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## EDITORIAL

Maybe the obsession for power is endless, and so is the threat to the world suffering of trade war, corruption, inflation, unemployment, poverty, mental health problems etc. yet the human stands upright and moves stealthily with the idea of survival and sustainability. The current issue with the papers related to cultural dissemination, nation branding and Indian diaspora; a decadal review from artisan to artist; power and the metaphor of land; and ESG principles with sustainable finance presents the society with potential researchers as the strong backbone.

To add to the society Cao relates the culture dissemination, nation branding and Indian diaspora; Shah conducts a decadal review of the efforts from artisan to artist; Gupta & Gupta gauges the power through the metaphor of land; whereas Bhatt, Virparia & Mehta talks about ESG principles with sustainable finance in India.

With a hope of best for the mankind, I am sure this issue will enlighten the potential researchers and the society as well it will help us all think about the sustainability of the humanity.

Regards,

Avdhesh Jha  
Chief Editor,  
Voice of Research

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## FROM CULTURAL DISSEMINATION TO NATION BRANDING: THE MULTIFACETED CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIAN DIASPORA IN SHAPING INDIA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

*The Indian diaspora is a mosaic of individuals from various walks of life, spread across continents and cultures. From the early days of migration to the present, they have carried with them the rich tapestry of Indian traditions, values, and aspirations. Their presence in different parts of the world has not only facilitated the spread of Indian culture, cuisine, music, and dance but has also opened up channels of communication and understanding between India and the host countries. This cultural exchange has laid the foundation for a deeper appreciation of India's heritage and has helped dispel misconceptions, fostering a more nuanced global perception of the nation. However, the impact of the Indian diaspora extends far beyond cultural diffusion. They have become vital stakeholders in India's public diplomacy efforts, leveraging their influence, networks, and resources to advocate for India's interests on the global stage. Through their achievements in various fields such as technology, business, academia, and the arts, they have showcased India's potential and capabilities, acting as beacons of inspiration for the nation. Moreover, their active engagement in philanthropy, investment, and knowledge transfer has contributed to India's socio-economic development and strengthened its ties with the international community.*

*This article explores the intricate and dynamic relationship between the Indian diaspora and India's public diplomacy. It examines how their contributions have evolved over time, the challenges they face, and the opportunities they present for further enhancing India's global standing. By understanding the multifaceted role of the Indian diaspora, we can gain valuable insights into the power of diaspora communities in shaping national narratives and influencing international relations in the modern world.*

**Keywords:** Indian Diaspora, Public Diplomacy, Cultural Dissemination, National Image  
Public diplomacy is the practice of engaging with foreign audiences to strengthen ties, build trust, and promote cooperation. It is often seen as the transparent means by which a sovereign country communicates with publics in other countries to inform and influence audiences overseas for the purpose of promoting the national interest and advancing foreign policy goals. The term was coined in the mid-1960s by former U.S. diplomat Edmund Gullion, public diplomacy was developed in part to distance overseas governmental information

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is a phased achievement of the Scientific Research Fund Project of the Education Department of Yunnan Province, China, "Research on the Impact of Indian Diaspora on India's Public Diplomacy" (Project No.: 2023J0615)

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activities from the term propaganda, which had acquired pejorative connotations. Over the years, public diplomacy has also developed a different meaning from public affairs, which refers to a government's activities and programs designed to communicate policy messages to its own domestic audiences.

By the late 20th century, public diplomacy was widely seen as the transparent means by which a sovereign country communicates with publics in other countries. Its aim was to inform and influence audiences overseas for the purpose of promoting the national interest and advancing foreign policy goals. In this traditional view, public diplomacy serves as an integral part of state-to-state diplomacy, involving official relations, typically in private, between leaders and diplomats representing sovereign states. In this sense, public diplomacy includes such activities as educational exchange programs for scholars and students; visitor programs; language training; cultural events and exchanges; and radio and television broadcasting. Such activities usually focus on improving the “sending” country's image or reputation in order to shape the wider policy environment in the “receiving” country.

Notably since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, public diplomacy has attracted increased attention from practitioners and scholars around the world. As distinct from the “narrow” traditional, state-based conception of public diplomacy, recent scholarship has offered a “broader” conception of the field's scope, developing the concept of a new public diplomacy. This view aims to capture the emerging trends in international relations where a range of non-state actors with some standing in world politics—supranational organizations, sub-national actors, non-governmental organizations, and even private companies—communicate and engage meaningfully with foreign publics and thereby develop and promote public diplomacy policies and practices of their own. Advocates of the new public diplomacy point to the democratization of information through new media and communication technology as a force that has greatly empowered non-state actors and elevated their role and legitimacy in international politics. As a result, a new public diplomacy is seen as taking place in a system of mutually beneficial relations that is no longer state-centric but rather composed of multiple actors and networks, operating in a fluid global environment of new issues and contexts.

The heightened interest in public diplomacy in recent years has been facilitated by conceptual developments in other fields. Marketing and public relations concepts such as branding have been incorporated by public diplomacy scholars to apply to countries, regions, and cities. Similarly, the concept of soft power coined by international relations scholar Joseph Nye has, for many, become a core concept in public diplomacy studies. Nye defines soft power as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments.” In other words, soft power is the degree to which a political actor's cultural assets, political ideals and policies inspire respect or affinity on the part of others. Thus,



soft power has come to be seen as a resource, and public diplomacy as a mechanism that seeks to leverage it.

### **Development History of Public Diplomacy**

Early Origins: The concept of public diplomacy emerged in the mid-1960s, partly to distance overseas governmental information activities from the term "propaganda," which had acquired negative connotations; Cold War Era: During the Cold War, public diplomacy was used by the United States and other countries to promote their values and policies abroad. The United States Information Agency (USIA) was a key player in this period; Post-Cold War Era: By the late 20th century, public diplomacy was widely seen as an integral part of state-to-state diplomacy, involving activities such as educational exchanges, cultural events, and media broadcasting; Post-9/11 Era: After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, public diplomacy gained increased attention globally. The rise of new media and communication technologies has empowered non-state actors and elevated their role in international politics; New Public Diplomacy: In recent years, the concept of "new public diplomacy" has emerged, emphasizing the involvement of non-state actors such as supranational organizations, sub-national actors, NGOs, and private companies in engaging with foreign publics.

### **Main Theoretical Viewpoints of Public Diplomacy**

Soft Power: Coined by Joseph Nye, soft power refers to the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. Public diplomacy is seen as a mechanism to leverage a country's soft power; Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Public diplomacy is closely related to the impact of public opinion formation on foreign policy execution. It involves shaping public opinion in other nations and understanding the impact of international affairs on domestic policy; International Public Relations: Public diplomacy shares similarities with international public relations in terms of goals, target publics, strategies, and tools. Both focus on long-term, complex interactions to build relationships with foreign publics; Cultural Diplomacy: This viewpoint emphasizes the role of public diplomacy in promoting cultural exchanges, understanding, and cooperation. It sees public diplomacy as a means to foster intercultural dialogue and long-term national goals; The interconnection among public diplomacy, cultural communication, and the construction of national image highlights that cultural communication serves as a crucial instrument of public diplomacy, while shaping a positive national image constitutes a significant objective of public diplomacy.

### **Public Diplomacy and Cultural Communication**

Cultural Communication as a Tool of Public Diplomacy: Cultural communication is a crucial instrument of public diplomacy. It involves the exchange of ideas, art, and information between states and their people to enhance mutual understanding and interest. Through cultural diplomacy, countries can showcase their cultural heritage, values, and traditions to foreign

audiences. This helps in building long-term relationships and fostering a positive image of the country; Long-term Engagement and Mutual Understanding: Cultural diplomacy, as a form of public diplomacy, emphasizes long-term investment and mutual understanding. It is not just about promoting one's own culture but also about engaging with other cultures and learning from them. This approach helps in overcoming cultural barriers and building trust among different nations.

### **Public Diplomacy and National Image Construction**

**Shaping a Positive National Image:** One of the significant objectives of public diplomacy is to shape a positive national image. By influencing public attitudes and perceptions, countries can improve their reputation and standing in the international community. This is achieved through various public diplomacy techniques such as branding and advocacy; **Role of Government and Other Actors:** The construction of a national image is a joint responsibility shared by the government, media, and other social entities. Governments play a crucial role in communicating their country's values and policies to foreign audiences, while media and enterprises contribute through their international presence and communication efforts.

### **The Interplay Between Cultural Communication and National Image**

**Cultural Heritage and Positive Image:** Cultural communication serves as a powerful means to highlight a country's cultural heritage and achievements. By showcasing its arts, traditions, and values, a country can create a positive image that attracts international attention and support. This positive image, in turn, enhances the country's soft power and influence in global affairs; **Overcoming Stereotypes:** Cultural communication can also help in overcoming negative stereotypes and misconceptions about a country. Through cultural exchanges and events, countries can present a more authentic and nuanced view of themselves to the world. This is essential in building a favorable national image and fostering international cooperation.

### **Indian Diaspora and India's Public Diplomacy**

#### **Concept and Scope of Indian Diaspora**

The term "Diaspora" originates from the ancient Greek word "diaspeiro," where "dia" signifies "through" and "speiro" denotes "to scatter or disperse." In its original usage, "Diaspora" specifically described Jewish communities dispersed globally due to historical events. Over time, the term has been extended to encompass migrants or exiles from any country or ethnic group who have relocated due to factors such as colonial expansion, imperialism, trade, business opportunities, the pursuit of improved living conditions, and globalization. "Diaspora" emphasizes the enduring emotional attachment and sense of belonging that immigrants maintain toward their homeland or ancestral roots, reflecting deep-seated emotional and identity affiliations. While changes in nationality may alter certain aspects of personal identity, they cannot eradicate or modify this fundamental allegiance. As such, the theoretical framework of

"Diaspora," initially developed to address the experiences of Jewish communities, has since been expanded to analyze nearly all transnational migration phenomena and immigrant groups.

The Government of India and authoritative institutions define "Indian Diaspora" as individuals of Indian origin and their descendants who have emigrated from territories currently comprising India to reside abroad. This population is categorized into three primary groups: Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), who retain Indian citizenship but reside overseas, Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), who hold foreign citizenship but possess Indian ancestry, and Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs), Individuals of Indian origin granted permanent residency in India. According to a report issued by the Ministry of External Affairs of India in May 2024, there are approximately 35.42 million Overseas Indians globally, consisting of 15.85 million NRIs and 19.57 million PIOs. These communities are distributed across over 200 countries and regions, with significant populations exceeding one million in the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Kuwait. The Indian Diaspora is one of the largest in the world, they are highly diverse, comprising people from different regions, religions, castes, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Despite living in foreign countries, they maintain strong connections to their cultural roots, often celebrating Indian customs and traditions.

### **Strategic Role of Indian Diaspora in Public Diplomacy**

The Indian Diaspora community has garnered substantial attention in both domestic and international academic research and public discourse. Additionally, the Indian government actively engages this diaspora to mobilize public support and advance national development objectives.

Their strategic role is multifaceted, encompassing cultural dissemination, image ambassadorship, and acting as diplomatic bridges.

### **Cultural Disseminators**

The Indian Diaspora plays a pivotal role in spreading Indian culture, traditions, and values globally. Through various means, they promote India's rich cultural heritage, fostering cross-cultural understanding and respect. For instance, Indian festivals like Diwali and Holi are widely celebrated in countries such as the U.S. and the UK, creating a platform for cultural diplomacy. And China is no exception. Many Indians living in China gather to celebrate important festivals like Diwali. These celebrations not only introduce Indian customs to the Chinese public but also strengthen the sense of community among the diaspora. Such festivals create a platform for cultural diplomacy, allowing Chinese people to experience the joy and significance of Indian traditions firsthand. This helps in fostering mutual respect and understanding. These celebrations not only introduce Indian customs to the host societies but also strengthen the sense of community among the diaspora.

Indian classical music and dance are gaining popularity in China. Indian dance forms like Bharatanatyam and Kathak are taught in China through workshops and classes. For example, the Le Wu Bo Sa Indian Classical Art Center in China, founded by Jin Shanshan, has trained many students in Indian classical dance. This not only spreads Indian dance culture but also creates a new generation of performers who can further promote it. Yoga, an integral part of Indian culture, has gained immense popularity in China. Many Indians teach yoga in China, promoting not just physical fitness but also the philosophical aspects of yoga. This has led to a growing appreciation for Indian wellness practices. Some Indian diaspora in China are involved in teaching Hindi and other Indian languages, as well as promoting Indian literature. This helps in creating a deeper understanding of Indian culture and values. They use social media platforms to share their cultural experiences and traditions. This helps in creating a broader awareness and appreciation of Indian culture among the Chinese public. Regular community events organized by Indians in China, such as cultural fairs and exhibitions, provide an opportunity for the Chinese public to interact with Indian culture in a fun and engaging way. Through these diverse efforts, the Indian Diaspora in China plays a crucial role in promoting cross-cultural understanding and enriching the cultural landscape of both countries.

Moreover, the diaspora organizes cultural events that showcase Indian art, music, and dance. These events provide a window into India's diverse cultural landscape, enhancing the global appreciation of Indian traditions. The presence of Indian restaurants, Bollywood movies, and traditional Indian attire in various countries further contributes to the dissemination of Indian culture.

### **Image Ambassadors**

Members of the Indian Diaspora often serve as informal ambassadors, promoting a positive image of India in their host countries. Their success stories in various fields, such as technology, medicine, and business, highlight India's potential and talent. For example, Indian-origin leaders like UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris advocate for India's interests and enhance its international reputation. Additionally, the economic contributions of the diaspora, including remittances and investments, play a crucial role in India's development.

The Indian Diaspora also engages in philanthropic activities, supporting healthcare, education, and disaster relief in India. These efforts demonstrate their commitment to their homeland and further enhance India's image. The American India Foundation, for instance, funds various education and livelihood projects in rural India.

### **Diplomatic Bridges**

The Indian Diaspora has emerged as a crucial force in fostering stronger bilateral relations between India and their host countries. Their multifaceted role as intermediaries extends beyond cultural exchange to encompass economic integration, political cooperation, and crisis management. This comprehensive

engagement not only benefits India but also enhances the global standing of both the host countries and India itself. They act as intermediaries, promoting trade, investment, and political cooperation. For example, the Vibrant Gujarat Summit actively engages NRIs for investment and development opportunities, fostering economic integration. The diaspora also lobbies for India's interests in foreign governments, influencing policy decisions and fostering diplomatic ties. The Indian Diaspora also plays a vital role in influencing policy decisions and fostering political cooperation between India and their host countries. In the United States, for instance, Indian-origin professionals and organizations have been actively involved in lobbying efforts. The US India Political Action Committee (USINPAC) has been instrumental in shaping U.S. policies towards India, advocating for stronger bilateral ties and supporting India's strategic interests.

A notable example is the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal in 2008, where the Indian Diaspora played a pivotal role in lobbying for its passage. Their influence helped secure U.S. support for India's civilian nuclear program, marking a significant milestone in Indo-U.S. relations. Similarly, in the Gulf countries, the Indian Diaspora has been influential in promoting India's interests, contributing to the strengthening of bilateral ties in areas such as trade, energy, and security.

In times of conflict or crisis, the Indian government often takes proactive measures to ensure the safety of its diaspora. For instance, during the Sudan crisis, India evacuated over 7,000 citizens, demonstrating its commitment to their welfare. Such actions not only protect the diaspora but also strengthen India's diplomatic standing.

### **Government Initiatives to Engage the Diaspora**

The Indian government has implemented several policies and initiatives to engage with and leverage the potential of the Indian Diaspora effectively. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD), celebrated biennially on January 9, honors the contributions of the diaspora and fosters connections with India. The PBD Convention includes events, seminars, and award ceremonies, recognizing the achievements of overseas Indians in various fields.

The Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) scheme allows people of Indian origin to apply for a lifelong visa to visit India without restrictions on the duration of stay. This scheme also provides benefits such as the ability to open bank accounts, buy property, and invest in India. The Know India Program (KIP) engages young diaspora members with Indian culture, heritage, and contemporary developments, fostering a sense of belonging.

The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) offers financial assistance to Indians abroad during emergencies or distress, ensuring their welfare. Social Security Agreements with various countries also protect Indian workers, ensuring their rights and benefits.

The Indian government has recognized the significant potential of the Indian Diaspora in driving national development. Programs like "Make in India" are

designed to attract investment and expertise from the Diaspora, leveraging their global experience and resources to boost India's economic growth. This approach is supported by a range of policies and initiatives aimed at fostering a conducive environment for Diaspora engagement. Launched in 2014, the "Make in India" initiative aims to transform India into a global manufacturing hub by attracting foreign and domestic investment. For example, the government has streamlined regulatory processes and offered tax incentives to encourage Diaspora investment. As of 2024, the program has attracted significant foreign direct investment (FDI), with the Indian Diaspora contributing through direct investments and partnerships. This has not only boosted manufacturing but also created jobs and enhanced India's export capabilities.

### **Challenges and the Way Forward**

Despite their significant contributions, the Indian Diaspora faces several challenges. Many laborers in Gulf countries face harsh working conditions, low pay, and limited rights. Integration issues, cultural and linguistic differences, and limited access to legal aid further complicate their situation. To address these challenges, the Indian government needs to strengthen consular services, implement stronger protections against labor exploitation, and ensure robust legal safeguards.

Engaging the diaspora through cultural, social, and economic programs can deepen their connections with India. Promoting Indian languages, traditions, and history can help preserve cultural identity among the diaspora. Encouraging investments and knowledge sharing from successful diaspora members can also contribute to India's development.

### **The Role of Overseas Indians in Cultural Dissemination**

#### **The Dissemination of Language and Cultural Symbols**

Indian Diaspora play a pivotal role in the global dissemination of Indian languages and cultural symbols. Through family, community, and educational institutions, they promote Hindi and other regional Indian languages, while also introducing traditional Indian cultural symbols such as attire, religious icons, and culinary traditions. These efforts enhance cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

#### **The Dissemination of Language**

Many Indian Diaspora maintain strong family ties and pass on their native languages to the younger generations. This is often done through daily conversations, storytelling, and cultural practices within the family. For example, in cities like Guangzhou, Indian families gather during festivals to celebrate and share their linguistic heritage. These gatherings not only preserve the languages but also create a sense of cultural continuity and identity among the diaspora. Community centers and cultural associations serve as hubs for language promotion. These centers offer language classes, cultural events, and workshops where Indians and locals can interact and learn from each other. In China, such centers have been instrumental in teaching Hindi and other Indian languages.

For instance, the Indian Cultural Association in Beijing regularly organizes language classes and cultural events that attract both Indians and Chinese locals, fostering a deeper understanding of Indian linguistic heritage.

They celebrate World Hindi Day in a variety of vibrant and meaningful ways, highlighting the importance and richness of the Hindi language. World Hindi Day is an annual celebration observed on January 10 to promote the Hindi language globally and highlight its cultural and historical significance. This day commemorates the first World Hindi Conference, which was held on January 10, 1975, in Nagpur, India. The conference was a landmark event that emphasized the importance of Hindi as a language of cultural and diplomatic relevance. The theme for World Hindi Day 2025 is "Hindi: A Global Voice of Unity and Cultural Pride." This theme emphasizes the role of Hindi in fostering international cultural and linguistic exchanges, and its growing influence in the digital era. Indian embassies and consulates around the world host events to promote Hindi and engage local communities. These events include seminars, cultural programs, and discussions about the role of Hindi in global communication. In countries with large Indian diasporas, such as Mauritius, Nepal, Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago, and South Africa, communities come together to celebrate the day with various events that highlight both the language and the culture.

Universities and cultural institutions sometimes host academic programs and lectures on Indian languages and literature. For instance, Yunnan Minzu University in China, there have been initiatives to promote Hindi through academic exchanges and language programs. The Indian Cultural Center in Beijing has organized seminars and workshops on Indian literature, inviting renowned Indian authors and scholars to share their insights. These programs not only enhance the academic understanding of Indian languages but also create a platform for cultural dialogue.

### **The Dissemination of Indian Cultural Symbols**

During festivals like Diwali and Holi, Indians in overseas wear traditional attire such as sarees, lehengas, and turbans. These events provide an opportunity for locals to see and appreciate Indian clothing. For example, the Diwali celebrations in overseas feature traditional Indian costumes, attracting the attention of the Chinese people public. Additionally, fashion shows and cultural performances showcase the beauty and significance of Indian attire, further enhancing its visibility and appreciation.

Temples and cultural centers often display statues and images of Hindu deities. These religious icons are central to many cultural events and festivals. For example, during the Vasant Mela festival in Beijing, Hindu deities are prominently featured, allowing participants to learn about their significance. The architecture of Indian temples, with its intricate designs and symbolic elements, is also showcased through exhibitions and cultural exchanges, highlighting the rich cultural heritage of India. BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir built by Indian

Diaspora is located in Robbinsville, New Jersey. It is the largest Hindu temple in the United States, covering 162 acres. The temple is built in the Nagaradi style using 68,000 cubic feet of Italian Carrara marble. BAPS Indian Temples in the United Kingdom is located in Neasden, London. It is one of the largest and most significant Hindu temples in Europe. The temple is built in traditional North Indian style. Its exterior is crafted from carefully selected stone, with intricate carvings depicting stories from Hindu mythology. It serves as a vibrant community hub where cultural events, religious festivals, and educational programs are held.

These temples not only serve as places of worship but also as cultural centers that promote Indian traditions and values. They play a crucial role in preserving and disseminating Indian cultural heritage globally.

Indian cuisine is not only a beloved culinary tradition but also a powerful cultural ambassador that transcends geographical boundaries. The packaging and promotion of Indian cuisine by overseas Indians, regardless of the country they reside in, serve multiple purposes and reflect deeper cultural, social, and economic dynamics. For Indian diaspora, food is a tangible and deeply emotional connection to their roots. It serves as a means of preserving and expressing their cultural identity in a foreign land. By sharing traditional dishes like curry, naan, and biryani, they are able to maintain a sense of continuity with their heritage. This is particularly important in the context of diaspora communities, where maintaining cultural traditions can help combat feelings of alienation and homesickness.

Indian restaurants and culinary events often act as community hubs for overseas Indians. These spaces provide a platform for social interaction, fostering a sense of belonging and community among expatriates. By organizing special events during festivals like Diwali or Holi, these restaurants create a shared cultural experience that strengthens bonds within the community. They also serve as meeting points for Indians from different regions, allowing them to share and celebrate the diverse culinary traditions of India.

Food is a universal language that can bridge cultural gaps. By introducing authentic Indian cuisine to locals in cities like Beijing and Shanghai, overseas Indians are facilitating cultural exchange and fostering mutual understanding. Cooking classes and workshops are particularly effective in this regard, as they provide an interactive and immersive experience. Locals who participate in these classes not only learn how to prepare traditional Indian dishes but also gain insights into the cultural significance and history behind the recipes. This hands-on approach helps demystify Indian culture and promotes a more nuanced understanding of its complexities.

The global popularity of Indian cuisine presents significant economic opportunities for overseas Indians. Indian restaurants are a thriving business in many cities around the world, contributing to the local economy and creating jobs. By packaging and promoting Indian cuisine, overseas Indians are tapping



into a lucrative market. The success of these ventures can also lead to the establishment of additional businesses, such as spice shops, food festivals, and cultural events, further boosting the local economy. By promoting Indian cuisine, overseas Indians are contributing to the global perception of India as a rich and diverse cultural entity. This can enhance India's cultural diplomacy efforts, fostering positive international relations and a favorable image of the country. The popularity of Indian cuisine can also lead to increased interest in other aspects of Indian culture, such as music, dance, and literature, creating a ripple effect of cultural dissemination.

Indian diaspora often adapts and innovates traditional recipes to suit local tastes and dietary preferences. This process of culinary fusion not only makes Indian cuisine more accessible to a broader audience but also reflects the dynamic nature of cultural exchange. For example, in some countries, Indian dishes are modified to be less spicy or to incorporate local ingredients. This adaptability ensures that Indian cuisine remains relevant and appealing while still retaining its core cultural essence.

Through these efforts, Indian Diaspora significantly contribute to cross-cultural understanding and respect. By sharing their languages, cultural symbols, and traditions, they create a bridge between different cultures. This not only enriches the cultural landscape of the host countries but also fosters a sense of global community and mutual appreciation.

### **The Role of the Indian Diaspora in National Image Construction The Construction of Image in the Economic Domain**

Overseas Indian entrepreneurs have made significant contributions to the global business landscape through their innovative ideas, strategic acumen, and leadership skills. Prominent figures like Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella have not only achieved remarkable success in their respective fields but have also played a crucial role in enhancing India's global economic image. Their accomplishments highlight the country's innovative capabilities and business acumen, attracting international investment and fostering global collaboration opportunities.

Sundar Pichai, the former CEO of Google, has been instrumental in driving the company's growth and innovation. Under his leadership, Google expanded its product portfolio significantly, including the development of Google Chrome, Android, and Google Drive. Pichai's strategic vision has also led to Google's dominance in the global search engine market and its expansion into emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and cloud computing. Pichai's success at Google has positioned India as a global leader in technology and innovation. His achievements highlight the potential of Indian talent in the tech industry, inspiring future generations of Indian entrepreneurs. Moreover, his leadership has attracted significant investment in Indian tech startups and fostered collaboration between Indian and global tech companies.

## ***CULTURAL DISSEMINATION, NATION BRANDING AND INDIAN DIASPORA***

Satya Nadella, the CEO of Microsoft, has transformed the company through a series of strategic initiatives. He has led Microsoft's shift towards cloud computing and artificial intelligence, making significant acquisitions such as LinkedIn, GitHub, and Mojang. Under his leadership, Microsoft has embraced open-source technologies and fostered a culture of innovation and collaboration. His success has enhanced India's reputation as a hub for technological innovation and business leadership. Also have demonstrated the potential of Indian professionals to drive global technological advancements. Additionally, his leadership has attracted investment in India's tech sector and created opportunities for collaboration between Indian and international tech companies.

Sunil Bharti Mittal is the founder and chairman of Bharti Enterprises, one of the world's largest telecom companies. His company, Bharti Airtel, operates in over 18 countries and has significantly transformed connectivity in underserved region. In 2024, Mittal acquired a 24.5% stake in the British telecom operator BT Group for \$4 billion, showcasing India's rising influence in global market. Mittal's success in the global telecom industry has positioned India as a major player in the telecommunications sector. His initiatives have attracted investment and fostered collaboration opportunities, bridging the digital divide in many regions.

Ylias Akbaraly, a prominent entrepreneur of Indian heritage, heads Groupe Sipromad, a diversified conglomerate operating in Madagascar. Under his leadership, the group has expanded into renewable energy, technology, real estate, and broadcasting. Notably, the acquisition of Thomson Broadcast in 2018 established Sipromad as a key player in the global broadcasting industry. Akbaraly's success demonstrates the potential of Indian entrepreneurs to thrive in emerging markets and drive sustainable growth. His initiatives have attracted investment and fostered collaboration opportunities in Madagascar and beyond. The success stories of overseas Indian entrepreneurs like Sundar Pichai, Satya Nadella, Sunil Bharti Mittal, and Ylias Akbaraly have significantly enhanced India's global economic image. Their achievements in the international business arena highlight India's innovative capabilities and business acumen, attracting international investment and fostering opportunities for global collaboration. These entrepreneurs serve as role models for future generations, inspiring them to pursue excellence on the global stage and contribute to India's continued growth and development.

Overseas Indians have played a significant role in shaping India's economic landscape through their contributions to international economic organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These individuals have leveraged their positions to advocate for India's economic interests, promote its image as an emerging economy, and foster international cooperation and investment opportunities.

Overseas Indians have held influential positions within the World Bank, contributing to its policies and projects. As a key player in global finance, the World Bank Group provides financial and technical assistance to developing countries, including India. Indian professionals within the organization have been instrumental in shaping development projects that align with India's economic goals. For example, they have advocated for infrastructure development, poverty alleviation programs, and sustainable growth initiatives that directly benefit India. Their involvement has also helped India access significant financial resources and technical expertise, enabling the country to implement large-scale development projects.

India has a long-standing relationship with the IMF, which has provided financial assistance during economic crises and offered policy advice to support economic reforms. Overseas Indians within the IMF have played a crucial role in this relationship. For instance, Raghuram Rajan, a prominent Indian economist, has held influential positions in both the IMF and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). As the Chief Economist and Director of Research at the IMF from 2003 to 2006, Rajan played a crucial role in shaping global economic policies. His insights into financial stability and regulatory frameworks were instrumental during a period of significant global economic challenges. Rajan's work at the IMF also helped strengthen India's voice in international economic discussions, highlighting the need for reforms and greater representation of emerging After his tenure at the IMF, Rajan returned to India and served as the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India from 2013 to 2016. During this period, he implemented several key reforms aimed at stabilizing the Indian economy and promoting sustainable growth. His experience at the IMF provided valuable insights into global economic trends, which he leveraged to shape India's monetary policy and financial sector reforms.

Arvind Subramanian is another notable Indian economist who has made significant contributions to international economic organizations. He served as the Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India and has been associated with the IMF and the World Bank. Subramanian's research and policy recommendations have focused on issues such as trade, development, and climate change, providing valuable perspectives on how emerging economies like India can navigate global economic challenges. His work at the IMF and the World Bank has helped shape policies that benefit not only India but also other developing countries. Subramanian's advocacy for greater economic cooperation and his emphasis on sustainable development have positioned India as a leader in global economic discussions. Kalpana Kochhar, an Indian economist, has had a distinguished career at the IMF, where she has held various senior positions. Her expertise in macroeconomics and development economics has been crucial in shaping the IMF's approach to supporting economic growth in emerging markets. Kochhar's work has focused on issues such as gender equality, economic inclusion, and sustainable development, highlighting the importance

of these factors in driving economic growth. Her contributions have helped elevate India's profile in international economic forums, demonstrating the country's commitment to inclusive and sustainable development. Kochhar's work has also fostered greater collaboration between the IMF and India, leading to more effective policy implementation and economic reforms.

The presence of Indian Diaspora in international economic institutions has significantly enhanced India's global image. Their contributions have demonstrated India's capabilities in economic management, technological innovation, and business leadership. For example, the success of Indian professionals in the IMF and the World Bank has showcased India's talent pool and its potential to drive global economic change. Additionally, the active participation of overseas Indians in shaping international economic policies has positioned India as a key player in global economic discussions. This has helped counter any negative perceptions and highlighted India's progress and achievements on the global stage.

Indian Diaspora in international economic organizations have been proactive in advocating for India's economic interests. They have used their positions to highlight the potential of the Indian economy and the need for greater investment and collaboration opportunities. For example, Indian-origin officials have emphasized the importance of India's growing middle class and its potential as a global market. This has attracted significant foreign investment, with India receiving over \$100 billion in annual remittances, making it the largest recipient of such funds globally. These remittances have not only supported individual households but have also been invested in new assets and public welfare schemes, contributing to India's economic growth.

### **Image Building in the Field of Science, Technology, and Innovation**

Overseas Indian tech talents have made remarkable contributions to the global technology sector, particularly in Silicon Valley and cutting-edge fields such as artificial intelligence, big data, and biotechnology. Their achievements have not only reshaped the global community's perception of India's technological capabilities but have also bolstered India's reputation in the international tech landscape, attracting additional tech talents and investments to the country.

Indian professionals have played a pivotal role in the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Silicon Valley. Since the 1980s, waves of Indian engineers and entrepreneurs have migrated to the United States, establishing a strong presence in the tech industry. Notable figures like Vinod Dham, known as the "Father of the Pentium Chip," and Vinod Khosla, co-founder of Sun Microsystems, have made groundbreaking contributions. By 1998, Indian-born entrepreneurs had founded 7% of all Silicon Valley startups, and by 2012, this number had risen to 13.4%. Today, Indian-origin entrepreneurs continue to dominate, with significant contributions in sectors such as biosciences (35%), computers/communications (28%), and software (33%).

Indian tech talents have also made significant contributions to cutting-edge fields such as artificial intelligence (AI) and big data. For instance, Ashish Vaswani and Niki Parmar, both Indian-origin scientists, were key contributors to the development of the Transformer architecture, which underpins modern AI models like GPT. Additionally, Aditya Ramesh, an Indian-origin researcher, led the development of Open AI's DALL•E model. These achievements highlight the role of Indian professionals in driving technological advancements. Indian-origin researchers and developers are actively involved in R&D centers across the globe. They contribute to advancements in AI, quantum computing, healthcare technology, and sustainable IT solutions. For example, many global companies have established R&D hubs in India, leveraging the country's talent pool to drive innovation. This has not only enhanced India's reputation as a hub for technological research but has also attracted significant investment in the sector.

The achievements of overseas Indian tech talents have significantly reshaped the global community's perception of India's technological capabilities. Their contributions have demonstrated that India is a leader in technology and innovation, capable of driving global advancements. This has attracted additional tech talents and investments to India, with many global companies setting up operations in cities like Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Chennai. The success of Indian-origin professionals in Silicon Valley has also inspired a new generation of entrepreneurs within India, contributing to the growth of its own startup ecosystem.

### **Image Building in Education and Academia**

Overseas Indian scholars have made significant contributions to the global academic community, enhancing India's reputation in education and academia. Prominent figures such as mathematician Harish-Chandra and economist Amartya Sen have not only achieved remarkable academic success but have also inspired international collaboration and attracted global attention to India's educational sector.

Harish-Chandra (1923–1983) was a renowned Indian mathematician and physicist whose work has had a profound impact on the fields of representation theory and harmonic analysis. His contributions include the development of the Harish-Chandra homomorphism, a powerful tool that relates representations of semi-simple Lie algebras and groups. He received numerous accolades for his work, including the Cole Prize from the American Mathematical Society in 1954 and the Srinivasa Ramanujan Medal in 1974. Harish-Chandra's research laid the foundation for future advancements in mathematics and inspired generations of mathematicians worldwide.

Amartya Sen is an influential Indian economist and philosopher whose work has reshaped modern understanding of welfare economics and development. Sen's contributions include pioneering work on social choice theory, the capability approach, and the causes of famine. His book *Development as Freedom* (1999)

argues that development should focus on expanding human capabilities and freedoms, rather than merely increasing economic output. Sen received the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1998 for his work in welfare economics and was awarded India's highest civilian honor, the Bharat Ratna, in 1999. His research has influenced global policy-making and inspired the creation of the Human Development Index (HDI) by the United Nations Development Programme.

The success of Indian scholars has inspired international students and researchers to engage in academic exchanges and studies in India. Institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) have become global destinations for higher education.

Indian scholars have collaborated with leading global institutions, fostering a culture of academic excellence and innovation. For example, Amartya Sen's work has influenced policy-making at the United Nations and the World Bank.

The international recognition of Indian scholars has bolstered the global perception of India's educational institutions. This has led to increased investment in education and research, further strengthening India's position as a hub for academic excellence.

The academic achievements of overseas Indian scholars like Harish-Chandra and Amartya Sen have had a profound impact on the global academic community. Their contributions have not only enhanced India's reputation in education and academia but have also attracted international talent and investment to the country. These scholars serve as role models for future generations, inspiring continued excellence and innovation in India's educational sector.

### **Image Construction in Social and Cultural Domains**

#### **Construction of the Image of Overseas Indians in International Cultural Exchanges**

Overseas Indians have played a significant role in fostering international cultural exchanges, contributing to the construction of a positive image of India as a multicultural and inclusive nation. Through their active participation in cultural festivals, art exhibitions, and academic symposia, they present a friendly, open, and inclusive image that enhances mutual understanding and trust among nations and regions.

They are often the ambassadors of Indian culture in their host countries. They actively participate in cultural festivals, showcasing the rich diversity of Indian traditions, music, dance, and cuisine. For example, during events like the Holi or Diwali, overseas Indians organize vibrant celebrations that attract people from diverse backgrounds. These festivals are not only a celebration of Indian culture but also an opportunity to share its values of joy, unity, and inclusivity.

Art exhibitions featuring Indian artists are another platform where overseas Indians present a positive image of their homeland. Exhibitions of traditional Indian art forms, such as miniature paintings, sculptures, and contemporary

works, provide a window into India's rich artistic heritage. These events often include interactive workshops and lectures, allowing participants to engage deeply with Indian culture and fostering a sense of connection and appreciation. Cultural exchanges initiated by overseas Indians play a crucial role in breaking down stereotypes and building bridges between different cultures. By sharing their traditions and values, they create an environment of mutual respect and understanding. For instance, Indian film festivals held in various countries showcase Bollywood movies that highlight Indian social issues, family values, and cultural nuances. These screenings are often followed by discussions and interactions, providing a platform for open dialogue and cultural exchange.

Academic symposia and conferences are another important avenue for fostering mutual understanding. Overseas Indian scholars and professionals participate in international conferences, presenting research and insights that reflect India's contributions to various fields. These events provide an opportunity for global collaboration and knowledge-sharing, enhancing the perception of India as a nation that values education and intellectual pursuit.

The active involvement of overseas Indians in international cultural exchanges has significantly contributed to the construction of India's positive image as a multicultural nation. Their efforts highlight India's rich cultural heritage, its values of inclusivity, and its contributions to global culture and knowledge. This positive image attracts international students, tourists, and professionals to India, fostering further cultural exchange and collaboration. For example, the India International Centre (IIC) in New Delhi is a hub for cultural and intellectual exchange, hosting events that bring together people from diverse backgrounds. Similarly, the Taj Mahotsav, an annual cultural festival held in Agra, showcases the best of Indian art, music, and dance, attracting visitors from around the world. These initiatives are supported by the efforts of overseas Indians who promote such events globally, enhancing India's reputation as a welcoming and culturally rich nation.

### **Construction of the Image of Overseas Indians in Global Social Welfare Activities**

Indian Diaspora have made significant contributions to international social welfare through charitable donations, volunteer services, and environmental conservation efforts. Their activities reflect the social responsibility and humanitarian values of the Indian community, enhancing India's reputation within the global community.

#### **Charitable Contributions**

Overseas Indians are known for their generous charitable contributions, which have had a profound impact on both their host countries and India. In 2024, several prominent Indian philanthropists collectively donated over Rs 32,501 crore (\$4 billion) to various causes. For example, the late Ratan Tata bequeathed Rs 10,000 crore to the Ratan Tata Endowment Foundation, supporting education, healthcare, and marginalized communities. Similarly, Abhishek Lodha

transferred significant shares of his company to the Lodha Philanthropy Foundation, which focuses on women, children, the environment, and Indian culture.

Indian Americans have also been major donors in the United States, contributing over \$1.5 billion in 2023. Since 2008, individuals of Indian origin have donated approximately \$3 billion to US universities. These contributions highlight the philanthropic spirit of the Indian diaspora and their commitment to improving education and healthcare globally.

### **Volunteer Services**

Overseas Indians actively participate in volunteer services, contributing their time and skills to various social causes. The Organisation for the Welfare of Overseas Indians (OWOI) provides numerous volunteer opportunities both in India and internationally, including event coordination, outreach, and mentorship programs. These initiatives help build a sense of community and belonging among overseas Indians while also supporting those in need.

In addition, organizations like the American Indian Foundation (AIF) have mobilized the Indian-American community to provide relief during natural disasters and support long-term development projects in India. For example, AIF launched the #RebuildLives campaign in 2020 to support migrant workers affected by the COVID-19 lockdowns. These efforts demonstrate the commitment of overseas Indians to social welfare and their ability to mobilize resources effectively.

### **Environmental Conservation Efforts**

Environmental conservation is another area where overseas Indians have made significant contributions. Nikhil Kamath, co-founder of Zerodha, donated Rs 120 crore (\$15 million) to the Rainmatter Foundation, which focuses on climate change and sustainability. This donation highlights the growing awareness and commitment of overseas Indians to addressing global environmental challenges. Other initiatives include the work of the Indian diaspora in promoting sustainable practices and supporting environmental projects in their host countries. For example, the Indian American community has been actively involved in conservation efforts in the United States, leveraging their expertise and resources to drive positive change.

The social welfare activities of overseas Indians reflect the values of social responsibility and humanitarianism deeply rooted in Indian culture. Their contributions have enhanced India's reputation as a nation committed to global welfare and sustainable development. By supporting education, healthcare, and environmental initiatives, overseas Indians have fostered goodwill and trust between India and other nations.

Moreover, these activities have inspired a new generation of philanthropists and volunteers, both within the Indian diaspora and in India itself. The growing trend of strategic giving and impact investing among overseas Indians is testament to their commitment to creating lasting change. This trend is likely to



continue as more Indians abroad seek meaningful ways to contribute to social welfare and environmental conservation.

The involvement of overseas Indians in international social welfare endeavors is a testament to their commitment to social responsibility and humanitarian values. Through charitable contributions, volunteer services, and environmental conservation efforts, they have made a significant impact on global welfare. These activities not only enhance India's reputation within the global community but also inspire others to engage in similar initiatives. As overseas Indians continue to contribute to social welfare, their efforts will further strengthen India's position as a leader in global humanitarianism and sustainable development.

### **The Interactive Relationship of Indian Diaspora in Cultural Dissemination and Image Building**

Indian Diaspora play a pivotal role in the propagation of Indian culture and the construction of India's global image, with a profound interplay existing between these two phenomena. This relationship is evident not only in the positive reinforcement of India's image through cultural diffusion but also in the reciprocal feedback loop where image-building enhances cultural outreach. Through this dynamic bidirectional interaction, Indian Diaspora have significantly bolstered India's global influence while simultaneously reinforcing the attractiveness and recognition of Indian culture on an international scale.

### **The Promoting Role of Cultural Dissemination in Image Building Cultural Attraction and Image Enhancement**

Cultural dissemination has significantly enhanced India's global appeal and image recognition by presenting its rich cultural symbols and diverse artistic expressions. The Indian diaspora has deepened the world's understanding of India's cultural heritage and unique charm through activities such as celebrating traditional festivals (e.g., Diwali and Holi), organizing art exhibitions, and promoting Indian classical music and dance. This form of cultural outreach has not only challenged and transformed stereotypical perceptions of India but also elevated its global reputation. For instance, the international popularity of Indian classical music and dance, along with the global proliferation of yoga, has substantially reinforced India's standing as a cultural powerhouse.

### **The Synergistic Effect of Cultural and Value Dissemination**

The integration of cultural and value dissemination has significantly shaped the international community's perception and evaluation of India. The diaspora of overseas Indians has played a pivotal role in portraying India as a nation actively embodying universal values, such as family cohesion, respect for tradition, and harmonious coexistence. This interplay and reinforcement between cultural and value dissemination have bolstered India's global image through diverse mechanisms. For instance, the worldwide influence of Indian cinema not only highlights India's cultural diversity but also communicates the core values of Indian society, thereby enhancing the global appeal of Indian culture.

### **The Feedback Effect of Image Building on Cultural Dissemination Enhancing Global Attention and Interest**

A positive national image has significantly elevated India's global visibility and appeal, thereby creating substantial opportunities for cultural dissemination. As India's advancements in technology, economy, and culture gain widespread recognition, international interest in Indian culture is correspondingly increasing. For instance, the achievements of Indian-origin entrepreneurs such as Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella not only highlight India's technological capabilities but also stimulate global curiosity regarding the cultural origins and values underpinning these successes. This heightened curiosity encourages a broader exploration of India's cultural practices, traditions, and core values, effectively fostering the dissemination of its rich cultural heritage.

### **Strengthening Cultural Identity and Pride**

A positive national image significantly enhances the cultural identity and pride among overseas Indians, encouraging them to engage more actively in cultural dissemination efforts. When the global community acknowledges and values India's contributions, it inspires overseas Indians to enthusiastically share their cultural heritage. This heightened sense of pride fosters richer and more impactful cultural activities, such as increasingly frequent and spectacular music concerts, dance performances, and art exhibitions. For instance, as international appreciation for Indian classical music and dance continues to expand, overseas Indians have successfully organized a greater number of high-quality events, thereby further promoting cross-cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

### **Facilitate cross-cultural communication and understanding**

A positive national image serves as a catalyst for cross-cultural dialogue and fosters mutual understanding. When India is recognized as a culturally diverse and inclusive nation, other countries are more inclined to participate in cultural exchanges with it. This favorable international reputation establishes a robust platform for cultural collaboration, academic partnerships, and strategic alliances. For instance, the increasing global interest in Indian literature has facilitated the translation of numerous works by Indian authors into foreign languages, thereby disseminating Indian narratives and perspectives on a broader scale. Likewise, the significant contributions of scholars of Indian origin to international policy-making create new avenues for cultural engagement between India and the global community.

### **Facilitate cultural investment and foster collaborative partnerships**

A positive national image serves as a powerful magnet for cultural investment and international cooperation. As India's global reputation continues to strengthen, international organizations, cultural institutions, and artists are increasingly inclined to engage in collaborative projects with India. These partnerships provide invaluable resources and platforms for the dissemination of culture. For example, the establishment of Indian cultural centers worldwide creates dedicated venues for cultural exchange and education. By hosting

workshops, exhibitions, and performances that highlight Indian culture, these centers foster a deeper understanding among local audiences. Furthermore, international artistic collaborations, such as joint productions by Indian and foreign theater troupes or dance companies, significantly enhance the global influence of Indian cultural expression.

**Enhance cultural symbols and preserve traditions**

A positive national image amplifies the significance of cultural symbols and traditions. When India's cultural heritage is globally acknowledged and esteemed, its importance within overseas Indian communities is also enhanced. This enhancement motivates overseas Indians to be more diligent in preserving and promoting these cultural elements, thereby ensuring their sustained relevance and outreach. For instance, as Indian festivals such as Diwali and Holi gain increasing global recognition, overseas Indians organize more elaborate and culturally rich celebrations. These events not only introduce Indian customs to a wider audience but also reinforce the cultural significance of these festivals within the overseas Indian community. Similarly, the growing international appreciation for traditional Indian attire, such as the sari and turban, has encouraged overseas Indians to wear these garments more frequently during cultural events and even in daily life, further expanding their influence and appeal.

**Establish a positive feedback loop**

The mutual reinforcement between image building and cultural dissemination establishes a positive feedback loop, progressively amplifying their respective impacts. As India's international image continues to improve, the potential for cultural dissemination expands, fostering greater global recognition and appreciation of Indian culture. This heightened appreciation, in turn, further enhances India's reputation and stimulates increased interest and investment in cultural exchange initiatives. This symbiotic cycle not only sustains but also accelerates the growth of Indian cultural influence, thereby solidifying India's position on the global stage.

The symbiotic relationship between the Indian diaspora and cultural dissemination, as well as national image building, constitutes a pivotal force driving India's ascending influence on the global stage. Cultural propagation elevates India's international standing by highlighting its profound cultural heritage and diverse artistic expressions. In return, a favorable national image fosters greater opportunities for cultural outreach, thereby amplifying the global reach of Indian culture. This reciprocal interaction not only enhances India's global appeal and recognition but also establishes a robust foundation for cross-cultural exchanges and collaboration. As India's image continues to strengthen, the potential for cultural dissemination will expand, creating a virtuous cycle that propels the worldwide diffusion of Indian culture and fortifies ties between India and the global community.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Indian diaspora has played a pivotal role in shaping India's public diplomacy by promoting cultural understanding, enhancing the nation's global image, and contributing to its socio-economic development. Their multifaceted contributions have positioned India as a leader in various domains, fostering international cooperation and goodwill. As the Indian diaspora continues to engage in cultural, economic, technological, and social initiatives, their efforts will further strengthen India's global standing and contribute to its ongoing progress. The future holds great promise as the Indian diaspora continues to bridge cultural divides, drive innovation, and advocate for India's interests on the global stage.

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## FROM ARTISAN TO ARTIST: A DECADAL REVIEW OF HANDICRAFTS AWARDS IN INDIA

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### Abstract

*The handicrafts sector in India carries profound cultural heritage, economic importance, and social relevance. Over the past decade, the journey of Indian artisans has seen a significant transformation—from being traditional craftspeople to being recognized as artists of national importance. This decadal review of handicraft awards in India highlights how government recognition through national awards has not only honoured their exceptional skills but also elevated their social and economic status. This research paper presents a comparative analysis of data collected from the official website of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Government of India, focusing on awardees from 2012 to 2023. The study aims to understand the, gender-wise, craft-wise, state-wise and region-wise distribution of awarded artisans. Data from 447 awardees, comprising 329 males and 118 females, has been analysed. The data reveals a wide range of crafts—from painting, woodwork, and metal craft to lesser-known forms like palm leaf engraving and natural fiber craft—being acknowledged across regions. Notably, the Northern and Eastern regions dominate in terms of the number of awardees, while unique regional crafts continue to gain national visibility. The growing participation of women artisans and the diversification of awarded crafts indicate a positive trend toward inclusivity and innovation. This shift from mere craftsmanship to artistry marks a cultural resurgence and calls for sustained efforts in training, market access, and preservation of traditional knowledge systems.*

**Keywords:** Handicrafts, Artisan Diversity, Awards, Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Cultural Heritage, Rural Economy, Policy Support, Craft Preservation

The handicrafts sector in India holds immense cultural, economic, and social significance. It is a vital contributor to the country's economy, providing employment to a vast segment of craftspeople, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, and generating substantial foreign exchange through exports. Beyond its economic contributions, the sector plays a crucial role in preserving India's rich cultural heritage and traditional skills. The office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) serves as the nodal agency for promoting and developing this sector, offering technical and financial support through various schematic interventions and its extensive network of regional and field offices. To recognize excellence, encourage new talent, and promote innovation within the sector, the Government of India confers various Handicrafts Awards under the National Handicrafts Development Programme (NHDP) with an aim to acknowledge outstanding skills, foster creativity, and ensure the perpetuation of traditional craft forms. This research paper seeks to analyse the demographic trends among the recipients of these prestigious awards from 2012 to 2023. By examining the craft-wise, state-wise, gender-wise, and region-wise distribution of awardees, the study aims to understand patterns of recognition and identify potential disparities or concentrations within the

Indian handicrafts ecosystem. The data, comprising 447 artisans (329 male and 118 female), provides a valuable dataset for this comparative analysis.

**The Handicraft Industry& Awards by the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)**

The office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) is the nodal agency in the Government of India for craft and artisan-based activities. It assists in the development, marketing and export of handicrafts, and the promotion of craft forms and skills. The Handicrafts Awards program is a crucial initiative by the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) to acknowledge and promote excellence in the sector. The program's core objectives are -To honor artisans and designers who have significantly contributed to the promotion, development, and preservation of craft traditions and the welfare of the craft community; To motivate young artisans to continue their work with enthusiasm and productivity, and to inspire others to aspire to similar levels of excellence; To acknowledge individuals and designers who adopt innovative marketing strategies and achieve success in the handicraft domain; and To raise awareness about and celebrate the adoption of innovative technology in handicraft production, leading to increased output.

The paper includes main four types of awards as under: Shilp Guru Award: The Shilp Guru Award is the highest honour bestowed upon master craftspersons in India by the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). Instituted in 2002, the award recognizes lifetime achievement, mastery, and outstanding contribution to the preservation and promotion of India's rich handicraft traditions. Each awardee receives a certificate, a gold coin, a cash prize, a shawl, and a plaque, making it a highly prestigious recognition.

National Handicrafts Award: Instituted in 1965, the National Handicrafts Award is one of the most prominent recognitions for outstanding craftsmanship and innovation in the Indian handicrafts sector. It is awarded annually to craftspersons who demonstrate exceptional skill, creativity, and innovation in their craft. This award aims to encourage artisans by providing national recognition and visibility for their work. Awardees are selected through a multi-tier selection process involving expert committees. They are honored with a certificate, a cash prize, a Tamrapatra (bronze plaque), and a shawl. National Handicrafts Award for Start-up Venture is also a sub category of National Handicrafts Award.

National Merit Certificate: The National Merit Certificate was awarded to artisans who have demonstrated commendable craftsmanship and potential, though they might not have reached the level required for the National Award. It served as a form of encouragement and recognition for promising talent in the field of handicrafts. This has been discontinued after 2018.

Design Innovation Award: The Design Innovation Award is a relatively new initiative introduced to promote creativity, experimentation, and design evolution in the handicrafts sector. The award is intended for artisans who integrate traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design sensibilities, producing items that appeal to modern markets while retaining cultural value. This award reflects a strategic shift in policy focus toward design-led

development and market adaptation, especially in the context of globalization and competition with machine-made products. This award consists of a cash prize to be shared equally between the concerned designer and the artisan, a shawl, a certificate and Tamrapatra for both designer and artisan.

The application and selection process for these awards are rigorous, involving a three-tier system: Regional Level Selection Committee (RLSC), Headquarter Level Selection Committee (HLSC), and the Central Level Selection Committee (CLSC). This multi-stage evaluation ensures a comprehensive assessment of the applicants' skills, contributions, and the quality of their craftwork. Special emphasis is placed on identifying and supporting endangered crafts, with specific consideration given to efforts in their revival.

### **Objectives of the Study**

To analyze the trends of various types of Handicraft Awards offered by the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) from 2012 to 2023; To examine the gender-wise representation of handicraft awardees; To explore the awarded craft categories and their regional concentration; To provide suggestions for policy interventions that can help bridge disparities and promote equitable recognition of artisans across gender and region.

### **Research Methodology**

The data for this study were collected from the official website of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Government of India. There are 447 artisans from 26 states found from the list available 2012 to 2023. After the data entry with identified variables in excel and SPSS, crafts were categorised in to 16 categories for further analysis. The analysis involved quantitative tabulation, percentage calculation and comparative analysis using cross tabulation and charts.

### **Results and Discussion**

The data on the distribution of different types of handicraft awards over the years offers a clear picture of evolving priorities and patterns in artisan recognition in India. These awards include the Design Innovation Award, National Award, National Merit Certificate, and the prestigious Shilp Guru Award, collectively amounting to 447 recognitions between 2012 and 2023.

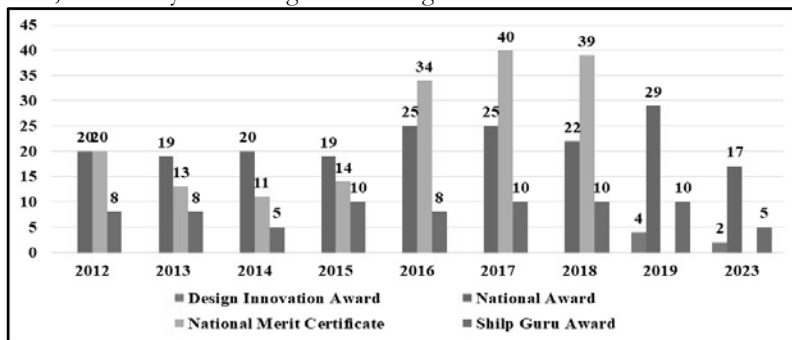


Figure 1: Distribution of Different Types of Handicraft Awards Over the Years



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The National Award consistently remains the most frequently conferred recognition across all years. It peaked in 2017, with 40 awards, followed closely by 2018 with 39 awards, and 2016 with 34 awards. The policy document shows that the National Award are now given under 17 identified categories including- Exclusively for women artisan, Young artisan below 30 years of age, Divyang artisan, Endangered Craft and Tribal artisan under Craft Category.

Award Data 2023 shows that Smt. P. Vijayalakshmi from Andhra Pradesh has received award under Women artisan category for Kalamkari Painting, Smt. Sabina Teronpi from Assam under Tribal artisan category for Karbi Tribal Textile, Ms. Priya (Young Artisan below 30 years) from Himachal Pradesh for Painting, Smt. A. Bimola Devi (Endangered Craft category) from Manipur for Shaphee-Lanphee handicrafts and Ms. Yengkhom O Indira Devi (Divyang Artisan Category) from Manipur have received the Nation Award for Hand embroidery.

The Shilp Guru Award, which is considered the highest honor for master artisans for an exceptional piece of craftwork to promote the handicraft and to impart their skills to the next generation of artisans. Data shows that during 2012-19, about 8-10 awards were given to the artisans. Afterwards, it has been decided that 6 such awards are to be given among which one is dedicated exclusively for women artisan. In 2023, two female artisans received this award (Smt. D. Sivamma from Andhra Pradesh for Leather Puppet Craft and Smt. Dolon Kundu Mondal from West Bengal for Terracotta Craft).

The National Merit Certificate, which is indicative of commendable craftsmanship just below the National Award level, also saw high numbers during the years 2016 to 2018, with 34, 40, and 39 awards respectively. Afterwards, it has been discontinued due to policy changes.

The Design Innovation Award has been introduced later after 2018. It has been found that 2 handicrafts Kantha Hand Embroidery (West Bengal) and Kundan Jadai Meenakari (Rajasthan) were awarded (4 artists - Two pairs of each – Designer and Artisan). In 2023 a pair of two- designer (Ms. Kavita Chaudhary) and artisan (Smt. Dhapa Devi) from Rajasthan were awarded with The Design Innovation Award for Carpet Knotting.

**Table 1: Year-wise Distribution of Handicraft Awardees by Gender**

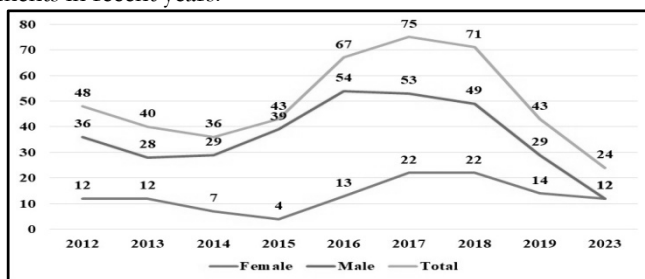
Year of Award		Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
2012	Count	12	36	48
	% Within Year of Award	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
2013	Count	12	28	40
	% Within Year of Award	30.0%	70.0%	100.0%
2014	Count	7	29	36
	% Within Year of Award	19.4%	80.6%	100.0%
2015	Count	4	39	43
	% Within Year of Award	9.3%	90.7%	100.0%
2016	Count	13	54	67
	% Within Year of Award	19.4%	80.6%	100.0%
2017	Count	22	53	75

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	% Within Year of Award	29.3%	70.7%	100.0%
2018	Count	22	49	71
	% Within Year of Award	31.0%	69.0%	100.0%
2019	Count	14	29	43
	% Within Year of Award	32.6%	67.4%	100.0%
2023	Count	12	12	24
	% Within Year of Award	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	118	329	447
	% Within Year of Award	26.4%	73.6%	100.0%

The present study includes 447 handicraft awardees who have received various awards from 2012 to 2023. Out of a total of 447 awardees, 329 are male, accounting for 73.6% of the total, while only 118 are female, representing 26.4%. Thus, the gender-wise distribution of handicrafts awardees reveals a clear imbalance inrepresentation.

The gender-wise distribution of national handicraft awardees from 2012 to 2023 reveals significant disparities as well as gradual shifts toward inclusivity. Out of the total 447 awardees during this period, 329 (73.6%) were male, while only 118 (26.4%) were female, indicating a strong gender imbalance in recognition. However, deeper analysis of year-wise trends shows some positive developments in recent years.



**Figure 2: The Trend and Gender-Wise Pattern of Handicraft Awardees**

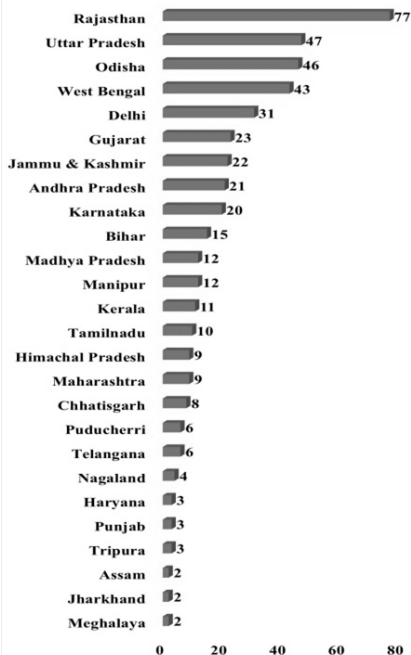
In the early years of the period under study, particularly 2012 to 2015, the participation of women remained consistently low. For instance, in 2015, women made up only 9.3% of awardees, the lowest across all years, with just 4 female recipients out of 43 total awards. Similarly, in 2014, female representation was limited to 19.4%, and in 2013 and 2012, women accounted for just 30% and 25%, respectively. These years reflect a notable gender gap in terms of national recognition for handicrafts.

A positive shift becomes visible beginning in 2016, where female awardees began to receive relatively more recognition. The year 2017 saw 29.3% of awards going to women, and this increased further in 2018 and 2019, with 31% and 32.6%, respectively. These years mark an encouraging trend toward gender inclusion, reflecting a possible change in policy emphasis or growing visibility of women artisans.

The most remarkable development occurred in 2023, which stands out as the only year in the dataset to achieve perfect gender parity, with 12 male and 12 female awardees. This 50-50 distribution not only marks a milestone in the recognition of female artisans but also suggests a meaningful shift in the award selection process or nomination practices.

**Table 2: State-Wise Distribution of Handicraft Awardees (Including Figure-03)**

State	Awardees		Rank
	No.	%	
1 Rajasthan	77	17.2 %	1
2 Uttar Pradesh	47	10.5 %	2
3 Odisha	46	10.3 %	3
4 West Bengal	43	9.6 %	4
5 Delhi	31	6.9 %	5
6 Gujarat	23	5.1 %	6
7 Jammu & Kashmir	22	4.9 %	7
8 Andhra Pradesh	21	4.7 %	8
9 Karnataka	20	4.5 %	9
10 Bihar	15	3.4 %	10
11 Madhya Pradesh	12	2.7 %	11
12 Manipur	12	2.7 %	11
13 Kerala	11	2.5 %	12
14 Tamilnadu	10	2.2 %	13
15 Himachal Pradesh	9	2.0 %	14
16 Maharashtra	9	2.0 %	14
17 Chhatisgarh	8	1.8 %	15
18 Puducherri	6	1.3 %	16
19 Telangana	6	1.3 %	16
20 Nagaland	4	0.9 %	17
21 Haryana	3	0.7 %	18
22 Punjab	3	0.7 %	18
23 Tripura	3	0.7 %	18
24 Assam	2	0.4 %	19
25 Jharkhand	2	0.4 %	19
26 Meghalaya	2	0.4 %	19
Total	447	100 %	



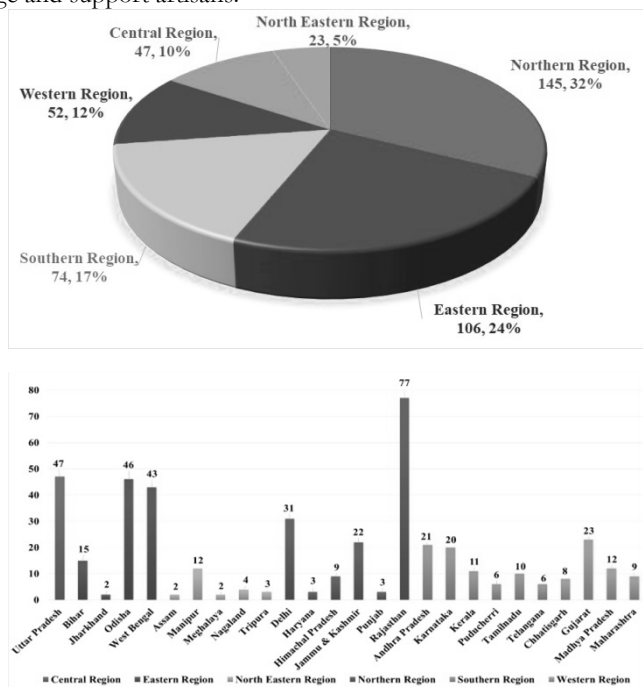
The table presents a state-wise distribution of handicraft awardees, ranking the states based on the number of individuals who received awards. The analysis reveals distinct regional patterns in award recognition across India. The main observations are as follows:

**Top Performing States:** Rajasthan leads the list with 77 awardees, accounting for 17.2% of the total, indicating the state's strong heritage and active engagement in handicrafts; Uttar Pradesh and Odisha follow, contributing 10.5% and 10.3% respectively, further reinforcing the prominence of northern and eastern Indian states in the traditional crafts sector; West Bengal (9.6%) and Delhi (6.9%) complete the top five, highlighting their significant presence in craft production and promotion.

**Moderately Represented States:** Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka each contribute between 4.5% to 5.1%, reflecting moderate but

notable participation in national handicraft recognition; States like Bihar, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, and Kerala hover around 2.5% to 3.4%, indicating emerging or underrepresented artisan communities.

**Lower Representation:** A considerable number of states, including Nagaland, Tripura, Punjab, Haryana, Meghalaya, Jharkhand, and Assam, have fewer than 5 awardees each, suggesting geographic imbalance in recognition or participation; These regions may require policy attention, outreach, or capacity building to encourage and support artisans.



**Figure 4: Region-Wise Distribution of Handicraft Awardees**

The Figure 4 presents the region-wise distribution of 447 handicraft awardees, offering insight into the geographical spread of national recognition for handicraft excellence in India. It is to be noted here that the regional classification is based on administrative regions of DC (Handicrafts), not on cultural zones.

The Northern Region tops the list with 145 awardees, accounting for 32.4% of the total. This suggests a significant concentration of recognized handicraft talent or institutional support in northern states like Rajasthan, Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir.

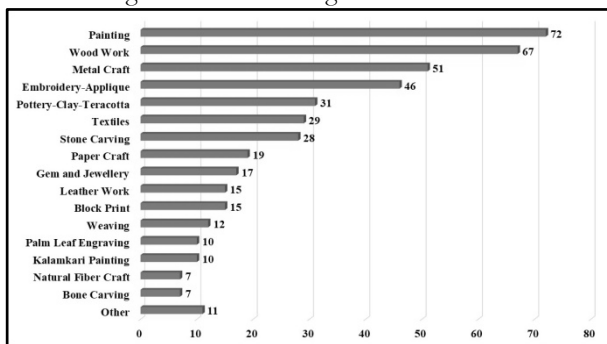
The Eastern Region follows with 106 awardees (23.7%), indicating a strong presence of award-winning artisans from states such as Odisha and West Bengal, both of which have rich cultural and artisanal traditions.

The Southern Region has 74 awardees, contributing 16.6% to the total. This is a notables share and reflects active participation from southern states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala.

The Western Region (including Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh) accounts for 11.6% with 52 awardees, while the Central Region (Uttar Pradesh) has 47 awardees (10.5%), showing moderate representation.

The North Eastern Region, despite its unique and rich craft heritage, is the least represented with only 23 awardees, forming 5.1% of the total. This underrepresentation may suggest the need for increased support, visibility, and outreach efforts in this culturally vibrant area.

Overall, the data highlights regional disparities in the distribution of handicraft awards, with a concentration in the Northern and Eastern regions and relatively lower representation from the North East and Central India. This information could be vital for policymakers and cultural institutions in promoting more balanced national recognition across all regions.



**Figure 5: Craft Category Distribution among Handicraft Awardees**

The given figure presents a detailed distribution of handicraft awardees across various craft categories. The most prominent category is Painting, with 82 awardees, accounting for 18.3% of the total. This indicates the widespread practice and cultural significance of traditional Indian paintings such as Madhubani, Kalamkari, Pattachitra, Mithila, Godana, Kangra, Thanjavur, Tanjore, Rogan, Mandana, Warli, Miniature Painting, etc. which continue to receive strong national recognition.

Following closely is Wood Work, with 67 awardees (15.0%). This high representation reflects the enduring popularity and heritage of wooden handicrafts such as Wooden toys, Carving, Cane and Bamboo work, Sandal wood carving, Walnut wood carving, Plastic inlay on wood, Wooden block, Tarkashi inlay, Lacquer-ware, etc. across various Indian states, especially in Northern and Southern regions.

Metal Craft ranks third with 51 awardees (11.4%), underscoring the artistic and utilitarian value of metal-based crafts such as Dhokra, Bidri-ware, Brass

engraving, Copper engraving, Bronzecarving, Silver filigree, and Bell metal items that are rooted in tribal and folk traditions.

Embroiderywork holds significant importance, with 46 awardees (10.3%), demonstrating the intricate textile embellishment traditions that are particularly rich in states like Jammu-Kashmir, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. This craft includes Chikankari, Applique work, Zari Zardozi, Katha Kashidakari, Chamba, Sozni, Soof &Kharek embroidery, Lace and Crochet, etc.

Other moderately represented categories include Pottery-Clay-Terracotta (6.9%), Textiles (6.5%), and Stone Carving (6.3%), which together show the strong presence of India's material culture and its deeply rooted artisanal skills in clay, fabric, and stone.

Crafts with lower but notable representation include Paper Craft (4.3%), Gem and Jewellery (3.8%), Leather Work and Block Print (both 3.4%), and Weaving (2.7%). These figures may reflect either regional concentration or relatively lower promotion or visibility at the national level.The least represented categories, such as Palm Leaf Engraving (2.2%), Natural Fiber Craft, and Bone Carving (both 1.6%), as well as Other crafts (2.5%), suggest that while these arts exist, they receive less national recognition or have fewer practitioners engaged in competitive award platforms.

**Table 3: Region-Wise Craft Category Distribution among Handicraft Awardees**

Handicraft Categories		Regions						Total
		Central Region	Eastern Region	North Eastern Region	Northern Region	Southern Region	Western Region	
Block Print	Count	0	0	0	4	0	11	15
	% R	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	26.7%	0.0%	73.3%	100.0%
	% C	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	21.2%	3.4%
Bone Carving	Count	3	0	0	4	0	0	7
	% R	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%	57.1%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% C	6.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%
Embroidery-Applique	Count	7	9	2	16	4	8	46
	% R	15.2%	19.6%	4.3%	34.8%	8.7%	17.4%	100.0%
	% C	14.9%	8.5%	8.7%	11.0%	5.4%	15.4%	10.3%
Gem and Jewellery	Count	4	1	0	11	0	1	17
	% R	23.5%	5.9%	0.0%	64.7%	0.0%	5.9%	100.0%
	% C	8.5%	0.9%	0.0%	7.6%	0.0%	1.9%	3.8%
Leather Work	Count	0	0	0	6	7	2	15
	% R	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	46.7%	13.3%	100.0%
	% C	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	9.5%	3.8%	3.4%
Metal Craft	Count	16	3	0	10	13	9	51
	% R	31.4%	5.9%	0.0%	19.6%	25.5%	17.6%	100.0%
	% C	34.0%	2.8%	0.0%	6.9%	17.6%	17.3%	11.4%
Natural Fibre Craft	Count	0	4	0	1	2	0	7
	% R	0.0%	57.1%	0.0%	14.3%	28.6%	0.0%	100.0%
	% C	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	0.7%	2.7%	0.0%	1.6%
Painting	Count	0	27	0	33	18	4	82
	% R	0.0%	32.9%	0.0%	40.2%	22.0%	4.9%	100.0%

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	% C	0.0%	25.5%	0.0%	22.8%	24.3%	7.7%	18.3%
Palm Leaf Engraving	Count	0	10	0	0	0	0	10
	% R	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% C	0.0%	9.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%
Paper Craft	Count	3	2	0	13	0	1	19
	% R	15.8%	10.5%	0.0%	68.4%	0.0%	5.3%	100.0%
	% C	6.4%	1.9%	0.0%	9.0%	0.0%	1.9%	4.3%
Pottery-Clay-Terracotta	Count	2	8	2	13	3	3	31
	% R	6.5%	25.8%	6.5%	41.9%	9.7%	9.7%	100.0%
	% C	4.3%	7.5%	8.7%	9.0%	4.1%	5.8%	6.9%
Stone Carving	Count	2	16	0	4	5	1	28
	% R	7.1%	57.1%	0.0%	14.3%	17.9%	3.6%	100.0%
	% C	4.3%	15.1%	0.0%	2.8%	6.8%	1.9%	6.3%
Textiles	Count	0	3	8	7	2	9	29
	% R	0.0%	10.3%	27.6%	24.1%	6.9%	31.0%	100.0%
	% C	0.0%	2.8%	34.8%	4.8%	2.7%	17.3%	6.5%
Weaving	Count	2	5	0	4	0	1	12
	% R	16.7%	41.7%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	8.3%	100.0%
	% C	4.3%	4.7%	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	1.9%	2.7%
Wood Work	Count	6	11	11	18	19	2	67
	% R	9.0%	16.4%	16.4%	26.9%	28.4%	3.0%	100.0%
	% C	12.8%	10.4%	47.8%	12.4%	25.7%	3.8%	15.0%
Other	Count	2	7	0	1	1	0	11
	% R	18.2%	63.6%	0.0%	9.1%	9.1%	0.0%	100.0%
	% C	4.3%	6.6%	0.0%	0.7%	1.4%	0.0%	2.5%
Total	Count	47	106	23	145	74	52	447
	% R	10.5%	23.7%	5.1%	32.4%	16.6%	11.6%	100.0%
	% C	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

%R=% Within Craft Category (Raw-wise percentage); %C=% Within Region (Column-wise percentage)

The data reveals a noticeable variation in the distribution of handicrafts across India's regions. Among all categories, Painting (16.1%), Wood Work (15.0%), and Metal Craft (11.4%) are the most dominant crafts across India. These three categories collectively account for more than 42% of the total artisan representation. Painting is especially concentrated in the Northern (45.8%) and Eastern (37.5%) regions. Similarly, Wood Work is well-spread, with significant activity in the Southern (28.4%), Northern (26.9%), and Eastern (16.4%) regions. Metal Craft sees a prominent presence in the Central (31.4%) and Southern (25.5%) regions.

Certain crafts are highly localized and showcase regional uniqueness. For example, Palm Leaf Engraving is found exclusively in the Eastern Region, while Kalamkari Painting is practiced largely in the Southern Region (70%). The North Eastern Region, despite having a small overall share, is notable for its strong presence in Textiles (34.8%). Similarly, Block Printing is predominantly practiced in the Western (73.3%) and Northern (26.7%) regions. This indicates that many crafts have evolved regionally, influenced by local traditions, materials, and cultural practices.

Several handicrafts show limited geographical spread and low artisan participation. Categories such as Bone Carving, Natural Fiber Craft, and Palm Leaf Engraving have fewer than 10 practitioners each and are restricted to one or two regions. For instance, Bone Carving is seen only in the Central and Northern regions, while Natural Fiber Craft appears mainly in the Eastern and Southern regions. These crafts may be at risk of decline if not supported adequately through training, promotion, and market access.

Suggestions to strengthen the recognition, inclusivity, and sustainability of the handicraft sector: Based on the comprehensive analysis of handicraft awards in India over the past decade, the following expert suggestions can be offered to strengthen the recognition, inclusivity, and sustainability of the sector:

**Promote Gender Inclusivity:**The data reveals a consistent gender disparity, with male artisans receiving a significantly higher number of awards than females. Despite some improvement in recent years, targeted efforts are needed to identify, support, and promote the work of women artisans. Policy interventions such as women-focused capacity building, exclusive award categories, and outreach in women-dominated crafts can help bridge this gap.

**Strengthen Regional Representation:**States like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Odisha dominate the award list, while several north-eastern and smaller states remain underrepresented. This calls for decentralization of the award nomination process and increased awareness campaigns in underrepresented regions. Regional craft fairs, workshops, and mobile jury evaluations could ensure equitable participation across India.

**Support Craft Diversity:**The findings indicate a concentration of awards in certain craft categories like painting, woodwork, metal craft, and embroidery, while many traditional or rare crafts such as bone carving, palm leaf engraving, and natural fibre crafts receive minimal recognition. Reviving endangered crafts through special grants, promotional exhibitions, and research-driven documentation should be prioritized.

**Link Awards to Livelihood Sustainability:**While awards provide recognition, they must also translate into sustained economic benefit for artisans. Linking awardees with national and international markets, providing branding and marketing support, and encouraging entrepreneurship through skill upgradation and digital literacy will enhance their livelihood opportunities.

**Transparent and Periodic Evaluation:**The analysis shows fluctuations in the number of awards given each year, with missing or reduced representation in certain years. A more consistent and transparent framework for award nomination, evaluation, and declaration can help maintain credibility and motivate artisans across all regions and categories.

**Establish Mentorship Programs:**Shilp Gurus and national awardees should be engaged in mentorship programs to pass on traditional knowledge to younger artisans. This would help preserve intangible cultural heritage and foster



intergenerational transfer of skills, ensuring continuity and innovation in the crafts sector.

**Leverage Digital Platforms for Visibility:** Digital tools and platforms can be powerful in documenting artisans' journeys, showcasing their work globally, and streamlining the award nomination process. Government and non-government agencies must collaborate to create robust online databases and storytelling platforms for artisans.

**Regional Craft Resource Centres:** Establishing regional craft resource and training centres can help artisans improve product design, quality, and competitiveness. These centres should also offer guidance on intellectual property rights, especially for crafts with geographical indication (GI) potential.

### **Conclusion**

The handicrafts sector in India, deeply rooted in cultural heritage and traditional knowledge systems, plays a vital role in sustaining livelihoods and preserving artistic diversity. This decadal review of national handicraft awards reveals critical insights into patterns of gender representation, regional dominance, and craft category distribution. While the awards have successfully recognized and celebrated exemplary craftsmanship, the analysis also uncovers disparities that merit attention—such as the underrepresentation of women, north-eastern regions, and lesser-known crafts. The findings underscore the need for more inclusive, transparent, and balanced mechanisms to identify and honor deserving artisans across the country. Strengthening outreach, capacity-building initiatives, regional equity, and craft-specific promotion are essential to making the award ecosystem more representative and sustainable. Furthermore, linking recognition with economic empowerment and intergenerational knowledge transfer can help artisans evolve from tradition-bound workers to celebrated cultural ambassadors.

In conclusion, the journey from artisan to artist must be supported through proactive policy interventions, holistic development strategies, and sustained recognition. Only then can India's rich handicraft legacy thrive in the contemporary era, securing its place both in national development and global appreciation.

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RECLAIMING POWER THROUGH THE METAPHOR OF  
LAND: A POSTCOLONIAL JOURNEY IN NGŪĠ WA  
THIONGO'S *WEEP NOT, CHILD*

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**Abstract**

*Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o's Weep Not, Child can be interpreted in multiple ways and examined through different lenses. It is a tale of resilience of Kenyans against the colonial rule. It is also a tale of conflict between hope and disillusionment in the face of adversity. The novella's emphasis on the importance of education in unravelling the political hegemonical exploitation of the natives and helps in asserting one's identity. At the same time, it makes an appeal to the readers to recognise the importance of one's roots for aid and constant support. Ngũgĩ's Weep Not Child is one of the memorable pieces in which he celebrates the strength of family, friendship, kinship and community in one's life. Through oral storytelling, myths and folklores, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o vividly portrays the significance of land and its connection to one's identity and power. While most of the narrative depicts the oppression faced by blacks and the existing disparity between the two races, some parts of the novel also emphasize on bridging the gap between the two races and the possibility of reconciliation and harmony in their life.*

**Keywords:** Postcolonialism, Education, Oral Storytelling, Land, Optimism, Disillusionment, Myths, Race, Racism, White Man's Burden, Colonial Conflict, Universalism, Non-separatism

Africa saw a turbulent time during the colonial era which was characterised by the imposition of foreign power, exploitation of resources, and the repression of indigenous traditions. In this context, *Weep Not, Child*, a novel by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, provides a moving portrayal of the challenges encountered by the Kenyan people during colonial subjugation. The novel is set in a Kenyan village during the 1952-1960 Emergency. The Mau Mau uprising began in 1952 as a reaction to injustices imposed by the British in Kenya. With the Mau Mau uprising set as a backdrop in the novel, it navigates the political terrain to highlight the hopes and difficulties of the natives aching for freedom.

The protagonist of Thiong'o's story is Njoroge, whose unwavering desire for education serves as an oasis of hope in the face of hardship. The novel is a critical investigation of Njoroge's journey to aspire for education and become one with the Whites. He encounters myriad challenges during his journey such as the loss of land, friendship and family, and the significance of the nation's collective identity. In addition to this, the tale becomes more complex by highlighting the contrast between idealism and realism, as represented by the central characters like Njoroge and Mwihaki. Through the characters of Njoroge and Stephen, the novel highlights the need to focus on reconciliation, resilience even amidst turbulent conditions existing between the two races.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's debut novel, *Weep Not, Child*, follows the life of Njoroge, a young boy in Kenya during the country's struggle for independence. Njoroge's aspirations for education and betterment are challenged by the turmoil surrounding him. He faces familial tensions, particularly due to his father's clashes with a wealthy farmer collaborating with the colonizers. Njoroge's dreams of getting education and helping his family are disrupted by the involvement of his brothers in the Mau Mau rebellion. Despite his determination, Njoroge's life spirals downward with his father's death, his brothers' political entanglements, and his own struggles to find employment. His last hope of eloping with his love, Mwhaki, is dashed when she chooses to stay with her mother towards the end of the novel. Feeling abandoned and desperate, Njoroge attempts suicide but is saved by the sense of familial duties. He is awakened to senses by the call of his mother Nyokabi.

The title *Weep Not, Child* draws on Walt Whitman's poem "On the Beach at Night," where the speaker urges the child not to cry amidst the turbulent storm, assuring him that it will soon pass. In a broader sense, the novel's title signifies the hope that supports its characters amidst the brutality and hardships of the Mau Mau revolt. Like the child on the beach, Njoroge and Mwhaki strive to focus on the forthcoming peace rather than the current turmoil. The beautiful and encouraging lines from Whitman's poem are: Weep not, child; Weep not, my darling; With these kisses let me remove your tears; The ravening clouds shall not be long victorious; They shall not long possess the sky. (Whitman, 1856)

These lines aptly fit in the context of the novel and make the title *Weep Not Child* centrally linked to the theme of it.

Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, a prominent Kenyan academician and writer, is renowned for his advocacy of African languages and his literary works in *ikũyũ*, a Bantu language spoken in Kenya. Born in 1938, he currently holds the position of a Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine. His academic background and literary contributions have established him as a leading figure in post-colonial theory and African Literature.

In 1970s, Ngũgĩ faced imprisonment by the Kenyan government for his involvement in the play *Ngaabika Ndeenda* (*I Will Marry When I Want*), which he co-wrote in *Gikũyũ*. The play, critical of post-colonial Kenyan society, was perceived as a threat by the government and led to Ngũgĩ's incarceration. Following his release, he lived in exile for over two decades due to threats to his safety in Kenya. One of Ngũgĩ's most influential works is *Decolonising the Mind*, published in 1986. In this book, he argues for the importance of linguistic decolonization, advocating for the revival and preservation of native African languages that were suppressed during the colonial era. He contends that language is a crucial tool for reclaiming cultural identity and resisting the legacy of colonialism.

The protagonist of Ngũgĩ's novel *Weep Not, Child*, Njoroge, is often seen as a reflection of the author himself. The novel, structured as a Bildungsroman, follows Njoroge's journey of self-discovery and resistance against colonial

oppression. Through Njoroge's experiences, Ngũgĩ explores themes of identity, education, and the impact of colonialism on African societies. Ngũgĩ's own experiences with language suppression in Kenyan schools, where students were punished for speaking native languages, are reflected in *Weep Not, Child*. This aspect of the novel highlights the dehumanizing effects of colonial language policies, which sought to undermine African languages and elevate colonial languages as superior.

Njoroge's constant pursuit of education is a recurring motif of hope amidst Kenya's struggle against colonial oppression. Njoroge, an ordinary Kenyan child, grows up with a vision: a vision to get education for himself, a light to his home, and an escape route for his country from ruin. His character embodies the conflicts and challenges faced by the Kenyan people as they strive for a better future amidst colonial oppression. The narrative of the novel is presented through Njoroge. He is full of happiness and gratitude when he discovers that he would start going to school. He receives immense support from his family as they believe his education can bring out crucial change in the society. While his mother, Njeri finds his education to be "the greatest reward she would get from her motherhood", his father, Ngotho considers education a tool which can help his child get his land back (Thiong'o, 1964:32). Owing to these sentiments of his family, Njoroge sees himself destined for something big and consequential in time of inconsequence.

The practice of oral storytelling is a vibrant and integral part of Kenya's cultural heritage. It encompasses a wide range of traditions, including myths, legends, folktales, proverbs and histories, which are passed down from one generation to the other through spoken words rather than written text. As Ms. V. Anushya Devi explains: African literature never attained popularity or fame in the early years because its literary texts were offered orally. The texts reflect the ties that the Africans enjoyed with the Plants and animals, the rivers and rocks for every aspect of nature was significant in the life of African people. Tribal members were taught by example; those guiding principles were not memorized in formal lessons but were internalized from childhood and became a part of their daily lives. Their literary expressions were oral in nature for they did not have formal written script.

Thus, oral literature derives its form from its tradition of performances, which incorporated stylistic devices used by these narrators who skilfully captured and held the attention of their audience. Ngũgĩ's fiction portrays oral traditions of his culture. He makes use of myths, legends and folklores. Ngũgĩ explores devices of oral traditions for the purpose of the preservation and projection of socio-cultural heritage and to teach moral values. (Devi, 2019)

In the similar way, Ngũgĩ also projects the socio-cultural background of Kenya through his literary works. *Weep Not, Child* is his masterpiece in which he beautifully depicts the storytelling tradition of the natives through his characters.

The protagonist of the novel, Njoroge learns about his roots from his father Ngotho's stories. Ngotho, the patriarchal head of the family recites how his ancestors, Gikuyu and Mumbi received the gift of land from the creator, Murungu. Upon learning this, Njoroge questions his father "where did the land go?" (Thiong'o, 1964:60). The question hints that the child is not even aware that Blacks are the actual owners of the land, and the Whites are mere settlers. His favourite book was the Bible which made him acquainted with Adam, Eve, and Moses. The naïve child comes to believe that the Blacks are the chosen people of God and the Gikuyu people were no different than the children of Israel who were eventually rescued by Moses. Even when his family descends into turmoil and faces financial crisis because of the fight between Ngotho and Jacobo who is a black man with colonial mindset, Njoroge continues learning. The author states:

Through all this, Njoroge was still sustained by his love for and belief in education and his own role when time came. And the difficulties of home seemed to have sharpened this appetite. Only education could make something out of this wreckage. He became more faithful to his studies. He would one day use all his learning to fight the white man, for he would continue the work that his father started. When these moments caught him, he actually saw himself as a possible saviour of the whole God's country. Just let him get learning. (Thiong'o, 1964: 92).

On the one hand, it makes one applaud the resilience and dedication of the child, but on the other hand, it also evokes sympathy for the child as he carries the sole responsibility of bringing reform in his native land. It also encourages readers to think about the ill-consequences of such happenings taking place around the child of such tender age. Ultimately, such incidents do culminate into fatal results and lead to life changing actions of the central characters.

Njoroge's journey towards his goal of getting education, motivated by the support of his family and village, reflects the enduring connection between modernity and tradition. It also illustrates how one's roots to his home and family provide essential support during times of adversity and change. Njoroge's education was financially supported by his brother Kamau, a carpenter. Furthermore, when he gets admitted in Siriana high school everyone from his village contributes money so that he can continue his studies. The author states, "He was no longer the son of Ngotho but the son of the land." (Thiong'o, 1964:113). These acts beautifully portray one's strong sense of belongingness and connectedness to one's roots despite outside turmoil. The human being is sustained by such rootedness when everything else seems to have fallen apart. The constant changing time and the advent of modernity can make one adapt oneself as per the needs of the situation, but one will always come back to one's own traditions and values for support and belongingness. The stark contrast between the values of the colonizers and the natives of Kenya is

rightfully established by the writer by highlighting the difference between the families of Mr. Howland, the Englishman in the novel and Ngotho, the native: Whereas the family of Ngotho is strongly knit together, the relationships between the members of Mr. Howlands's family are loose. The only passion for the 'rational' Mr. Howlands is his farm, and he considers his wife and children as valuable only in so far as they contribute to the farming. Likewise, his wife, his and his daughter leave the country and go back to England after the emergency is declared, leaving Mr. Howlands in such a moment of crisis alone. In contrast, Njoroge and his brothers always think about the upliftment of their family and never think of only their personal benefits; even Njoroge's dream of attaining education is based on his desire to uplift his family and even the black community from their present suffering. (Chakrabarti, 2008)

In this way, Ngũgĩ stresses on the possibility of restoring the natives' faith in cultural values and love for community and how it makes them different from the West.

The profound sense of betrayal and disillusionment felt by Kenyans is encapsulated in Ngotho's tragic realisation that the British were not the benevolent individuals as they projected themselves initially. He says, "They are not the gods we had thought them to be" (Thiong'o, 1964:26). The disillusioned colonised man Ngotho's statement clearly describes the sense of disappointment which the Kenyans felt when they realised that the British were not saviours but perpetrators. This realisation marks a pivotal shift in their attitude towards the Englishmen and lays bare the colonial and hegemonical practices exercised on the natives. It leads the natives towards the path of freedom and the reclamation of their cultural identity. The realization dawned on them very late that the white men were not there to civilize them. Neither the west is civilised and superior nor is the east barbaric and inferior. As Edward Said rightly said, "We cannot fight for our rights and our history as well as future until we are armed with weapons of criticism and dedicated consciousness" (Said, 2007:233). Said's call for a critical awareness and consciousness to fight for rights, history, and a more equitable future fits rightly in the narrative.

The profound significance of land in Ngotho's cultural identity becomes a poignant symbol of the broader dispossession experienced by the African community. It also reflects how the loss of land deepens disillusionment and raises doubts about the possibility of a better future in the face of colonial oppression. Ngotho supports his son's dream of getting education and breaking free from the chains of poverty. He looks at education as a tool to get back his land. Ngotho is one of the major characters who is very close to his roots and feels connected to his ancestors solely through their lands. Thus, land holds a lot of importance in Gikuyu culture, and it becomes a prominent metaphor for reclaiming one's past and sense of belongingness. In the novel it is a recurring image to heighten the pain and trauma faced by the natives. In the similar way, the renowned South African writer Alan Paton also portrays 'land' as a character itself in his award-winning novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*. It plays an

important role in building up relationships, bringing harmony and retrieving one's lost identity. In Paton's novel, the protagonist Stephen Kumalo's quest for his sister and son turns to be a unified mission for searching his "own" people whose departure from their native land to the city of Johannesburg leads to the loss of their identity and doom. As Fanon rightly explains, "For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity." (Fanon, 1963) The British control over the native lands did not only displace the colonised natives physically but also psychologically. The importance of education lies not only in career-making but also being aware about getting one's rights and identity back. However, one needs to realise that revolutions are not brought over night, but it takes years to succeed. Things go downhill when KAU leader Jomo Kenyatta gets arrested. Nguni, who put too much faith in Njoroge's education and Jomo, feels defeated when the strike fails. His impulsive actions eventually land him and his family in trouble. His land is taken away by the white settlers, stripping him of his dignity and self-sufficiency. His loss of land symbolizes the broader dispossession experienced by the African community.

The arrival of white settlers in Kenya showcases an ironical situation. The people who were seeking refuge from their own hardships in their homeland end up subjecting the natives to the similar fate or even worse than that in their colonies. Mr. Bwana Howlands, a white settler, is the owner of Nguni's land. He escapes from England and relocates himself in Kenya hoping to have a better life. However, white settlers who had escaped their motherland to avoid wars and difficult circumstances exercise the same domination and exploitation over the natives of Kenya. They interfered in political, economic, social and cultural affairs of the people. For instance, they did not allow natives to grow cash crops except tobacco. However, they expected tobacco to be their puppet and when time came, tobacco returns their favour by deserting his own people and supporting the Whites. Mr. Howlands receives gratifying pleasure after witnessing that "the blacks were destroying the blacks" (Thiong'o, 1964: 106). He even goes on to compare the black men with donkeys or horses working in his farm. The whites did not even consider the blacks as humans but mere creatures who were created to serve them eternally. Here, Mr. Howlands becomes an epitome of "negrophobe". Frantz Fanon defines, "Negrophobes exist. It is not hatred of the Negro, however, that motivates them; they lack the courage for that, or they have lost it. Hate is not inborn; it has to be constantly cultivated, to be brought into being, in conflict with more or less recognized guilt complexes" (Fanon, 1967). Mr. Howlands cultivates the similar hatred for the natives to overcome his own fear.

A stress on universalism (non-separatism) is illustrated in the novel as well. It "pleads for connectedness and compatibility among races and sexes in general and between the white colonizers (represented in the novel by Mr. Howlands) and the colonized black subjects (represented by Nguni), in particular. It



promotes the dividedness of all races, particularly those living in the same community” (Hassan, 2014). Both have lost their son in the world war and share the same affection for their lands. Ngũgĩ’s ancestral land was like his own child whom he has borne and reared while for Mr. Howlands it was like an adopted child. This reflects that Mr. Howlands was attached to the land emotionally too. The two races who consider each other rivals are not so different from each other in actuality. This sentiment is beautifully brought out in the narrative when Njoroge runs into Stephen, Mr. Howlands’ son, in Siriana Secondary School. Reminiscing their childhood days, they share how both wanted to interact with each other, but they never did so because they feared each other. This fear was inculcated in their minds by their families who had imposed their racist ideologies on their innocent children. It is only after their interaction they realise that they are “united by a common expression of insecurity and fear no one could see” (Thiong’o, 1964: 118). Stephen considers how prejudices and anxieties propagate within a community in this passage. He makes the argument that certain people are predisposed to hostility because of the impact of their families and their culture, which suggests that bias and hatred are more learned than innate. The inclination of Njoroge and Stephen to become friends and encourage a positive relationship implies that racial harmony is achievable. Thus, if the two races put aside their differences and inhibitions, they will realise that they have same needs, desires and fears. Only healthy communication between the two races is capable in healing their wounds which further can bridge the gap between the two worlds and bring them together for better future.

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## ALIGNING ESG PRINCIPLES WITH SUSTAINABLE FINANCE IN INDIA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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### Abstract

*This study aims to examine the correlation between environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors and the availability of long-term financial support for sustainable initiatives. This article aims to examine how the ESG Principles are integrated into the development of environmentally responsible financial products and sustainable investment decisions. By employing case studies, empirical research, and an assessment of the pertinent literature. The results demonstrate the synergy between ESG Principles and sustainable finance, emphasizing their potential to enhance risk management, foster long-term wealth generation, and promote positive social outcomes through green and sustainable financing. More specifically, the results emphasize how these concepts might promote both.*

**Keywords:** ESG, Sustainable Finance, Investment decision, Synergy

We also see that the increasing interest in social and environmental responsibility as well as the participation of the business world and society in the achievement of various global commitments to development has not been accompanied by the proper knowledge, there is a phenomenon where the initiative of the House of Representatives set practices corporate social responsibility is promoting CSR as a source of construction funds instead of as sustainable business practices

Environmental, social, governance, commonly abbreviated as ESG is corporate social responsibility. Information ESG now become the focus of everyone's attention because it provides the potential long-term impact given by the investment to the stakeholders. The importance of the measurement of ESG in SRI due that the measurement of ESG plays two important roles, namely as a proxy for the performance of sustainable and market movers SRI. The application of factor ESG in investment should ensure three things.

The elaboration of the 3 factors ESG: 1. The core business of the company is not in the business category of pesticides, nuclear, weapons, tobacco, alcohol, pornography, gambling, and genetically modified organisms (GMO). 2. Management of human resources pays attention to human rights in its implementation. 3. Activities of the company must be qualified in various aspects such as governance 11 companies, community involvement, and behavior business that is fair and ethical. (Dina Hastalona1, Isfenti Sadalia2, 2021)

### Principles of ESG

The Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles provide a framework for assessing and incorporating sustainability and moral issues into corporate operations. These are the main ideas that underpin ESG.

**Integration:** Businesses should include ESG principles into their basic business plans and decision-making procedures. This entails using financial measures in conjunction with environmental, social, and governance aspects to promote long-term value creation and risk mitigation

**Materiality:** Businesses ought to concentrate on ESG concerns that have the greatest bearing on their stakeholders and day-to-day operations. The activities and investments that have the biggest effects on risk mitigation and sustainability performance are prioritized with the use of materiality assessments.

**Transparency:** The core values of ESG include transparency and disclosure. Businesses must give all relevant parties—investors, clients, staff members, and regulators—accurate, timely, and thorough information regarding their ESG performance, policies, and practices.

**Accountability:** Organizations should set up systems to track, evaluate, and report on their ESG performance over time. Businesses have responsibility for this. Setting goals, monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs), and carrying out routine audits or assessments may all be part of this.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** Determining ESG goals, comprehending stakeholder expectations, and establishing confidence and trust all depend on effective stakeholder engagement. Businesses ought to interact with a wide variety of stakeholders, such as communities, civil society organizations, workers, suppliers, investors, and customers.

**Continuous Improvement:** Environmental sustainability is a journey rather than a one-time project. Organizations must to consistently assess and modify their ESG policies, procedures, and outcomes in light of changing stakeholder demands, legal mandates, and developing sustainability patterns.

**Risk management:** Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles assist businesses in recognizing, evaluating, and controlling risks that may have an influence on their operations, standing, and bottom line. Sustainable company practices are encouraged and resilience is improved by incorporating ESG into risk management procedures.

**Innovation and Collaboration:** To tackle difficult sustainability issues and take advantage of favorable impact opportunities, businesses should promote innovation and collaboration. This could entail creating brand-new goods, services, and business plans that complement the objectives of sustainable development and collaborating with stakeholders to promote group action.

**Long-Term Value Creation:** A key component of ESG principles is the creation of long-term value for stakeholders, including shareholders. Businesses may improve their competitiveness, reduce risks, draw investment, and support a more sustainable and equitable economy by properly tackling ESG problems.

**Alignment with Global Goals:** The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations and the Climate Change Agreement of Paris are two examples of global frameworks and efforts that are in line with ESG principles. Businesses are urged to coordinate their ESG policies and procedures with these

international objectives in order to optimize benefits and support global sustainability initiatives.

All things considered, the ESG principles offer businesses a comprehensive framework for incorporating sustainability, accountability, and morality into their operations and business plans, which eventually leads to the development of long-term value and beneficial social effect.

### **Literature Review**

(Driessen, 2021)an overview of the different sustainable and ESG products, including green, ESG, and sustainability-linked bonds and loans, that have been a part of the global financial markets is given by the author. The Taxonomy Regulation and the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation are two examples of EU-level legislation that the author focuses on when discussing the current legal framework in which these financial products are issued. The author also takes into account upcoming legal and regulatory developments, such as the Green Bonds Standard and Climate Benchmarks. A few closing thoughts on broad ESG trends and advancements in sustainable finance in the financial markets are provided by the author.

(Dina Hastalona<sup>1</sup>, Isfenti Sadalia<sup>2</sup>, 2021) This study examines some of the academic studies and sources about the sustainability of the company so that you can see evidence of the business case for corporate sustainability, integrate sustainability into investment decisions and implement policy ownership active in portfolio investors. There is a contradiction between the disclosure of ESG with the sustainability of the company as seen from the financial performance and value of the company, this is because the practice of the application of the CSR impact on the financial sustainability of the company's.

(Xin Chang, Kangkang Fu, Yaling Jin, Pei Fun Liem, 2022) It highlights the significance of ESG (environmental, social, and governance) and CSR in terms of their impact on value. It employs a discounted cash flow valuation approach to discover value drivers that can boost the value of a corporation through the implementation of such practices. Empirical evidence together supports the notion that they enhance business value through employee motivation, improvement of customer-supplier connections, promotion of long-term growth, rise in dividends, and reduction of financing costs.

(Vinay Kandpal, Anshuman Jaswal, Ernesto D. R. Santibanez Gonzalez, Naveen Agarwal, 2024), This chapter examines a variety of sustainable funding sources that firms can utilise in order to incorporate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) objectives into their company operations. An investigation that was carried out to investigate the ways in which sustainable funding helps to facilitate the execution of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) activities and resulting in positive outcomes. In the course of this investigation, both conventional financial instruments and novel sources of funding will be investigated.

(Simon, 2023) This chapter presents a succinct synopsis of the inception of sustainable finance and delineates various approaches to sustainable investment,

such as mission-driven investments and risk management. The chapter underscores several notable challenges in sustainable finance that demand consideration. These obstacles include the lack of a standardised terminology and rigorous application of terms, as well as the possibility of "greenwashing" and mislabeling, which do not provide an accurate depiction of the sustainability impact. An analysis of investor characteristics and the relationship between sustainable investment techniques, risk, return, and impacts concludes the chapter.

(Shuitu Qian, Wenzhe Yu, 2024) Analyse the impact of the green financing policy on the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance. Stakeholder theory posits that firms with significant pollution should consider the concerns and interests of all stakeholders, rather than solely focusing on their owners. The implementation of a green finance policy can incentivize companies to enhance their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance and minimise their detrimental effects on the environment. Notably, the influence of the green finance policy on ESG performance is more evident in companies that have stronger internal and external governance.

(Ziolo, M., Bak, I., & Cheba, K, 2021) Even though finance plays a critical role in achieving the SDGs, few scientific studies have addressed these concerns. We made an effort to close the current research gap. In this research, using OECD member states that are part of the European Union, we looked at the relationship between sustainable financing and the SDGs. We offer a novel and inventive research methodology. Assuming that social and environmental sustainability are reflected in the SDGs, we believed that the sustainable finance model is essential to their implementation. The study's findings indicate that in the group of nations under analysis, SDG attainment increases with the sustainability of the funding mode.

Păun (Zamfiroiu), T. & Pinzaru, P. (2021) Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are beginning to accept the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria as the new must when establishing corporate initiatives, however, their success rates vary. The study examines the relationship between current sustainable investing methods and shareholders' wealth creation, as well as the issues facing sustainable strategic management. In recent literature, the financial effectiveness of sustainable business practices—both long- and short-term—as well as professional investors' attitudes on ESG initiatives are examined.

(Mathew Archer, 2022) The incorporation of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into the investment process is the widely accepted definition of sustainable finance. Drawing from participant observation of conferences on sustainable finance and impact investing from 2015 to 2020, as well as a series of interviews conducted in 2018 and 2019 with the sustainability team and multiple portfolio managers at a major European bank, I demonstrate how the need to define and measure sustainability indicators reflects the market's emergence as an ethical entity capable of making the most ethical decisions.

Yilan, G., Cordella, M., & Morone, P. (2022) Green and sustainable chemistry

(GSC) is an approach that aims to promote the development of an ecologically conscious society. It also highlights the necessity of offering sustainable choices to investors, customers, and manufacturers. Given that implementing GSC requires a significant financial outlay, this paper offers a variety of techniques and tools to assess the sustainability of proposed investments, with a focus on environmental sustainability. It also shows how better KPIs may be defined by applying life cycle methodologies.

### **Rationale of the Study**

Investigating the relationship between environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles and sustainable finance is not only attainable but also necessary for addressing the complex issues confronting society and the environment today. Those with a stake in the issue can effectively promote beneficial change, generate mutual benefits, and actively contribute to the development of a more sustainable and robust financial system for future generations by strategically utilizing both ESG integration and sustainable financing.

### **Research Objectives**

To study the relationship between ESG principles and Sustainable Finance; To examine the ESG integration on Investment Decision, Financial Performance and Risk Management; To identify opportunities and challenges in achieving synergy between ESG Principles and Sustainable Finance.

Challenges: The following are the challenges

Inadequate Levels of Compliance: The absence of standardised measurements and reporting systems for evaluating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance is one of the main obstacles that must be overcome to successfully incorporate ESG principles into sustainable financing in India. Investors have a difficult time effectively comparing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) data across companies and industries because there are no standardized standards. In the absence of standardized environmental, social, and governance (ESG) disclosure regulations, investors may have difficulties in evaluating the sustainability performance of Indian companies. This may result in uncertainty and inefficiency on the part of investors when making decisions regarding sustainable investments.

Availability and quality of data: Challenge: The availability of dependable and all-encompassing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) data continues to pose a significant obstacle in India, especially for smaller enterprises and industries with restricted reporting protocols. The presence of inconsistent data quality and coverage poses further challenges in effectively evaluating ESG risks and opportunities. The limited availability and quality of ESG data impede investors' capacity to perform thorough ESG analysis and incorporate sustainability factors into investment choices, which may lead to miscalculated risks and overlooked prospects for value generation.

Regulatory and Policy Loopholes Exist: Even though regulatory attempts to promote ESG integration in India have been expanding, there are still gaps in

the legal framework, enforcement procedures, and reporting requirements. This presents a challenge. Inadequate regulatory oversight may reduce the efficiency of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) activities and impede the growth of the market. The implications of this are that enterprises and investors may face difficulties in complying with regulatory rules that are unclear or inconsistent. This may result in a lack of confidence in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) policies and be detrimental to efforts to mainstream sustainable finance in India.

**Enhancing Capabilities and Raising Awareness:** The limited understanding and capacity of investors, corporations, and other stakeholders with regard to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles and sustainable finance presents substantial difficulties to the adoption and implementation of these principles of sustainable finance. When it comes to effectively incorporating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into decision-making processes, many market participants lack the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to do so. It is possible that the adoption of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices and sustainable financing initiatives would continue to be delayed and fragmented if enough capacity building and awareness-raising efforts are not made. This will limit the scalability and impact of sustainability efforts in India.

### **Potential Opportunities**

**Demand and the Growth of the Market:** The increasing understanding of the significance of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) concerns, as well as the growing demand for environmentally responsible investment solutions, both create considerable prospects for market expansion in India. As investors become more aware of the environmental and social risks that they face, there is a growing need for investment products and services that are linked with environmental, social, and governance principles. The increasing demand for sustainable finance solutions presents opportunities for financial institutions, asset managers, and other market participants to offer novel products and strategies that incorporate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors while simultaneously generating attractive financial returns.

**Incentives and Support for Public Policy:** An opportunity exists in India for the acceleration of the adoption of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles and sustainable financing through the continuation of policy support and incentives from government agencies, regulators, and industry associations. Market development can be supported by regulatory initiatives such as mandated ESG disclosure requirements and tax incentives for sustainable investments. These types of activities can generate an atmosphere that is conducive to market building. Strong governmental support and incentives can provide corporations with an incentive to improve their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance, strengthen their openness and disclosure procedures, and draw more money towards sustainable projects, which will ultimately lead to better environmental and social consequences.

Technological advancements and inventive ideas: The progress and breakthroughs in data analytics, artificial intelligence, and blockchain technology present fresh prospects for tackling issues with the accessibility, accuracy, and openness of ESG data. Digital platforms and technologies have the potential to optimize the process of ESG reporting, better the gathering and analysis of data, and facilitate more involvement with stakeholders. Through the utilization of technology and innovation, individuals involved in the market can surmount obstacles associated with data, improve the procedures of making decisions, and access fresh prospects for sustainable financing in India. This will lead to increased efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

Cooperative alliances: The establishment of collaborative partnerships between government agencies, financial institutions, corporations, NGOs, and academics can facilitate the exchange of knowledge, enhance capabilities, and encourage collective efforts to advance the integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors and sustainable finance in India. The facilitation of information exchange, sharing of best practices, and collaborative problem-solving can be achieved through the implementation of multi-stakeholder initiatives and industrial alliances. Through collaboration, stakeholders can utilize their combined knowledge, assets, and connections to tackle shared obstacles, foster creativity, and expand sustainable financial solutions, ultimately supporting India's sustainable development objectives.

### **Discussions and Findings**

In the course of our research, we intended to investigate the connection between environmental, social, and governance principles and sustainable finance. More specifically, we were interested in the influence that ESG integration has on financial performance as well as the larger implications that this has for investors and businesses. The investigation uncovered many significant findings that shed light on the intricate relationship that exists between environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues and financial consequences.

In the first place, our study found that there is a favorable association between businesses that have excellent environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance and their financial success measures. Companies that placed a higher priority on environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and effective governance processes tended to display higher levels of profitability, stock performance, and market valuation in comparison to their competitors who had lower ESG ratings. These findings provide credence to the growing body of evidence that suggests businesses that adopt sustainable practices have the potential to generate long-term value for their shareholders and investors.

Secondly, the findings of our research emphasized the significance of incorporating environmental, social, and governance considerations into investment decision-making and portfolio management. Investors are becoming more aware of the significance of environmental and social risks and possibilities, and as a result, they are increasingly considering ESG factors when



evaluating investment options. Through the incorporation of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into their investment strategies, investors can improve risk management, recognize opportunities to generate alpha and align their portfolios with sustainable objectives.

The significance of market efficiency and information asymmetry in sustainable finance is further emphasized by the interpretation of our findings. Investors play a significant role in price determination and market transparency by integrating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into their investment decision-making processes. This practice facilitates effective capital allocation and enables informed decision-making. Furthermore, our research emphasizes the capacity of sustainable finance to stimulate growth and effectiveness, directing funds towards eco-friendly technology and sustainable business models that tackle urgent environmental and social issues.

**Policy Implications:** For investors and asset managers, our research underscores the importance of incorporating ESG factors into the investment decision-making process. By integrating ESG consideration into portfolio construction and risk management strategies, investors can enhance risk-adjusted returns, mitigate downside risks, and contribute to positive social and environmental outcomes

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

This study has limitations even if it offers insightful information about how ESG principles and sustainable financing interact. Because of its reliance on earlier research, this study may not be able to adequately prove causality or capture dynamic interactions across time. Furthermore, the study may not adequately reflect the range of ESG practices and financial outcomes across sectors and geographies. Due to its focus on particular industries or geographic areas.

Studies in the future could address these limitations by using experimental designs, case studies, or longitudinal studies to investigate the dynamic relationships and causal mechanisms between ESG integration and financial performance. Furthermore, research could look at how particular ESG factors, like initiatives to mitigate climate change or promote diversity and inclusion, influence investor behavior and financial outcomes

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that there is a strong association between ESG indicators and financial performance. Studies have demonstrated that organizations that integrate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles into their operations typically attain superior financial results. This, in turn, attracts investors and supports sustainable finance. However, there are still challenges that need to be addressed, including legal constraints and the need for greater transparency. To achieve positive outcomes for sustainable development, it is important to tackle these issues and adopt the incorporation of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) and sustainable finance elements, such as investment decisions, risk management, and financial performance of organizations.

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