos of tolerance, creativity, and harmony.

At the heart of this spiritual synthesis stands **Kashmir Shaivism**, one of India’s most profound philosophical traditions. Visionaries like Vasugupta, Utpaladeva, Somananda, Abhinavagupta, and Jayaratha articulated a vision of con-

sciousness that merged metaphysics with aesthetics. For them, divinity was not distant but inherent in every act of perception and creation. Their texts remain timeless, offering a window into India’s inner journey toward self-realization.

Temples such as Martand, Avantipur, and Shankaracharya are not mere relics of stone; they are *living vibrations* of a civilization that valued light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance. Even today, their ruins stand resilient—echoes of devotion that refused to be silenced.

Waves of Darkness and Resilience

Yet, the valley that once radiated wisdom also endured centuries of devastation. From the 14th century onward, invasions by foreign powers tore through Kashmir’s sacred landscape. Temples were desecrated, manuscripts burned, idols shattered. The Afghan onslaughts sought to extinguish the flame of its indig-



enous culture.

But light has a way of surviving. The **Kashmiri Pandits**, torchbearers of this legacy, carried their heritage beyond the valley through waves of exile and migration—six times between the 14th century and 1989. Though uprooted, they became silent ambassadors of Kashmir's spiritual brilliance across India. Those who remained safeguarded their faith in secrecy, whispering mantras in hidden corners, teaching their children the rituals and stories of their ancestors.

This tenacity preserved a culture where devotion blended with philosophy, where Shankaracharya's Advaita resonated with Lalleshwari's mystic poetry and Nund Rishi's compassionate Sufi wisdom. Together, they forged a shared spiritual grammar—one that transcended sects and languages.

Kashmir: Cradle of Indian Civilization

In truth, Kashmir was never a periphery—it was the pulse of Bharat's civilization. Its scholars shaped grammar, aesthetics, logic, and metaphysics; its artists sculpted visions of the divine that inspired temples across India. From its universities at Sharada Peeth to its manuscripts that traveled as far as Tibet, Kashmir served as the intellectual fountainhead of ancient India.

The message of Kashmir Shaivism—that *the universe itself is a reflection of divine consciousness*—remains India's spiritual



DNA. It teaches that enlightenment is not an escape from the world but a deeper embrace of it.

Revival and the Path Ahead

Today, as the world rediscovers the importance of cultural roots and sustainable heritage, Kashmir calls out not just for preservation, but for *revival*. The revival of its temples, manuscripts, music, and oral traditions is not merely an act of memory—it is an act of national renewal.

Efforts must focus on restoring sacred sites, digitizing ancient texts, and enabling younger generations—both within and outside the valley—to reconnect with their spiritual inheritance. Academic pro-

grams, cultural festivals, and research collaborations can breathe life into this continuum.

Just as the river Jhelum flows unbroken despite obstacles, Kashmir's spirit continues to nourish India's soul. Its story is not one of loss alone, but of endurance—an unyielding reminder that civilizations may falter but never vanish when sustained by faith and knowledge.

The *revival, preservation, and sustainability* of Kashmir's cultural heritage must therefore become a shared national mission. To revive Kashmir is to reconnect India with her civilizational heartbeat.

In the twilight of history, when civilizations are judged not by their power but by their wisdom, Kashmir stands as India's testament to eternal resilience. Its mountains guard not just borders, but the very memory of enlightenment. To keep that light alive is both our duty and our destiny.



Harnessing Creativity: A Path to Better Mental Health and Inclusive Communities



DR. KULDEEP SINGH



Why does mental health still sit in the shadows when a brushstroke, a melody, or a shared story can offer comfort and connection? On 10 October, World Mental Health Day, I strongly feel this question demands urgent reflection.

India faces a silent epidemic. According to the National Mental Health Survey (2023), over 10% of adults live with mental health conditions, yet nearly 80% receive no formal treatment. Millions of Indians silently struggle with stress, trauma, and isolation, particularly youth, differently-abled individuals, and marginalized communities. The reasons are complex: stigma, lack of access, and limited community-based support.

While clinical interventions are

essential, they are not the only path to healing. Art offers an alternative — not as a luxury, but as a lifeline. It allows people to express what words cannot. It gives form to grief, anxiety, and hope. It builds emotional resilience and fosters connection. Across India, creative initiatives are quietly transforming lives: schoolchildren cope better with academic pressure,



patients recover faster in hospitals, and communities find collective strength through shared expression.

But I strongly feel art alone cannot heal. Its potential is unlocked only when all stakeholders—communities, educators, social initiatives, and policymakers—act together. Without their engagement, even the most promising creative programs remain isolated, and the lofty aspirations of **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)** and **SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)** remain just that: aspirations.

Stories of Impact: When Creativity Meets Opportunity

My perception of disability and inclusion was transformed when I met *Sonu Gupta*, a 29-year-old differently-abled artist from Varanasi. *Sonu's* journey did not begin in galleries, but on the streets – painting murals that speak of education, inclusion, and dignity. Supported by local social initiatives, his work turns public walls into canvases of hope. Each brushstroke tells a story of resilience, courage, and the power of opportunity.

“When I paint, I don’t just create walls. I create awareness, I create hope,” Sonu shared with me, reflecting on the purpose behind his murals.

Sonu's art is more than personal expression. It is a platform for awareness. His murals invite passersby to

reflect, engage, and empathize. They transform everyday spaces into sites of social dialogue. And they show what happens when **individual talent is nurtured by collaborative support** here I find CSR had played a vital roles

The highest point of my reflection is this: **no single entity can create change alone**. Sonu's impact was made possible by mentorship, inclusive policies, and practical platforms. Across India, when schools, local bodies, social initiatives, and policymakers collaborate, mental health and inclusion initiatives gain scale and sustainability.

Art-based programs are increasingly integrated into schools, hospitals, and community centers. From theatre workshops for adolescents to music therapy for trauma survivors, these initiatives help people process emotions, build confidence, and reconnect with others. Research shows that **creative engagement reduces cortisol levels, improves mood, and strengthens emotional regulation**.

Yet, these efforts often remain fragmented. Without strategic alignment, they risk being short-lived or inaccessible to those who need them most. I strongly feel that **stakeholder collaboration is the bridge between isolated success and systemic impact**.

From Expression to Impact: Stakeholder Action

To truly harness the healing power of art, we need more than inspiration – we need structured, ongoing collaboration. Stakeholders across sectors must act together, not just on World Mental Health Day, but every day.



- **Educational institutions** can integrate creative therapy into curricula, train facilitators, and create safe spaces for expression.
- **Social initiatives and community groups** can mentor artists, run inclusive workshops, and connect communities with resources.
- **Local governments** can provide public platforms for creative engagement -from mural walls to open mic spaces -ensuring accessibility.
- **CSR programs and philanthropic efforts** can support sustainable initiatives that nurture talent,



reduce inequalities, and align with SDG 3 and SDG 10.

Across India, programs in both urban schools and rural communities are helping children and adolescents express emotions, build confidence, and process trauma through painting, music, and theatre. These actions do more than support mental health. They make **inclusive development possible**, foster participation, and turn global goals into local impact. I strongly feel that **SDGs will remain aspirational unless stakeholders collaborate on the ground, every day, to create opportunities for all**.

Sonu Gupta's story is a vivid reminder: creativity, when nurtured, can break barriers. It can heal, empower, and connect. But only when stakeholders unite- when art is seen not as decoration, but as intervention can this potential be realized at scale.

Conclusion: Colour, Courage, Collaboration

Art is simple -a mural, a song, a brush-stroke- yet its impact is powerful. It heals, empowers, and connects. *Sonu Gupta* shows that talent, when supported, transforms not just lives, but entire communities.

On this World Mental Health Day, I strongly feel that we must move beyond awareness. We must invest in creativity as a tool for healing, support artists like Sonu, and build safe spaces for expression. Above all, we must act together -because when stakeholders collaborate, art doesn't just decorate walls. It transforms lives, fosters inclusion, and makes the SDGs achievable in practice, not just on paper.



Tata Trusts

REVIVING ROOTS: THE CHALLENGES AND PROMISE OF INDIA'S FOLK ARTISTS

MANISH BHARTIA

India's folk art is a vibrant tapestry woven from centuries of tradition, storytelling, and community expression. From the earthy rhythms of Bhavai and Baul to the intricate brushwork of Warli and Gond, these art forms are not just cultural artifacts — they are living legacies. Yet, despite their richness, folk artists across the country face growing challenges that threaten the survival of their craft.

The Struggles Behind the Stage

For many folk artists, the biggest hurdle is economic instability. Their income is often seasonal, tied to festivals or tour-

ism, and rarely sufficient to sustain a livelihood. With limited access to formal markets, digital platforms, or institutional support, these artists remain on the margins of India's creative economy.

Generational disconnect is another concern. As younger members of artisan

families pursue urban jobs or modern education, traditional skills are not passed down. The lack of structured training programs and mentorship opportunities means that many art forms risk fading into obscurity.

Moreover, globalization and mass production have shifted consumer preferences. Handmade items are often undervalued compared to factory-made goods, and folk performances struggle to compete with digital entertainment. Without visibility and appreciation, these artists face cultural invisibility.



Dastkar A Society for Crafts & Craftspeople

Why Folk Art Matters

Preserving folk art is not just about safe-

guarding heritage — it's about nurturing identity, livelihoods, and inclusive growth. These art forms reflect local histories, ecological wisdom, and social values. They offer insight into India's diverse communities and serve as tools for education, healing, and empowerment.

Folk art also contributes to sustainable development. Most traditional practices use natural materials, eco-friendly techniques, and community-based production. Supporting these artists means promoting low-carbon, resource-efficient livelihoods.

In the broader vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, folk art plays a vital role. A developed India must be culturally confident, socially inclusive, and environmentally conscious. Folk artists embody all three — they are custodians of tradition, agents of social cohesion, and practitioners of sustainable creativity.

CSR: A Catalyst for Revival

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a powerful force in reviving India's folk traditions. Through targeted initiatives, companies are helping artisans access training, markets, and recognition.

For example, Tata Trusts have supported performing artists through programs like Kalapana, which promotes traditional music, dance, and crafts from underserved regions. By organizing festivals and exhibitions, they connect artists with urban audiences and buyers.

The Reliance Foundation has worked to document endangered art forms and create digital platforms for artisans to showcase their work. Their



NMACC Swadesh

focus on empowering women artisans has led to increased participation and financial independence in rural areas.

ITC's Mission Sunehra Kal includes support for rural artisans through skill development and market linkages. By integrating folk art into corporate gifting and branding, they help elevate its visibility and value.

Other organizations, like Crafts Council of India and Dastkar, collaborate with CSR partners to host fairs, workshops, and design labs that blend tradition with innovation. These efforts not only preserve heritage but also make it relevant to contemporary consumers.

Folk Art in Viksit Bharat's Future

As India moves toward its centennial of independence, folk art can contribute to national development in multiple ways:

- Economic inclusion: Artisan clusters can become hubs of rural entrepreneurship, reducing migration and boosting local economies.
- Cultural diplomacy: Showcasing India's artistic diversity strengthens its global image and soft power.

- Education and awareness: Folk stories and visuals can be integrated into school curricula to promote values, history, and creativity.
- Tourism and branding: Cultural circuits and heritage festivals can attract domestic and international visitors, creating new revenue streams.

To realize this potential, more collaborative efforts are needed. Educational institutions can offer folk art electives. Tourism boards can promote artisan villages. Digital platforms can amplify artisan voices. And CSR can evolve from one-time support to long-term partnerships that treat artists as co-creators, not beneficiaries.

India's folk artists are not relics of the past — they are architects of a more inclusive and imaginative future. Their songs, colors, and stories carry the wisdom of generations and the spirit of resilience. By addressing their challenges and investing in their revival, we not only preserve our heritage but also build a foundation for Viksit Bharat that is rich in culture, opportunity, and pride.



WHEN HERITAGE TOUCHES HEARTS: A JOURNEY OF 67 YOUNG DREAMERS

DR. KULDEEP SINGH

Culture is not just what we inherit — it's what we experience, live, and carry forward.

And sometimes, one journey can open more minds than a thousand lessons.

Recently, I had the privilege of accompanying 67 children of Deepalaya Children's Home on a two-day heritage exposure tour to Jaipur and Ajmer, sup-

ported by MMTC-PAMP under their CSR initiative for inclusive development. For me, this was far more than a CSR activity; it was a living demonstration of how *exposure becomes empowerment*.

When Travel Becomes a Teacher

Our journey began in Ajmer, where

the children explored Jagatpati Shri Brahma Mandir and the Nareli Jain Temple. Many children had never traveled outside Delhi before. Their faces reflected awe, curiosity, and a quiet sense of pride.

The next day took us to Jaipur, the famed Pink City. As soon as we entered, the children's eyes lit up at the sight of the vibrant buildings, bustling streets, and the aroma of local markets. They laughed, ran, and pointed at every corner, as if stepping into a living storybook. For many, it was their first encounter with such color, culture, and energy — and the thrill was palpable.

At Sisodia Rani Ka Bagh and Amber Palace, children sketched arches, traced



carvings, and listened to tales of kings, queens, and artisans. Their curiosity was infectious, and I felt strongly that heritage teaches far more than history ever can — it builds confidence, imagination, and a sense of belonging that no classroom alone can provide.

At Kishan Garh, a large open play area resembling a snowy field, the children ran, posed for pictures, and shouted with joy. Their laughter echoed across the space, reminding me that heritage trips are not only about learning but also about *creating moments of freedom and delight*.

Heritage as a Bridge to Inclusion

Inclusive development is not only about access to education or healthcare — it's about experiences that help children see the world, and themselves, differently.

For orphaned and vulnerable children, heritage exposure fosters pride, identity, and emotional resilience.

UNESCO calls culture the “fourth pillar of sustainable development,” yet in many CSR initiatives, it is often overlooked. This journey showed me that heritage can serve as a powerful tool for inclusion, linking real-world experiences to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

At Amber Fort, one child whispered, “*I didn't know our country had such beauty.*”

Those simple words carried the essence of the trip. It wasn't just about discovering Rajasthan — it was about discovering themselves. Culture, when accessible, becomes a true equalizer.



When Local Traditions Inspire Young Minds

Beyond monuments, Jaipur offered the children a glimpse into living traditions. They met local artisans demonstrating blue pottery, block printing, and mirror embroidery, learning the patience and creativity behind each craft.

One girl expressed her desire to learn painting; another boy wanted to become a tour guide. These sparks of aspiration are the real measure of impact.

I strongly feel that *CSR should go beyond funding — it should create platforms for participation and experiential learning*. I feel delighted as through this strategic partnership, MMTC-PAMP is not only providing financial support but also empowering children by building their confidence, nurturing imagination, and inspiring the courage to dream.

Culture, Collaboration, and CSR in Action

I often reflect that UN Sustainable Development Goals remain aspirations unless all stakeholders — corporates, communities, and educators — work together at the grassroots.

This heritage trip was proof of what collaboration can achieve.

It demonstrated that culture, art, and human experience, when shared, can foster empathy, inclusion, and

social responsibility. Heritage thrives when experienced, not just preserved.

By engaging children directly with India's traditions, we teach respect, empathy, and the value of diversity — qualities essential for an inclusive society. CSR can play a transformative role here, making culture a driver of social empowerment, not just a compliance activity.

From Monuments to Mindsets

As the trip ended and we boarded the bus back to Delhi, the children were humming songs, showing sketches, and sharing stories with each other. They carried souvenirs, yes, but also pride, wonder, and new aspirations.

I strongly believe that inclusive development begins when we include experiences, not just entitlements.

When heritage reaches those often left behind, it does more than preserve culture — it restores dignity, confidence, and hope.

The two days in Jaipur and Ajmer may have been short, but the impact will last long. For these 67 children, the journey was not just sightseeing — it was discovering their place in India's grand story.

And for me, it was a reminder of why CSR matters: when culture touches hearts, partnerships go beyond compliance — they transform lives.

Continuing a Sacred Legacy

Padma Awardee 2025
Radhakrishnan
Devasenapathy
Satpathy

Shri Radhakrishnan Devasenapathy Sthapathy, honoured with the Padma Shri in Art, is a revered member of the 34th generation of a family known for their contributions to temple construction and sculpture.

In the sacred town of Swamimalai, where metal meets divinity, **Radhakrishnan Devasenapathy Sthapathy** continues a legacy forged in fire and faith. Descended from the master artisans who built the **Brihadeeswara Temple** under Raja Raja Chola, his lineage embodies centuries of devotion to the **Shilpa Shastra**. With steady hands and a humble heart, Radhakrishnan breathes life into bronze; transforming molten metal into timeless icons of grace. His artistry preserves not just a tradition, but a spiritual heritage where every sculpture tells a story of dharma, dedication, and the eternal beauty of India's divine craftsmanship.





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FROM TRASH TO TREASURE: HOW ECO-ART IS REIMAGINING WASTE AS WONDER

PRADEEP KUMAR PANDEY

In a world drowning in plastic, packaging, and planned obsolescence, a quiet revolution is taking shape — not in laboratories or boardrooms, but in studios, scrapyards, and street corners. It's called eco-art, and it's turning the narrative of waste on its head.

Eco-art is the creative alchemy of transforming discarded materials into powerful artistic expressions. It's where sustainability meets imagination, where a rusted bicycle chain becomes a sculpture, or a pile of bottle caps morphs into a mosaic. But beyond

the visual appeal, eco-art carries a deeper message: it forces us to confront what we throw away — and why.

In India, this movement is gaining momentum. Bengaluru-based **Vishwanath Mallabadi Davangere**, a former engineer, now crafts intricate sculptures from e-waste — circuit boards, wires, and microchips. His creations, often futuristic in form, highlight the growing menace of electronic waste while celebrating the hidden beauty of technology's leftovers. His art doesn't just decorate; it educates.

Then there's **Manveer Singh**,

whose installations made from plastic bottles and scrap metal mimic the very natural forms they threaten — trees, birds, rivers. Displayed in schools and public spaces, his work sparks conversations about single-use plastics and the urgent need for recycling. It's art that speaks, not just to the eyes, but to the conscience.

Globally, the movement is just as vibrant. Brazilian artist **Vik Muniz** creates portraits using garbage collected from landfills, collaborating with waste pickers to tell stories of dignity and resilience. His work, featured in the



acclaimed documentary *Waste Land*, is a testament to how art can humanize environmental issues and empower marginalized communities.

In the United States, **Aurora Robson** sculpts dreamlike forms from ocean plastic. Her installations — resembling jellyfish, coral, or cosmic clouds — are both haunting and hopeful. Robson also leads educational programs, teaching young artists how to work with waste, planting seeds of sustainability in the next generation.

What makes eco-art so compelling is its ability to blend emotion with awareness. Unlike charts or reports, these artworks evoke a visceral response. They make us pause. They make us uncomfortable. And in that discomfort lies the potential for change.

But eco-art isn't just about raising awareness — it's also about **reviving a culture of resourcefulness**. In India, where traditional crafts have long embraced reuse — think patchwork quilts, upcycled metal art, or jute weaving — eco-art feels like a contemporary continuation of that ethos. It reconnects us with a time when nothing was wasted, and everything had a second life.

There's also a subtle rebellion at play. Eco-art challenges the throw-away culture that glorifies the new and discards the old. It asks us to see value in the broken, the used, the forgotten. In doing so, it redefines beauty — not as perfection, but as transformation.

Perhaps most importantly, eco-art offers an antidote to digital fatigue. In an age where young people are glued

to screens, this movement invites them to touch, feel, and create. It encourages them to pick up a paintbrush instead of a phone, to build with their hands instead of scrolling with their thumbs. It's a call to rediscover the joy of making — and the responsibility of mindful living.

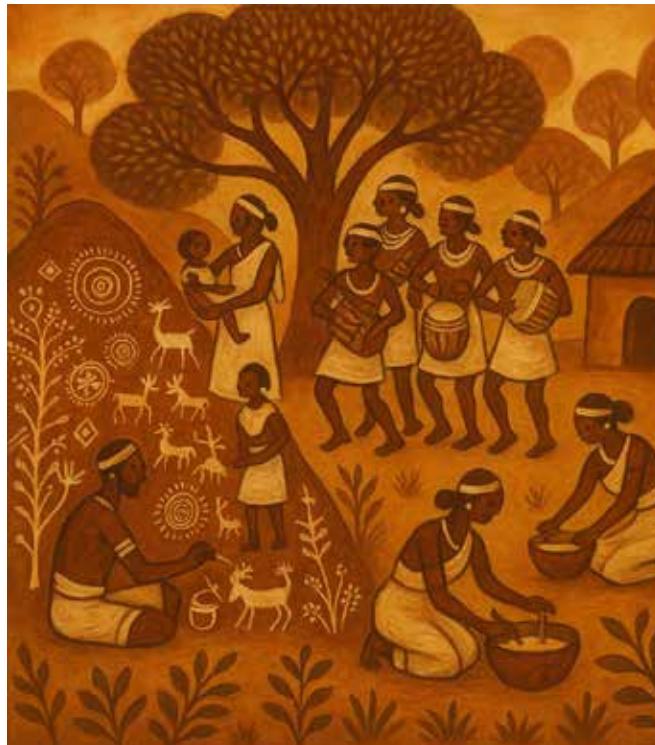
As landfills overflow and climate warnings grow louder, eco-art offers a glimmer of hope. It reminds us that change doesn't always require grand gestures. Sometimes, it begins with a bottle cap, a broken toy, or a torn piece of fabric — and the courage to see not what it is, but what it could become.

In the hands of an eco-artist, waste is no longer the end of the story. It's the beginning of a new one — one that's creative, conscious, and deeply connected to the world we share.

The River Within: Art, Empathy, and Emotional Sustainability



DR. K.K. UPADHYAY



“Satyam Shivam Sundaram” – The True, the Auspicious, and the Beautiful are One.

The world, at its core, is sustained by rhythm, grace, and harmony. When the inner and outer worlds unite at that sacred point of balance, creation happens — and we call it Art.

The river of life finds its expression through painting, music, dance, poetry, and countless creative forms. A brushstroke mirrors the heartbeat, a melody echoes the breath, and a sculpture captures the silence between two thoughts.

Art, in its purest essence, is not merely a pursuit of beauty — it is a

communion of being. When words fall short, colours speak. When logic pauses, rhythm flows. From ancient cave paintings to contemporary murals, art has always been humanity's way of processing emotion, connecting communities, and seeking meaning.

Today, as the world grapples with rising stress, anxiety, and isolation, the therapeutic power of art is being rediscovered — not only by psychologists, but also by educators, healers, and changemakers who see in it the timeless possibility of healing through harmony.

The River Within: Science and Soul of Healing through Art

The river flows majestically — serene, alive. Birds sing along its banks; water nourishes green fields; wild animals come to drink; life hums in rhythm. Then one day, the sky darkens, the mountain crumbles, and the river's path is blocked. Water gathers, pressure builds, and when it can hold no more, it bursts — sweeping everything away.

The same happens within us.

When emotions remain unexpressed — when grief, anger, fear, or loneliness are dammed up — they seek release in unexpected ways: outrage, conflict, depression, even self-destruction.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 970 million people globally struggle with mental-health disorders. One in every eight lives under the shadow of anxiety or depression. In India alone, nearly 15 percent of adults experience some form of mental distress — much of it unspoken and unseen.

That is where Art becomes Therapy.

Art opens a passage where the inner river can flow again — gently, safely, meaningfully. It channels emotional turbulence into creative movement, transforming chaos into composition. This is why we find peace in the hills, why music on a Goan beach feels liberating, why painting under open skies stills the mind. In those moments, we are in rhythm with ourselves — in harmony with nature, with sound, with colour, with life itself.

Modern neuroscience confirms what our ancient seers intuited: creativity heals. Engaging in art activates the brain's reward system, releases dopamine, and lowers cortisol levels. It helps individuals externalize feelings of grief, fear, or trauma — turning pain into patterns that can be seen, understood, and transcended.

Whether it is a cancer survivor painting their journey, a war refugee sketching memories of home, or a child with autism expressing emotion through rhythm — art provides a non-verbal sanctuary of healing. Structured

creative activities, as studies by the American Art Therapy Association reveal, enhance emotional regulation, self-awareness, and resilience.

When the soul paints, words heal. And when we create, we reconnect — not just with beauty, but with balance.

The Development Dilemma

As luck would have it, I was born and brought up in the sleepy town of Mandi, Himachal Pradesh — cradled by hills that whisper ancient tales. Life took me across India's spine: from the snow-clad silence of Kashmir to the rain-kissed rhythms of Meghalaya, through the golden hush of Rajasthan's desert, and finally into the heart of Bastar.

Among the tribal communities of Bastar, I spent four transformative years — years that changed how I understood development. The theories I had learnt in classrooms felt suddenly distant and incomplete. Bastar gently asked questions that pierced the heart. Here were people living in rhythm with nature — their lives attuned to the forest, the soil, and the seasons.

In the name of progress, we often drift them away from this harmony — from traditional knowledge, from customs, from the soul of community life. Yet here, when a child is born, they celebrate with food, drink, and dance. When someone departs, they mourn — and still, they eat, drink, and dance. Joy and grief both find expression in their art, in what the world calls Bastar Art.

And I, as a development professional, often ask myself: Should I change it? Or should I learn from it? Today, I feel certain — let the art flow, let it

express. Please, do not block this river of experienced spirit. Let it flow.

Healing the Heart of Humanity

Art teaches us to slow down, to observe, and to empathize. It reminds us that healing is not always about cure — sometimes, it is about connection. Whether on a therapist's canvas, a child's notebook, or a village wall, every colour tells a story of survival and hope.

As we step into an era of growing mental-health awareness, may we remember that art — in its myriad forms — holds the power to heal not only individuals but also the collective spirit of humanity. It is both a mirror and a medicine, reminding us that even in pain there is poetry, and in every stroke of colour, a promise of renewal.

Like time itself, art flows — sometimes gently, sometimes in storms, yet always forward. It reminds us that nothing remains static: grief softens, seasons return, creation continues.

The opening lines of the Mahabharata television epic come to mind: "Main Samay Hoon" — I am Time. Time, the eternal witness, moves on — healing what is broken, erasing what is cruel, nurturing what is beautiful.

Art, too, is like time. It flows through us, carrying away the debris of sorrow and leaving behind patterns of meaning, hope, and grace.

In that continuous flow — of colour, sound, rhythm, and silence — life finds its harmony again. And perhaps that is what art truly is: time made visible, healing made beautiful.



Festivals as Growth Engines: TOURISM, JOBS, AND CSR IN ACTION

SUBRAMANYA SHASTRI

Festivals in India are not only cultural celebrations but also powerful economic stimulants. They bring communities together, attract tourists, and create a surge in demand across multiple sectors. From food and crafts to transport and accommodation, festivals generate employment and income, especially in small towns and rural areas. Their eco-

nomic impact is often underestimated, yet they play a vital role in sustaining local economies and promoting inclusive growth.

When a festival is announced, it sets off a chain reaction of economic activity. Local transport services see a rise in bookings as people travel to attend events. Hotels, guesthouses, and homestays experience increased

occupancy, often at premium rates. Street vendors and restaurants benefit from the influx of visitors, offering regional delicacies that become part of the festive experience. Temporary stalls selling snacks, sweets, and beverages pop up around venues, providing short-term employment and boosting local enterprise.

Artisans and craftspeople also

find a valuable platform during festivals. Cultural fairs and exhibitions allow them to showcase traditional products — from handwoven textiles and pottery to folk paintings and jewelry. These events often serve as the primary sales season for many artisans, especially those who rely on seasonal markets. The visibility gained during festivals can lead to long-term business opportunities, including collaborations with designers, retailers, and online platforms.

Event management companies, decorators, sound technicians, and security personnel are also in high demand during festivals. The logistics of organizing large-scale events require a wide range of services, creating temporary jobs and skill-building opportunities. Youth and women, in particular, benefit from these short-term roles, which often serve as gateways to more stable employment.

The tourism sector sees a significant boost during festivals. Events like the Rann Utsav in Gujarat, Hornbill Festival in Nagaland, and Pushkar Camel Fair in Rajasthan attract thousands of domestic and international tourists. These festivals not only showcase the cultural richness of the region but also contribute to the hospitality industry, local transport, and retail. Tour operators, guides, and travel agencies benefit from curated packages and increased bookings.

Despite their economic potential, many festivals lack the infrastructure and strategic support needed to maximize their impact. This is where Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can play a transformative role.

Companies can invest in festival infrastructure — clean toilets, waste management systems, signage, and accessibility features — to enhance the visitor experience and ensure environmental sustainability.

CSR initiatives can also support skill development programs for local youth. Training in hospitality, guiding, craft marketing, and digital promotion equips them to participate more effectively in the festival economy. These skills remain valuable beyond the festive season, contributing to long-term employability and entrepreneurship.

Artisan support is another area where CSR can make a difference. Companies can sponsor craft clusters, provide raw materials, and facilitate access to e-commerce platforms. By helping artisans adapt to contemporary markets while preserving traditional techniques, CSR initiatives ensure that heritage becomes a source of livelihood.

Documentation and promotion of cultural practices are equally important. CSR funds can be used to record folk performances, oral histories, and rituals, preserving them for future generations. Digital storytelling and social media campaigns can attract wider audiences and tourists, turning local festivals into national and global attractions.

Inclusivity should be a core principle of CSR in the festival sector. Marginalized communities — including tribal groups, women, and differently-abled individuals — must be involved in planning and benefit-sharing. Corporates can ensure that festivals become platforms for

empowerment, not just entertainment.

One example of effective CSR in this space is IndiGoReach's "My City, My Heritage" campaign. By partnering with local governments and NGOs, the initiative has helped cities like Bhubaneswar and Shillong celebrate their heritage through festivals and cultural walks. These events have boosted tourism, supported local businesses, and fostered civic pride.

As India envisions Viksit Bharat by 2047, festivals can play a strategic role in achieving inclusive and sustainable development. They offer a unique blend of economic opportunity, cultural pride, and community cohesion. With the right support, festivals can revitalize rural economies, preserve intangible heritage, promote sustainable practices, and foster entrepreneurship.

To realize this potential, collaboration is key. Governments must streamline permissions and provide logistical support. Corporates must align CSR with cultural sustainability. Communities must take ownership of their traditions and ensure they evolve with integrity.

In conclusion, festivals are not just moments of celebration — they are catalysts for economic growth, cultural preservation, and social inclusion. By recognizing their economic value and investing in their sustainability, India can transform its festivals into engines of development. With thoughtful CSR engagement, the lights of celebration can shine brighter — not just in homes and streets, but across livelihoods and landscapes that make India's cultural calendar so extraordinary.



Language Death SAVING WORLD'S LAST DIALECT

MAANISA DAS

The Mortality of Language

Language exists through people and humanity. Just as human life is perishable, a language too dies with the last person who speaks it. One day it may exist, and the next, it can be buried along with its final speaker. And with his death, a world of meaning, memory, collective culture and tradition, and identity is lost forever. Language is a vessel of a mirror of human civilization. His death may have been mourned as the passing of a local elder. Yet who knew or grieved for what the extinction of a unique way of understanding the world.

According to the Foundation for Endangered Languages, about 6,000 languages are spoken across the world today. Of these, between 500 and

1,000 are spoken by only a handful of people. Every year, around 25 mother tongues vanish, amounting to nearly 250 languages per decade. UNESCO estimates that half of the world's current languages may disappear by the end of this century. That means a language dies somewhere on Earth every two weeks. Language death is a loss of wisdom. Each language holds within it the worldview, traditions, and ecological knowledge of its speakers. When a language disappears, humanity's cultural and intellectual diversity shrinks.

Who's to Blame

Language extinction is not a new phenomenon. Languages die for many reasons: natural disasters, forced displacement, cultural assimilation, or

even genocide. Throughout history, empires have risen and fallen, controlling language shifts. But, judged by the standards of the past, language extinction in the modern era is depleting on a massive scale. Political persecution, a lack of preservation, and globalization are to blame for the dwindling language diversity.

Powerful empires and colonial regimes imposed their languages upon indigenous populations. Over time, this linguistic dominance silenced native voices. It's even harder to decolonise minds and escape the suffering of institutional neglect and suppression under imperial and post-colonial policies.

Some might argue that language death is an inevitable side effect of globalization. As communities seek educa-

tion and employment in an interconnected world, they adopt dominant languages. Parents encourage their children to learn the “language of opportunity,” that promises education, employment, and social mobility, often at the expense of their mother tongue. Over time, intergenerational transmission breaks down, and the native language fades from everyday life. As long as a few hundred or even a couple of thousand languages survive, the gravity of the issue doesn’t feel heavy.

Parents often take pride in their children’s fluency in global languages, sometimes at the cost of their native tongue. Schools that enforce “English-only” corridors become symbols of modern success, while ancestral languages are quietly pushed aside.

Natural disasters, wars, and forced migration displace communities and disrupt linguistic continuity. Refugees, in particular, often abandon native languages to assimilate into host societies for safety or opportunity.

If you belong to a dominant linguistic group, the issue of language extinction may seem distant. But for those whose languages are on the verge of disappearance—whose tribes, ancestry, and identity depend on that survival—it becomes deeply personal. The dominance of globally accessible languages may open doors to education and employment across nations, yet it often distances us from the roots that shaped our identity. Language death is not a sign of progress, it is a sign of cultural erosion. When we lose a language, we lose unique expressions of humor, art, and identity. Literature, songs, art, culture, won’t thrive when coerced do



in a dominant language foreign to us. Linguistic diversity is the heartbeat of human creativity; it breathes life into our music, literature, and oral traditions, giving each culture its distinct voice in the chorus of humanity.

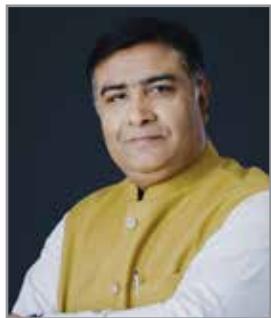
India's Linguistic Crisis

India, known for its linguistic richness, is also witnessing this silent crisis. According to the **People's Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI)**, the country had around 1,100 living languages, but nearly 220 have disappeared in the last 50 years. Many more are now critically endangered. The Ministry of Culture protects endangered Indian languages through the Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages of India (SPPEL), which is implemented by the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL). This scheme focuses on documenting and preserving mother tongues with fewer than 10,000 speakers by conducting research, fieldwork, and creating resources. Other efforts include schemes from the University Grants Commission (UGC) to support university research and establish centers for endangered languages. Currently,

SPPEL has identified 117 endangered languages, and is working toward documenting about 500 lesser-known languages in the future.

UNESCO's *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* similarly is intended to raise awareness about language endangerment and the need to safeguard the world's linguistic diversity among policy-makers, speaker communities and the general public, and to be a tool to monitor the status of endangered languages and the trends in linguistic diversity at the global level.

We should care about dying languages for the same reason that we care when a species of animal or plant dies. It reduces the intellectual and cultural diversity of our planet. Preserving endangered languages is not only the responsibility of governments or scholars but of every individual who values identity and heritage. Community-driven education, intergenerational storytelling, and digital preservation can help revive tongues on the brink of extinction. In saving the world's last dialects, we are, in truth, saving our stories, our wisdom, and our collective soul.



Mr. Himanshu Priyadarshi

Chief Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability Officer, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB)

"HCCB proudly continues to make a difference by supporting collective action to sustain resilient watersheds for the people and communities that need it most. By partnering with S M Sehgal Foundation, HCCB has rejuvenated centuries-old lakes in Nelamangala (built by the Chola, Hoysala, and Vijayanagara dynasties) and Mamadapur Lake (built by Adil Shahi Sultans) in Karnataka. These efforts combine technical solutions, such as desilting, embankment reinforcement, forming Tank User Groups, and installing piezometers for groundwater monitoring."

Mr. R. Pavithra Kumar

CEO, JSW Foundation



"JSW Foundation believes preserving India's rich cultural heritage is fundamental to building a strong national identity, pride, and continuity. Aligning our efforts with Schedule VII (v) of the Companies Act, 2013, our CSR mandate focuses on safeguarding traditions. This includes the meticulous restoration of historic sites as well as the promotion of traditional arts and the empowerment of the artisans who sustain them. For us, heritage preservation is a powerful catalyst for inclusive social and economic empowerment, ensuring our culture thrives for all future generations."

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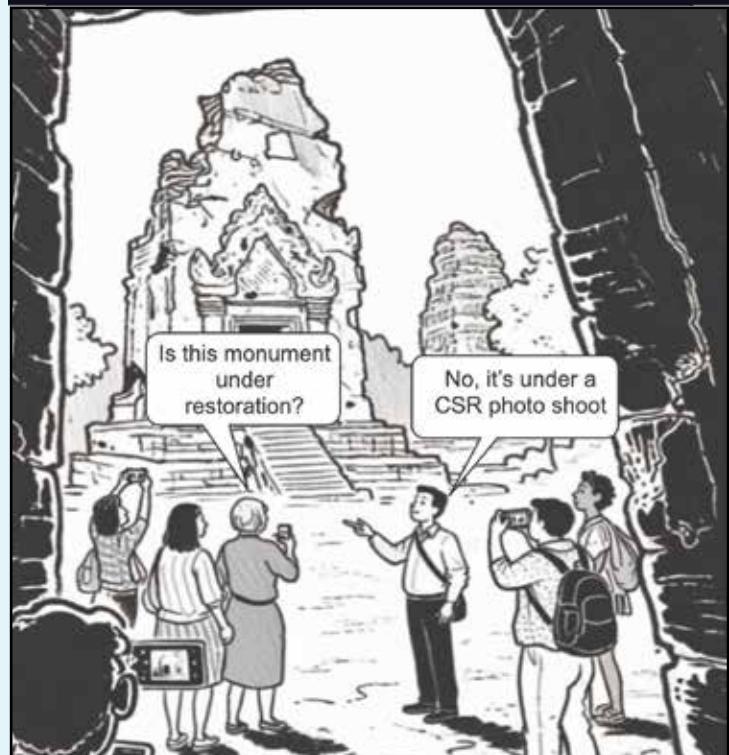
Don't forget to attach a good-quality photo of yourself so we can feature you properly!

Send your submission directly to the Editor at editor@csrtimes.org

Who knows? Your words might inspire hundreds of readers and make you part of India's leading CSR conversation!

NUTSHELL

By P.D.



विद्युत उत्पादन से राष्ट्र का सशक्तिकरण



हमारा साझा विजन

2040 तक **50000** मेगावाट

2030 तक **25000** मेगावाट

घरों, उद्योगों एवं अर्थव्यवस्थाओं के लिए स्वच्छ,
विश्वसनीय एवं स्थाई ऊर्जा प्रदान करने में अग्रणी

एक सतत् एवं समावेशी भविष्य के लिए हमसे जुड़ें।
आइए मिलकर प्राकृतिक ऊर्जा को अपनाएं, नवाचार को आगे बढ़ाएं
और एक उज्ज्वल, हरित भविष्य का निर्माण करें।

पंजीकृत कार्यालय : शक्ति सदन, कारपोरेट ऑफिस काम्पलैक्स,
शनान, शिमला-171006, हिमाचल प्रदेश (भारत)

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एनबीसीसी काम्पलैक्स, ईस्ट किंदवई नगर, नई दिल्ली-110023

एसजेवीएन लिमिटेड
SJVN LIMITED
(भारत सरकार एवं हिमाचल प्रदेश सरकार का संयुक्त उपक्रम)
‘एक नवरत्न सीपीएसई’



CHETAK FOUNDATION SERVING THE SOCIETY

The Chetak Foundation has emerged as a transformative force in India's social sector, focusing its energies on truck drivers as primary beneficiaries across education, skill development, health and wellness, environmental conservation, nutrition, and road safety. Through well-defined initiatives, the Foundation has championed the dignity of labour and is set to launch a new campaign for greater respect and empowerment within the

trucking profession.

Vision and Approach

Chetak Foundation was established in tribute to Shri Jai Karan Sharma, founder of Chetak Group, with a mission to uplift underprivileged communities by focusing on logistics sector workers—especially truck drivers. Its strategy recognises that truck drivers power India's supply chain, yet they face challenging work conditions, lim-

ited access to healthcare, and social marginalisation.

Social Initiatives and Strategic Collaborations

Key programs include:

- Swasthya Plus (Health & Wellness)
- Zindagi Plus (Road Safety)
- Poshan Plus (Nutrition)
- Oxygen Plus (Environmental Protection)
- Jai Krishna Awards (Skill

- Development Scholarships
- Sahayta Plus (Covid relief and distribution of food kits, dry rations, and sanitation supplies to underprivileged truckers and frontline workers.)
- **Sambandh Plus:** A program focused on fostering community ties and local engagement in villages and transport hubs.

Education and Skill Development

The Foundation partners with leading educational institutions to provide scholarships, skill-building courses, and awards to logistics students and truck drivers. The Jai Krishna Logistics Youth Awards and collaborations with the Delhi Skill and Entrepreneurship University (DSEU) focus on strengthening employability through a tailored curriculum, training, and recognition for outstanding contributions in logistics.

Health and Wellness

Initiatives such as Swasthya Plus and Better Sight Safer Drive address the health and safety needs of drivers. Regular eye check-up camps, conducted in partnership with top organisations (GMR, Honda 2-Wheelers, Vision Spring, JBM, SML Isuzu), ensure thousands of truckers receive thorough vision testing and free corrective spectacles, directly reducing accident risks and improving quality of life. During the COVID-19 crisis, ambulance drivers and frontline workers received sanitisation kits under Swasthya Plus, highlighting the Foundation's swift response and ongoing commitment

to public health.

Environment and Nutrition

Chetak Foundation's Oxygen Plus initiative focuses on tree plantation, aiming for 10,000 new trees to offset carbon and improve air quality around transport hubs—a direct benefit to both drivers and the urban environment. Under Poshan Plus, high-quality dry rations are distributed to truck drivers and frontline workers at events like Dappar Toll Plaza and Dharuhera, addressing both hunger and nutritional insecurity prevalent in the sector.

Road Safety

The Foundation's Zindagi Plus Road



Safety Drive and helmet distribution programs address the critical safety risks faced by drivers on Indian roads. By collaborating with public and private partners (including traffic police and automobile corporations), Chetak Foundation equips truckers, cab drivers, and even police constables with life-saving gear and targeted safety awareness sessions. Regular eye screening further supports safer driving—a significant contribution

that has been honoured by multiple awards, including the Business World Healthcare Institutional Excellence Award 2025.

Some independent Campaigns

- **Nasha Mukt, Suraksha Yukti Campaign:** Targeted in Himachal Pradesh's Una region to reduce substance abuse among logistics workers while strengthening safety practices.
- **Vaccination Drives:** Campaigns powered by partnership with UNICEF to promote child vaccination, driver awareness, and

community health workshops, including field activities bringing truck drivers to the UNICEF HQ for advocacy.

- **Road Safety Campaigns:** Joint programs with Delhi Traffic Police and corporates like HMSI for helmet distribution and safety awareness under the Zindagi Plus banner.
- **Senior Citizen Eye Camps:** Dedicated vision check-ups in

association with organisations such as Visual Eyez and HIF for elderly citizens in logistics-dependent communities.

Strategic Collaborations (Key partners and Associates)

The Chetak Foundation has significantly broadened its scope of interventions and partnerships, earning multiple awards and recognitions, as well as collaborating with many distinguished national and international organisations, including

- **UNICEF:** Collaborated on vaccination, health, and road safety campaigns with workshops to design impactful programs.
- **Vision Spring:** Ongoing partnership for driver vision health and safe driving via eye camps at major logistics hubs, airports, and toll plazas.
- **GMR Varalakshmi Foundation:** MoU for joint work in health, skill development, and road safety for logistics communities.
- **Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India, JBM, JCB:** Joint interventions supporting safety equipment distribution, health camps, and wellness awareness.
- **Visual Eyez and HIF:** Community eye health programs, especially senior citizen initiatives, are recognised in Vrindavan and other regions.
- **Delhi Traffic Police:** Supported major Zindagi Plus campaigns to boost public road safety awareness among logistics professionals.



Impact and Recognition

By crafting named, targeted interventions and expanding its collaborative networks, Chetak Foundation stands as an influential advocate for social justice, safety, and sustainable development for those who keep India's wheels turning. The Foundation's pioneering efforts have earned it distinguished honours, including

Awards and Recognitions

- **BusinessWorld Healthcare Institutional Excellence Award 2025:** For Swasthya and Zindagi Plus health and road safety interventions.
- **Social Impact Awards 2023:** Honouring top performance in Health, Nutrition, Road Safety, and Environment Protection.
- **National CSR Award 2023:** For outstanding social initiatives in the logistics sector.
- **ESG India Social Champion Award:** Recognising significant impact for underprivileged truck drivers' welfare.
- **Top 30 Most Trusted NGOs:** A listing rated by social sector observers and evaluators.
- **Lifetime Achievement Samman and Outstanding Leader Awards:** Conferred on Shri Jai Karan Sharma

as a pioneering entrepreneur and philanthropist in logistics.

- **Pinnacle Award for Creating an Equal World:** Acknowledging targeted equality-driven campaigns and inclusive social programming.

Future Plans: Pioneering Dignity of Labour and Future Campaigns

Recognising the fundamental role of truck drivers, the Foundation is committed to leading a "Dignity of Labour" campaign, promoting greater respect, fair treatment, and social acceptance for the profession. This future-focused program will further enhance road safety, health initiatives, and environmental protections, celebrating and elevating truck drivers as central contributors to India's economic growth.

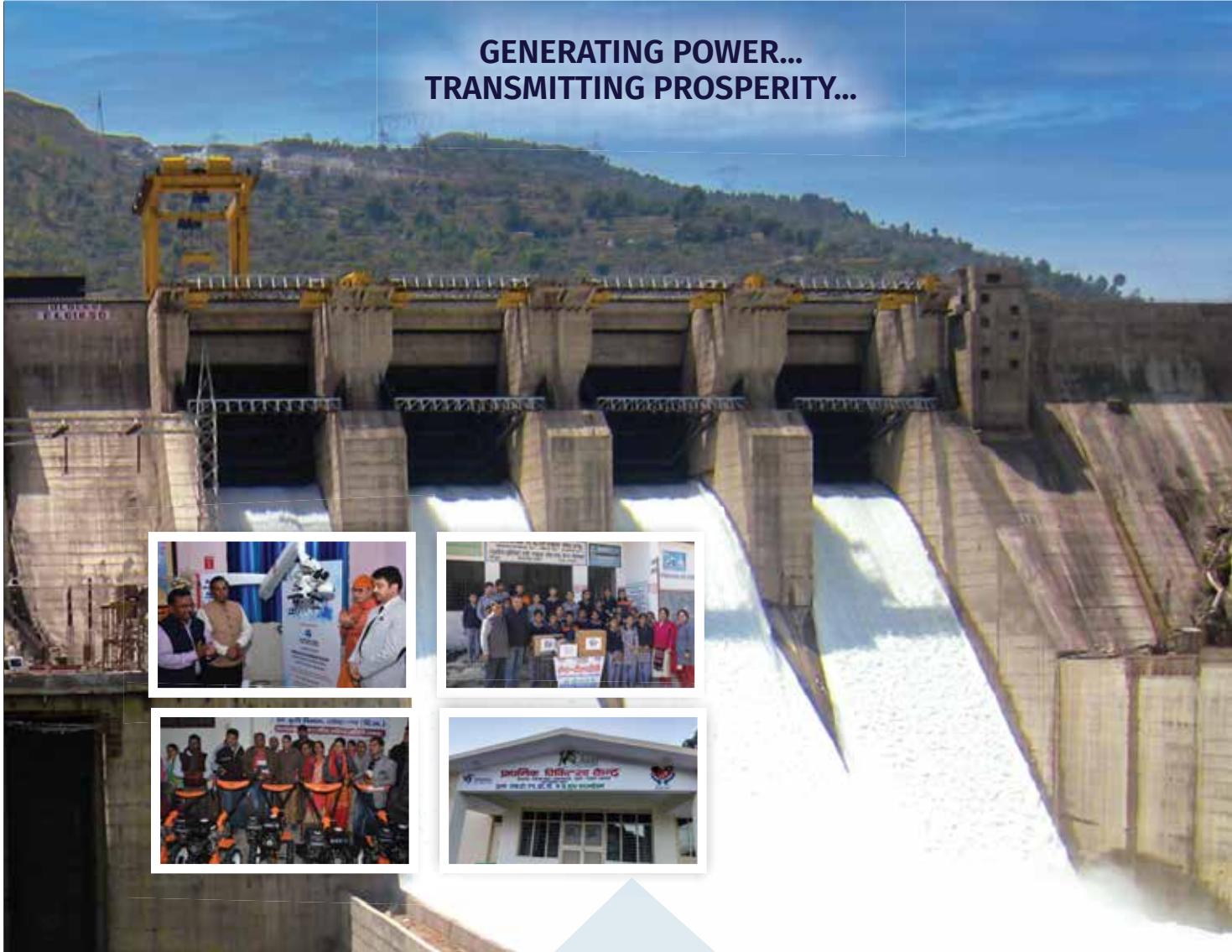
These initiatives further reinforce Chetak Foundation's leadership in innovative social programming for logistics workers, particularly truck drivers, earning it respect from prestigious national and global partners and distinguished awards, making it a benchmark NGO in this field.



Arun Arora

Head and Director, Chetak Foundation

GENERATING POWER...
TRANSMITTING PROSPERITY...



Hydropower and Beyond...

THDCIL SAHRIDAYA
Powering Progress,
Building a Sashakt Bharat





PNGRB MARKS 19TH FOUNDATION DAY, SHOWCASING INDIA'S ENERGY TRANSFORMATION

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), India's downstream regulator, celebrated its 19th Foundation Day at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi. Established under the PNGRB Act, 2006, the Board is responsible for regulating the refining, processing, storage, transportation, distribution, marketing, and sale of petroleum, petroleum products, and natural gas. It aims to safeguard consumer interests while fostering fair trade and competition within the energy sector.

Over nearly two decades, PNGRB has played a pivotal role in shaping India's energy landscape. From laying the foundation of the country's natural gas infrastructure to facilitating the expansion of City Gas Distribution (CGD) networks, PNGRB's efforts have connected millions of house-

holds, industries, and transport consumers to cleaner and more affordable natural gas. Today, nearly the entire country has been authorized for CGD development under PNGRB's regulatory framework.

Among its notable achievements are the expansion of the National Gas Grid, authorization of petroleum product pipelines, and facilitation of LNG terminal infrastructure. The implementation of a unified pipeline

tariff has reduced regional disparities in gas transportation costs. The Board has also strengthened digital grievance redressal systems, introduced transparent dispute resolution mechanisms, and promoted competition through open bidding processes.

Driving India's Energy Transition

Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission, attend-





ed the event as Guest of Honour. He commended PNGRB's contribution to advancing India's energy transition and competitiveness. "A transparent and competitive energy sector is vital for sustaining India's growth and ensuring sustainability. PNGRB's regulatory reforms in pipelines and LNG evacuation are instrumental in achieving these goals," he remarked.

Minister's Address

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, lauded PNGRB's role in driving India's clean energy mission. He noted that the Board has been central to expanding the national gas infrastructure, with 1.55 crore households connected through piped natural gas

and over 8,500 CNG stations operational across India. Out of the planned 35,000 km of gas pipelines, 24,500 km are already functional, forming a unified national gas grid.

The Minister underscored PNGRB's focus on consumer safety, equitable pricing through the unified tariff system, and the need for further digitalization and transparency in the gas market. He also presented **Excellence Awards** to top-performing entities for outstanding contributions in infrastructure development, service quality, and innovation.

Recognizing Excellence and Innovation

Awards were presented in categories such as Best Performing CGD Entity,

Best Performing NGPL Operator, Innovation & Sustainability, and Consumer Service Excellence. These accolades reaffirm PNGRB's commitment to fostering innovation and performance in the energy sector.

Publications and Digital Initiatives

The event also saw the launch of several key publications and digital initiatives, including *PNGRB Success Story – Bridging Energy Horizons*, *PNGRB Darpan* (newsletter), and *Compendium of Case Studies on Sustainability*. New web applications were also unveiled to enhance consumer interface and infrastructure monitoring.

Future Outlook

In his closing remarks, Dr. Anil Kumar Jain, Chairperson, PNGRB, emphasized the Board's continued focus on strengthening consumer protection, expanding infrastructure, and promoting sustainability and competition in the sector.

The event brought together senior officials, policymakers, and industry leaders, reflecting PNGRB's central role in steering India toward a sustainable, transparent, and competitive energy future.





DELHI CM REKHA GUPTA INAUGURATES NEW FACILITIES AT SUDEVA FOOTBALL ACADEMY, WITH SUPPORT FROM HINDALCO, THE ADITYA BIRLA GROUP

VATIKA SINGH

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta today inaugurated newly upgraded facilities at the Sudeva Football Academy, a state-of-the-art residential football facility dedicated to training India's next generation of footballers. This milestone was made possible with the generous funding and support from Hindalco, the flagship metals company of the Aditya Birla Group.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Mr Satish Pai, Managing

Director at Hindalco Industries Limited, Mr Sunil Bajaj, Director of the CAD Group at the Aditya Birla Group, Shri Surya Prakash Khatri, Member of Legislative Assembly along with Sudeva Football Academy's leadership including MR Anuj Gupta and several promising young footballers. The new and enhanced infrastructure is a significant boost for youth football development, providing young athletes with world-class resources to hone their skills.

The new facilities, which include a FIFA Pro turf, will help elevate the standard of football training in India, providing young talent with top-notch infrastructure and coaching.

Comments from the Chief Minister

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta lauded the collaborative efforts between the government and the corporate sector to promote sports in India.

"It is a pleasure to see the con-



tinuous progress of sports in India under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi,” Chief Minister Gupta said during the inauguration. “When the government and the public work together, 100% results are achieved. The inauguration of this football ground, developed through public-private partnership, is a testament to this cooperation”.

She added, “I am inspired by the young players here and am confident that with such excellent facilities and training, our team can reach new heights, including the World Cup”.

A long-standing partnership for grassroots sports

This inauguration is the latest development in the long-standing partnership between the Aditya Birla Group and Sudeva Delhi FC. In July 2024, Hindalco’s Managing Director, Satish Pai, and Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi inaugurated the new FIFA Pro turf, highlighting the company’s commitment to developing a robust sports infrastructure at the grassroots level. The company has consistently contributed through

its CSR initiatives to nurture young talent and foster community development through sports. During the ceremony, Mr Satish Pai, Managing Director at Hindalco Industries Limited said, “At Hindalco, through the Aditya Birla Group, we are proud to support the Sudeva Football Club as part of our commitment to public social responsibility. While we’ve long invested in health, education, and women’s welfare, we now recognize the power of sports—especially football—as a vehicle for change. Grassroots initiatives like Sudeva are where dreams begin. By nurturing talent from a young age, we lay the foundation for India’s future on the global stage.”

Nurturing talent for a brighter future

The upgraded facilities will support Sudeva’s mission to produce elite football talent and provide a structured pathway for young athletes to succeed at a professional level. By offering state-of-the-art training facilities and a nurturing environment, the academy is shaping the future of Indian foot-

ball and helping young athletes realize their potential.



Mr Satish Pai, Managing Director at Hindalco Industries Limited said, “*At Hindalco, through the Aditya Birla Group, we are proud to support the Sudeva Football Club as part of our commitment to public social responsibility. While we’ve long invested in health, education, and women’s welfare, we now recognize the power of sports—especially football—as a vehicle for change. Grassroots initiatives like Sudeva are where dreams begin. By nurturing talent from a young age, we lay the foundation for India’s future on the global stage.*”

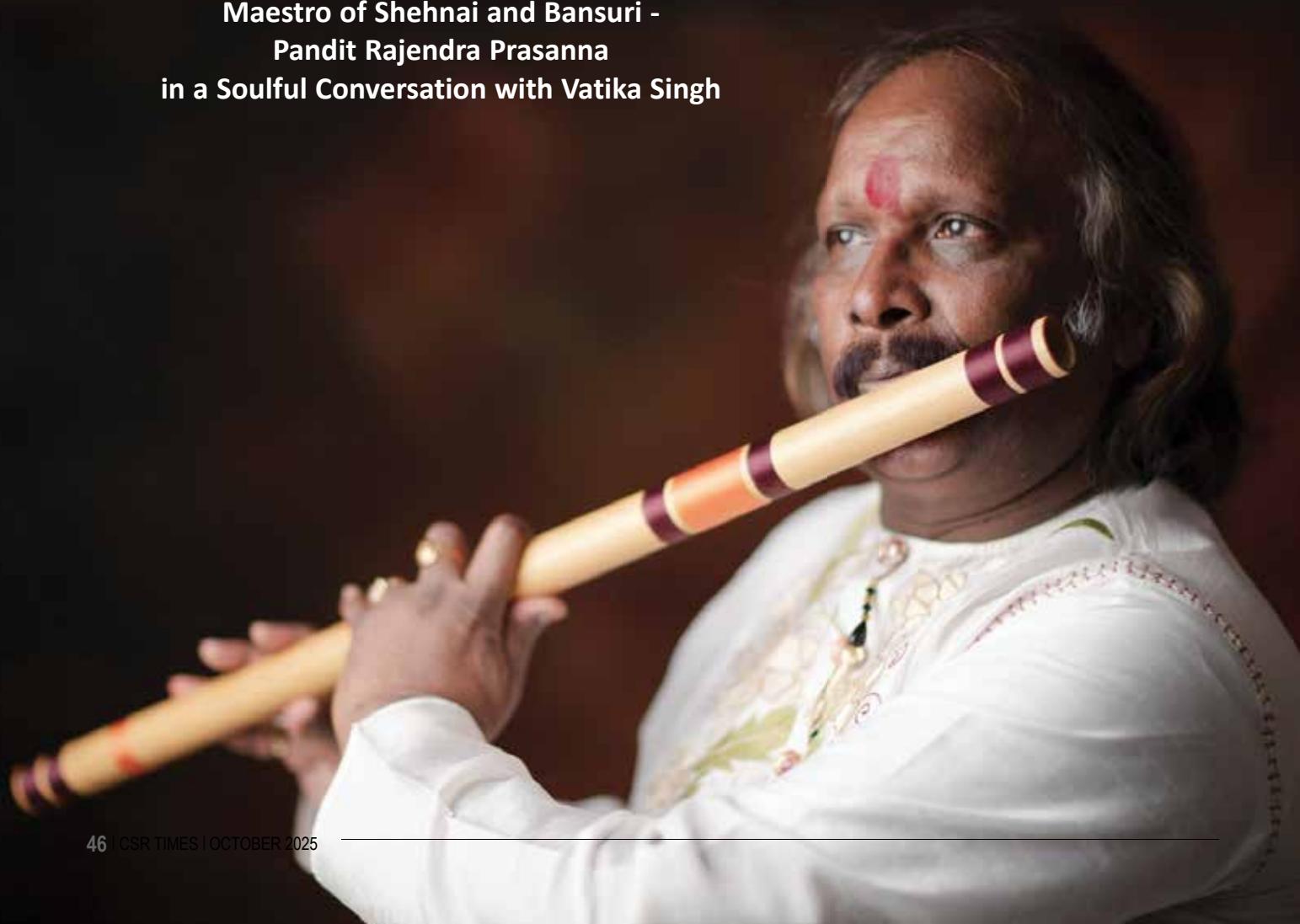
“JO KAREGA RIYAZ, WAHI KAREGA RAAJ”

**Maestro of Shehnai and Bansuri -
Pandit Rajendra Prasanna
in a Soulful Conversation with Vatika Singh**

In the sacred city of Banaras ,where music flows like the Ganga itself,was born a legacy of sound ,devotion, and discipline .Carrying forward the glorious tradition of Indian classical music, Pandit Rajendra Prasanna ji is not just a master of the *Shehnai* and *Bansuri* ,but a torchbearer of a heritage rooted in *Riyaz*, humility ,and spirituality .In this exclusive interview,he reflects on his journey, the timelessness of Indian music ,and his hopes for *Viksit Bharat* 2047.

**Your musical journey began in Banaras.
How did the city and your family tradition inspire you?**

The atmosphere in my house was naturally musical. When you're born into



such an environment, you are unknowingly drawn towards music. I started learning *Shehnai* at the age of 4 or 5, and *Bansuri* when I turned 10. It all came very organically. It's a *khandaani parampara* (family tradition). Just like a doctor or an engineer wishes their child to follow in their footsteps, musicians too hope their children carry forward the art. That's what my father and grandfather wished for me and now it's what I wish for the next generations.

You've performed across the world. How do international audiences receive Indian music and culture?

The love and respect abroad can be overwhelming. Many people there listen to Indian classical music as a form of meditation. Their applause, their silence during performances, it all gives us a lot of energy.

Legends like Pt. Ravi Shankar Ji, Ustad Bismillah Khan Sahab, and Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia have already created a wonderful image of Indian music worldwide. Even if foreigners don't understand Indian *Raag* or *Taal*, they appreciate good music and same appreciation given by Indians to Western music.

Young people today are more drawn to pop and Western music. How do we keep Indian classical music relevant for them?

It's our responsibility to present our music in a way that brings *Anand* (joy) to listeners. If people enjoy it, they will naturally be more inclined to learn and pass it on to their children.

Unfortunately, in many places in India, classical music doesn't get the

importance it deserves. While light music is widely popular, classical music has a unique dignity. We need to reintroduce that to the youth in an engaging way.

What role should the government and institutions play in promoting our art and culture?

Organizations like Sangeet Natak Akademi, ICCR, and the Ministry of Culture are doing good work. But we still struggle with how to present classical music effectively.

Currently, the entire burden lies on the artist. For instance, classical performances are mostly limited to channels like DD Bharati. But we need to make them more engaging and accessible so that wider audiences, especially the youth, take interest.

You've been with the National School of Drama (NSD) for decades. How has theatre enriched your music?

I was associated with NSD for over 38 years. Working there taught me so much, not just about music, but about different art forms like theatre music, film music, folk, and of course, classical.

Collaborating with top directors expanded my understanding and also gave them deeper insight into classical music. Many NSD students picked up instruments and began learning seriously. It was a mutually enriching experience.

You've received many awards. Which moment stands out as the most special to you?

Every award is a blessing, but one moment I'll never forget was perform-

ing at Royal Albert Hall with Pt. Ravi Shankar ji in 2002. When he entered, the entire audience stood and clapped for over 5 minutes. That kind of love... is beyond awards. Later I also performed and he received the Grammy Award. But honestly, the love of the audience is the biggest award for any artist.

Many believe Indian music is a spiritual practice. What would you advise today's youth who want to pursue music as a career?

That belief is absolutely true. Even folk music requires discipline and *Riyaz*. If you don't practice, you won't progress. Respect your *Guru*, never stop learning, and whenever you meet a musician, try to gain some knowledge from them. That hunger to learn is what will take you far.

How do you see the future of India's culture and heritage? What role do artists play?

An artist's role is to perform with utmost sincerity. But also, to keep faith in God. If you have divine blessings and you stay true to your art, the world will celebrate you. It's our responsibility to keep the tradition alive through teaching and performing with dedication.

What role will Indian art and culture play in *Viksit Bharat* by 2047?

Indian music was great in the past, is great now, and will continue to be great. Its only limitation is how it's presented. But *Hindustani Sangeet* can never fade. Our duty is to teach, inspire, and empower the next generation. If they succeed, that success reflects the strength of the nation too.



DIWALI AND THE AIR WE BREATHE: A FESTIVAL'S CALL FOR ECO-CONSCIOUSNESS

ASHOK KUMAR

Diwali, the festival of lights, is one of India's most cherished celebrations — a time when homes glow with diyas, streets shimmer with decorations, and hearts fill with joy and togetherness. Rooted in mythology and tradition, Diwali marks the victory of light over darkness and good over evil. It's a moment of spiritual renewal, family bonding, and cultural pride.

Yet, as the lamps flicker and the festivities unfold, another reality dims the glow — the sharp rise in air pollution. While firecrackers often take the blame, the issue is far more layered. Diwali coincides with a seasonal shift in North India, where cooler temperatures and low wind speeds trap pollutants close to the ground, creating a dense smog. The result? A visible haze, breathing discomfort, and a spike in respiratory illnesses.

Firecrackers do contribute significantly to this problem. Their combustion releases fine particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), sulfur dioxide, and heavy metals — pollutants that linger in the air long after the last spark fades. But focusing solely on crackers oversimplifies the issue. **Vehicular emissions**, especially from diesel engines, surge during the festive rush. People travel more, traffic congestion increases, and fuel consumption spikes.

Another major contributor is **stubble burning** in agricultural regions like Punjab and Haryana. Around the same time as Diwali, farmers burn crop residue to prepare fields for the

next sowing season. This practice releases massive amounts of smoke and particulate matter, which drifts into urban centers, compounding the pollution crisis.

Industrial activity, construction dust, and open waste burning also play a role. In cities, the combination of these factors creates a toxic cocktail that affects not just the environment, but public health — especially for children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing conditions.

So, how do we honor the spirit of Diwali while protecting the air we breathe?

This is where **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** can become a powerful ally. Companies, especially those with urban footprints, have the resources and influence to drive meaningful change. Through CSR initiatives, they can:

Fund awareness campaigns that promote eco-friendly celebrations, encouraging communities to opt for light shows, cultural performances, or green alternatives to firecrackers.

Support air quality monitoring by installing sensors and sharing

AQI Basics for Ozone and Particle Pollution			
Daily AQI Color	Levels of Concern	Values of Index	Description of Air Quality
Green	Good	0 to 50	Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Yellow	Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Orange	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected.
Red	Unhealthy	151 to 200	Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Purple	Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health alert: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone.
Maroon	Hazardous	301 and higher	Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected.

real-time data with local authorities and citizens.

Invest in urban greening, such as tree plantation drives, rooftop gardens, and green belts around industrial zones.

Promote clean mobility, offering incentives for electric vehicles, cycling infrastructure, and public transport usage during festive seasons.

Collaborate with local governments to manage waste, reduce construction dust, and enforce pollution control norms.

Several Indian companies have already taken steps in this direction. From organizing “No Crackers” campaigns in schools to sponsoring com-

munity Diwali events that focus on music, dance, and lights — the shift is visible. These efforts not only reduce pollution but also foster a sense of collective responsibility.

On an individual level, eco-consciousness can begin with small choices. Using **LED lights** instead of traditional bulbs, choosing **biodegradable décor**, avoiding **plastic packaging**, and celebrating with **community gatherings** instead of personal firecracker displays — all contribute to a cleaner celebration.

Importantly, embracing an eco-friendly Diwali doesn’t mean letting go of joy. It means redefining it. The essence of Diwali lies in illumination — of homes, hearts, and minds. By choosing sustainability, we illuminate a path toward healthier living and environmental stewardship.

As India envisions a *Viksit Bharat by 2047*, festivals like Diwali offer a unique opportunity to blend tradition with transformation. With the combined efforts of citizens, corporations, and communities, we can ensure that the festival of lights continues to shine — not just in our homes, but in the skies above.



Believe It or Not

Breliue It or Not: India's Cultural Wonders That Defy Belief

India isn't just a country — it's a kaleidoscope of stories, styles, and centuries-old secrets. From musical mud walls to temples that hum with geometry, the subcontinent's art and heritage are packed with surprises that make you stop and say... "Believe it or not!"

A Paintbrush That Never Fades

In the villages of Bihar, artists have been painting Madhubani art for over 2,500 years — originally on mud walls, now on paper, cloth, and even sneakers. But here's the twist: they use natural dyes made from turmeric, charcoal, and flowers, and the colors don't fade for decades. Some families still pass down brushes made from twigs and rice straw. Believe it or not, these intricate designs were once used to ward off evil spirits and decorate wedding chambers!

A Temple That Whispers Mathematics

The Konark Sun Temple in Odisha isn't just a marvel of stone — it's a celestial calculator. Built in the 13th century, its wheels are not just decorative; they function as sundials, accurately telling time with the shadow of the spokes. Each wheel has 8 major spokes and 8 minor ones, symbolizing the 24 hours of a day. Believe it or not, ancient architects embedded astronomy into architecture centuries before modern science caught up.

Puppets That Tell Epics — and Predict the Weather

In Andhra Pradesh, the art of Tholu Bommalata — shadow puppetry using translucent leather — is more than entertainment. These puppets, some over 5 feet tall, enact stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata. But here's the kicker: seasoned puppeteers claim they can predict monsoon patterns based on the behavior of local birds and winds during performances. Science or superstition? Believe it or not, the villagers swear by it.

A Drum That Talks

The Chenda of Kerala isn't just a percussion instrument — it's a storyteller. Used in temple rituals and Kathakali performances, its beats are said to mimic emotions: joy, anger, sorrow, and suspense. Some master drummers can play sequences that mirror the rhythm of a character's heartbeat on stage. Believe it or not, the audience doesn't just hear the story — they feel it.

A Weave That Changes With the Weather

The Ilkal saree from Karnataka is woven with a unique technique where the warp and weft are dyed separately. But here's the magic: the saree's color appears to change subtly with temperature and light, thanks to the natural dyes and the tightness of the weave. Believe it or not, some weavers say they can "read the sky" through their looms.

A Stepwell That's a Symphony in Stone

The Rani ki Vav in Gujarat isn't just a water reservoir — it's an underground palace of sculpture. Built in the 11th century, this UNESCO World Heritage site features over 500 intricately carved figures, including gods, dancers, and mythical beasts. The acoustics are so precise that a whisper at one end can be heard clearly across the steps. Believe it or not, it was designed to cool the air and soothe the soul.

Heritage That Lives and Breathes

India's cultural heritage isn't locked in museums — it's alive in festivals, crafts, and everyday rituals. From the living root bridges of Meghalaya to the singing bowls of Ladakh, every region has its own "Believe it or not" moment waiting to be discovered.

So next time you walk past a hand-painted wall, hear a folk tune, or sip chai from a terracotta cup — pause. You might just be touching a tradition older than history, richer than gold, and more surprising than fiction.

Believe it or not... India's heritage is a treasure chest that never stops giving.

CONTRIBUTORS



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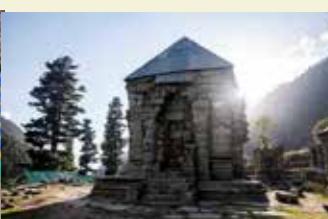
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CSR TIMES is coming up with a **special edition** to rank the top **PSUs and Corporates** that are effectively deploying their CSR budgets. Objective is to appreciate their commitment to social responsibility and their contribution towards a 'Viksit Bharat'.

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