

# Cultural Economy

## TAKEAWAY REPORT

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## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

MCES: 6<sup>th</sup> July 2024 (Delhi) and  
8<sup>th</sup> October 2024 (Mumbai)



Powered by MaitriBodh Parivaar

EDITOR  
GOPAL KRISHNA AGARWAL



## **MAITREYA DADASHREEJI**

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Visionary Global Humanitarian,  
Transformation Pioneer and Social Reformer

# Cultural Economy

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**Gopal Krishna Agarwal**

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Shri Gopal Krishna Agarwal

### Foreword from the desk of the Patron

I am happy to bring to you the Outcome Report of Maitri Cultural Economic Summit (MCES) held on 6th July'24 at New Delhi and on 8th October'24 at Mumbai. This outcome report contains edited speeches delivered by all the domain experts, discussions by panellists and Q&A in various sessions at both the summits. At the end we have given a separate segment on the policy recommendations. This important chapter contains takeaways from the summits and summarised action points for all the stakeholders including the government.

MCES seeks to integrate culture and economy by bringing together leaders from diverse fields to enter into discussions and deliberations. Our aim is to create a world where spiritually transformed individuals and a thriving economy coexist, guiding humanity toward a brighter, more harmonious future. MCES aims to create a transformative impact on society by integrating India's cultural heritage with economic development. It explores and highlights the significant economic potential of India's rich cultural heritage drawing from the well of cultural wisdom.

The key objective of MCES is to establish a Cultural Economic Governance Model. The model will not only catalyse our nation's economic growth for us to become a developed nation by 2047 but also be a case study for the global economies to emulate and propel their own social, cultural, and economic growth. MCES will inspire other countries to integrate culture and economy for their development. The initiative will lead to global economic growth while promoting cultural preservation and appreciation. It seeks to inspire people to align their personal

growth with societal well-being, promoting a more balanced and harmonious future.

In 2019, I visited Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj. I could not stop marvelling at the huge transformation that was evident from how the event was organized in the past. On my visit to Kashi, a similar transformation was visible. The economic benefits of these well organised, better developed and managed cultural inheritances were obvious. Importantly, this was not some 'trickle-down theory' at work; the people were the direct beneficiaries of increased activities and spending. I realised the need for concerted work in this direction to harness the economic potential of our civilisational wealth. For example, if we look at the performance of start-up in India, they are doing well because of various amendments to government policies, etc. Earlier under the banner of Indian Think Council, as chairman of Cultural Economic Conclave at Prayagraj and then at Ahmedabad, we deliberated in detail on various aspects of cultural economy of India.

Whenever we think of a concept, it is crucial to bring it into reality by creating an ecosystem. Another significant requirement is the need for conceptual clarity. Whenever an idea emerges and gains traction, it requires deep contemplation before being taken forward. We must ask: are culture and economy in conflict with each other? Are they competing forces? Should the economy drive culture or should culture drive the economy? In my opinion, this is not a question of competition—culture and economy must coexist and be synchronized. There are numerous global examples of this. Take Venice, for instance, or other major religious places across different countries. Their economic activities flourished first, and as prosperity grew, people started investing in art, music, dance, food, and festivals. Economic success paved the way for cultural expansion.

On the other hand, in India, we see the reverse happening—culture driving economic growth. Look at Ayodhya or the Kumbh Mela. In Ayodhya, a large-scale economic transformation is taking place. Extensive activity is expected, with an estimated annual visitor count of 30 lakh people by 2030. This shows how culture can be a major economic driver. The Kumbh Mela is another prime example. These examples clearly show that culture and economy are not competing forces; rather, they complement and strengthen each other.

Maitri Cultural Economic Summit is built on the belief that culture and economy must grow together in a synchronized manner. This is what will make India economically strong, culturally rich, and holistically developed. Our entire MCES initiative is a platform for knowledge sharing, and working together as a team. Unless we thoroughly analyse specific issues, we cannot develop meaningful solutions or implement them effectively. To make this vision a reality, we must: establish economic linkages for various cultural and social activities, bridge the gap between culture and its economic impact, take a

significant revenue but also strengthen its global brand, promote social cohesion, and preserve its unique identity. Linking these cultural activities with economics is crucial to encouraging people to enter the sector and achieve a better standard of living.

It is said the Vedas are the fountainhead of all knowledge. This includes not only spiritual wisdom but also material sciences such as: archery, architecture, medicine, mathematics, and many more fields. In fact, 80% of Vedic knowledge pertains to material sciences, contributing to



focused approach to cultural economics, ensuring that it contributes to national development.

India's civilizational continuity bestows it with great cultural heritage and wealth. Apart from being the thread that binds the country, from Kamrup in Assam in the East to Dwarka in the West and from Kashmir in the North to Kanyakumari in the South, together; it also is an additional engine of economic growth. Our pilgrimages, art, music and dance, food, festivals and architecture etc. are a source of livelihood for millions of Indians. India's potential in these fields is immense. India's intangible cultural assets—including its diverse traditions, languages, arts, and philosophies—represent a vast, untapped economic resource. By strategically leveraging these assets, the nation can not only generate

prosperity, while the remaining 20% is devoted to philosophy and spiritual enlightenment. The key is to strike a balance between material and spiritual growth.

In any society there is a close interrelationship between the culture and the economy. The economy has been an important factor in the big achievements of our glorious civilization and cultural heritage. The reverse also held true - our cultural content contributed to our strong economy. If India has to assume a global leadership position again, it has to be an economic power first. Economic considerations drive geopolitics today whether it's the leadership of international institutions or global diplomacy or bilateral and multilateral trade relations etc., alternatively cultural content also catalyse a country's economy.

When we talk about the cultural economy, we must also consider the economy of culture. For instance, if anyone want to start a restaurant, the location and its culture matters. If I open a restaurant in South India, I would naturally serve dishes like dosa, sambhar, idli, and vada. But if I open one in Mumbai, the first thing people would look for is vada pav. Similarly, in South India, silk sarees dominate the market, whereas in North India, different types of clothing prevail—like Lucknowi cotton kurtas and other regional fabrics. This means that economic activities are deeply intertwined with culture. When businesses align with the cultural identity of a region, they thrive. That is why understanding the economy of culture is crucial—it's not just about cultural economy propelling growth, but also about recognizing how cultural factors shape economic activities.



A report by World Economic Forum (WEF) highlighted that in 2024, India ranked 39th in travel and tourism, whereas in 2021, India's position was 54th. It showed India's performance and achievement in the travel and tourism sector. The report highlighted that its potential lies in the available resources of India where it ranks 6th in the natural resources, 9th in the cultural and non-ledger resources, and 18th in the price competitiveness. So, we have to move from the current performance to realise the potential that India holds. We often observe that culture is connected with the travel and tourism sector only. But there are other three sectors for growth in the economy; that is, the agricultural, manufacturing, and services. We believe that the cultural aspect should be integrated with all the three sectors rather than just focusing on the service sector for all round economic growth of the country.

A progress report of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlighted that in the past six years, the rate of poverty reduction in India has increased from 9.89% to 14.96%. However, there exists a disparity. Our summit focused on skilling and capacity building of people involved in cultural activities to help reduce this disparity. It further discussed the role of environment and society in emphasizing sustainable development and environmental protection. It is also crucial to take growth to the rural areas of the country where huge population resides, so we discussed about rural prosperity. A detailed discussion followed up on the present performance indicators and available potential factors and integrate them with the right policy formulation.

Government is an important driver of any initiative, therefore cultural economic governance assumes importance; policy formulation and its implementation and meeting infrastructure needs were debated threadbare. Nothing can come out without the skilling and capacity building of the stakeholders and establishing social and economic linkages for performing arts. All these and other important sectors formed part of our summit and work thereafter. We emphasized the need to a focused approach on the interrelationship between culture and economy, and how culture drives the economy. The event was based on five P principals; Performance (current evaluation), Potential (full realisable), Path (to be undertaken), Planning (requisite roadmap), and Policy (implementations).

MCES is not just about hosting events or discussing theories. The goal is to translate these ideas into policy interventions. For policy intervention and implementation, data-driven decision-making is critical. Without solid data and research, discussions remain theoretical, and policies lack direction. Our approach is to gather real data, analyze trends, and build structured models for cultural-economic development. We focused on various data points that can influence both economy and culture, enabling us to develop a comprehensive national model for sustainable growth.

Economic growth requires catalysts—specific activities, industries, or policies that propel development forward. A 360-degree approach is necessary for nation-building, making India an economic powerhouse while preserving its cultural heritage. Our goal is to establish strong economic connections across various cultural

sectors, including art, music, dance, food, festivals, architecture, and temples. We have seen compelling data that confirms tourism is a major driver of economic growth, significantly contributing to employment generation and infrastructure development.

Why do we need to focus on India's cultural economy? There is a lack of comprehensive understanding in India on how to put its accumulated cultural wealth over millennia to achieve economic growth. In any society, there is a close interrelationship between the culture and the economy. At one point in history, India contributed more than 25% to the world's GDP and controlled about 28% of global trade and commerce. Being an economic power for several centuries, India was playing a leadership role in other fields as well- whether it was art, culture, music, dance, food, festivals, architecture, handicrafts etc. Unfortunately, history took an unpleasant turn and India saw foreign occupation. In the thousand years of subjugation that followed, we were robbed of our glory and wealth. When we won our independence in 1947, our economy was in shambles. We were bogged down by extreme poverty, lack of education, famine, and internal strife. We lost pride in our tradition and cultural heritage.

Prime Minister Modi has a vision that India's cultural heritage will be an important driver for our economy. Through initiatives like building the Ram temple at Ayodhya, redevelopment of Kashi Vishwanath and Ujjain Mahakal temple corridors, giving a completely new dimension to the Kumbh Mela, and setting up Tamil Cultural Centres across the globe, our Prime Minister is realizing this vision. Showcasing India's diverse and vibrant cultural heritage to the world leaders through the G20 platform was another important milestone in the promotion of Indian art and culture.

We also published a detailed Background Paper for a meaningful debate, containing aspects of all the themes, their sub-topics and data thereof. Our background paper included data on how the Kumbh generates a massive economic impact. The 2025 Kumbh Mela in Uttar Pradesh is expected to surpass the previous figures. In the last Kumbh, the government spent Rs. 4,200 crore, which generated an economic activity worth Rs. 2.5 lakh crore within just 1 to 1.5 months, as per a CII report. The multiplier effect is estimated at 3x for the state's revenue in taxes, also. This time, the government has allocated

budget for the Kumbh at Rs. 8,500 crore. A report in the Background Paper also highlights that only 20% of the global organizations working in the cultural field consider themselves economically sustainable. The data reveals the need to create an economic link to the cultural activities.

One major issue in the current scenario is that the valuation and monetization of cultural activities are not well-structured. This means that many festivals, temples, and cultural initiatives do not get the financial recognition or investment they deserve. Our goal is to establish a fair and structured valuation system for these cultural activities, ensure that temples, festivals, and traditional arts receive proper economic recognition, and bridge the gap between economic potential and financial support for cultural sectors. This will allow culture to thrive while also contributing significantly to India's economic development.

At the Summit in New Delhi, we also pledged to make this event a mass movement and take it to the state level. There are multiple reasons why it makes sense. First, India is a continent size country with a huge population. Second, its cultural richness and diversity ensures that every region has something unique and specific to that region and is valued immensely by the local population but not have the same cultural resonance outside that region. Third, if we look at the division of powers between the centre and the states, the latter have the responsibility in executing projects on ground in a number of areas and have the requisite finance and bandwidth for it.

What does it mean to view culture as wealth? At its core, it is about changing our perspective. In this context, culture is an asset—like land, capital, or intellectual property—something that can be cultivated, invested in, and traded. It is not about altering our traditions or diminishing our spiritual values; rather, it is about using our cultural strengths as the foundation for new economic models.

India's soft power, built on its cultural capital, has global appeal. For centuries, our literature, philosophy, architecture, and spiritual knowledge have attracted scholars, travellers, and seekers from around the world. However, success lies in moving beyond seeing culture purely as heritage or a tourist attraction and beginning to view it as a dynamic economic driver that contributes to India's overall GDP and long-term growth. India must follow value-

based activities. When we try to follow Western development models in India without adaptation, it often leads to misconceptions. Therefore, we need to integrate them with Indian values and culture. When culture merges with the economy, its simplicity and authenticity remain intact. We can derive culture, economy, and knowledge from the three words given by Dadashreeji: Sanskriti (culture), Samashti (collective well-being), and Samridhhi (prosperity).

In the end of this Takeaway Report, we have included important set of policy recommendations for all stakeholders based on our deliberations. These recommendations are categorised into following seven heads dealing with various aspects such as Decentralised Governance Model: Given the size and diversity of India, there is huge regional variation in terms of cultural practices and preferences, and therefore, we have recommended Decentralised Governance Model. Indian artisans are mostly engaged in handicrafts, metal and clay work, herbal products, and textile and embroidery. Meaningful intervention by the government can allow Indian artisans to reach wider domestic and international markets. Therefore, our second important batch of recommendations focuses on Protection and Promotion of Indian Artisans. The third set of recommendation is on Enhancing

Intellectual Property Rights Ecosystem by focusing on traditional handcraft, and other products and processes. Without Rural and Agricultural Rejuvenation India cannot see a balanced and equitable development. Our fourth set of recommendation is dealing with issues related to prevention of large scale migration of labor. Simultaneously, our focus is also on enhancing the role of local communities in Temple Rejuvenation. We found that people are losing interest in folk dance, music and local theatre, leading to gradual death of these tradition. Our sixth set of recommendations works to deal with revival of folk dance, music and local theatres. India is rich in cultural and civilisational history. But there is a lack of maintenance at the tourism sites, in detail we recommend how to enhance engaging visitor's experience.

I am confident that this report will go a long way in providing an impetus to the idea of cultural economy and provide us with a roadmap to energise the Indian economy with an additional engine of growth. I would like to conclude that we will be able to contribute a lot in achieving our objective of 'Viksit Bharat' through the collective efforts.

Regards,

**Gopal Krishna Agarwal**

Patron, MCES

26th February'25, MahaShivratri

X: @gopalkagarwal





**Maitreya Dadashreeji**

### Message from Maitreya Dadashreeji

If Goddess Lakshmi and Goddess Saraswati were to appear before you, whom would you choose? We often say that we need money but a wise friend would answer, “Worship Goddess Saraswati, for when she is pleased, Goddess Lakshmi will follow.” Yes, it’s true. Wealth that comes without wisdom is fleeting and unstable. However, when wisdom is embraced, and Goddess Lakshmi arrives alongside Goddess Saraswati, that wealth remains steady, benefitting generations to come. This ideology underscores the summit’s goal: to integrate sanskriti and samruddhi for our sustainable development.

When we, MaitriBodh Parivaar, began in 2013, we started from zero – truly understanding what shunya meant. What does shunya mean to you in practical life? In practical life, it’s about starting with nothing and steadily moving forward, isn’t it? We didn’t rush, yet progress came faster than expected. What was once a thought soon became reality. As we say, “The will of the Divine shall prevail!” – and it did. We simply kept working, and everything fell into place.

When we last gathered at the Transform Bharat Conclave in 2021, amidst all ministry

representatives, media houses, influencers, philosophers, change makers, we envisioned India rising as a global leader. At the conclave, we launched ‘Maitri Sanskar’, focusing on an innovative, value-based educational model, that helps children navigate the challenges of life by imbibing the universal values necessary for a brighter future of our nation. Our publication on this subject is introduced in schools to bring about a mental and spiritual shift in young minds. In 2022, we started the ‘Chinta Mukh Bharat 2032’ initiative with an intent to identify and help address the mental blocks, depression, and anxiety issues people face; we have brought together medical professionals and spiritual experts to establish centres for mental well-being and lead us toward a physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually fit nation. Just recently, in 2024, MaitriBodh Parivaar had the privilege of addressing the International Spiritual Council in Geneva, spreading the message of peace to 40-50 countries worldwide, followed by many significant gatherings across Europe and Middle East.

MaitriBodh Parivaar has been dedicated to positive change, and now, recognizing the importance of economic empowerment, we have joined forces with experts like Gopal Agarwal Ji. Maitri Cultural Economy Summit held at Delhi and Mumbai are not just one-time events; it is a movement toward a

stronger, prosperous India, a deep contemplation, a vision for Sunehra Bharat. This platform isn't just for display – it's built for action.

Friends, how many of you truly believe, feel, and desire that our country should lead the world? It is a very simple answer indeed. And we are not talking of becoming something else; we just need to be our true selves. If we need to rediscover something, it means we have forgotten our identity somewhere along the way. When we, as individuals, understand our values, our true Sanskriti; our country will also recognize its rich heritage and culture, paving the way for India's emergence as a global leader – Vishwaguru in truest sense.

And to achieve that, one crucial aspect is our economy.

In a conversation with Gopal Ji, he expressed how when he spoke about the economy, people didn't pay attention. When MaitriBodh Parivaar began speaking about going back to our sanskriti in 2013, people did not respond. But now when are talking about the two – Lakshmi Ji (wealth) and Saraswati Ji (wisdom) merged, people began to connect.

If we want to make any project successful, there are three essential factors to achieve the vision:

**Firstly**, whenever you want to implement something practical, **the willingness of the policy-making institutions or government bodies** in that area is crucial. If they are willing, then the work can be done effectively.

**Secondly, public consent** – when people connect with a project, its success is ensured. If people do not support it, no matter how much effort is put in, it will not be completed.

**Thirdly, time.** If the time is in favor, only then the work will be accomplished; otherwise, it will not happen.

If we keep these three things in mind and integrate this equation into our lives, everything will fall into place. What additionally matters is - does Divine Will align with it? Does your will align with it? If you are determined to do something, you will have to prepare the system, create a support system, and only then you will be able to accomplish it. Also, you must consider whether time favors it or not. Keeping all three above aspects in mind, this initiative has been prepared.

Therefore, we are bringing forth three key aspects with this initiative – Sanskriti, Samashti, Samruddhi. If we genuinely want to advance economically, what can we practically do?

1) We can embrace our sanskriti – preserve it, promote it, and spread it to people. There is a Hornbill Festival which takes place in Nagaland yet majority of us are not aware of it. Almost 18% of the world's population resides in India, yet we often lack complete knowledge about our own country – what is happening, where different festivals are celebrated, and what makes our nation unique. If I ask you now, "What is sanskriti?" you might have different answers, and perhaps some confusion as well. What is our Indian sanskriti? Is performing rituals considered sanskriti? Is worshipping God considered sanskriti? Think about it—is that all? Is wearing saffron robes, applying a tilak, wearing garlands, or going on pilgrimages defines Indian culture? If we ask people, 90–95% would say yes, these are cultural practices. But then, there are also others who neither worshipped nor acknowledged God, yet they were able to help themselves and support the welfare of society. So, is that not part of sanskriti? Questions arise from both perspectives, believers and non-believers. Contemplate. The way we live, eat, and dress defines our culture. But if we go deeper, what do we find? – "*Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti*" – this means that the truth is one, but it manifests in many forms. The sages and scholars say that there is only ONE truth, but it appears in multiple ways. Our sanskriti originates from this concept – one truth, expressed in diverse forms across India. Varied cultures come together to form one Great Nation of Bharat. These various expressions shaped our culture, and we became connected to it. This land is my mother – "*Mata Bhumi, Putro Aham Prithivya*" – meaning, I am the child of this Earth. This nation is my family. This feeling is not just an imagination, it's a realization. It is not just a concept; it is a state of being a truth. This nation is our family, and the whole world is our family. The moment you create divisions saying "this is not mine", you will find others standing against you because you declared that it is not yours. Instead, embrace everyone as your own and move forward together. That is how we will achieve growth for all.

- 2) When we visit NASA, we see the statue of Nataraja there. This statue is directly connected to our country, yet it is exhibited in another nation. Why? Because they have understood its scientific significance. They understand the scientific perspective behind the statue, and interestingly, it is also sold in the market. This shows that people do recognize culture from an economic perspective as well. Indian sanskriti, when viewed through the lens of science, contributes to economic growth.
- 3) Similarly, we need to start from the basics. There is still so much we do not know about ourselves. If we start transforming this culture, our economy will advance significantly on a global scale. After all, Indians are present outside the country as well. Indian diaspora is spread across more than 200 countries. Around 2.5% of India's population lives outside the country, traveling and working abroad. And, all of them remain connected to Indian culture. Now, when India's handicrafts and cultural heritage reach international markets with these cultural connections, it becomes an industry worth billions of US dollars. You may not even realize how massive this business has become. By 2032, it is expected to reach USD 2,300 billion.
- 4) We envision that by 2032, the conversation will shift from dollars to rupees in international market, reflecting the immense growth of our economy. Indian currency should be the most powerful, dominant, and number one currency in the world. The day that happens, we will truly become a global leader. Imagine a world where, no matter where you travel – at international airports, in global markets – people talk in terms of Indian Rupees instead of Dollars. This is the

vision we all must embrace. Those who are mentally exhausted may not see this possibility, but those who remain alive and active in spirit can dream this dream. At all times, carry this vision with you – find a way at your level to contribute to the nation.

- 5) We will establish a Central Committee and Regional Coordinating Committees – groups of experts and skilled individuals who will go into different regions, understand the depth of the local sanskriti, and focus on developing the economy there. These committees will stay connected to a central body, which will also link with various ministries. MaitriBodh Parivaar will experiment on a small scale in one particular region. Specifically, we will focus on underprivileged and tribal areas, selecting a village and working to increase its income over 3 to 5 years. This village will then serve as a model for the entire country.

If we are to truly work towards samruddhi, we must focus on the values – sanskriti and samashti (collective welfare), and only then comes samruddhi. The journey doesn't start with samruddhi; it begins with sanskriti, which leads to samashti, and they result in samruddhi. Samruddhi doesn't create sanskriti; it is sanskriti that paves the way for prosperity. These are not just words; they are the foundation for meaningful action. Ultimately, true samashti is achieved when every individual contributes to and benefits from collective progress. True prosperity isn't about personal gain or recognition but about creating a society where everyone thrives, driven by selfless dedication and unwavering commitment. That is the legacy we should strive to uphold.



The education we've received since childhood, the lessons from saints, sages, philosophers, that children are still learning in this land — that itself is our sanskriti. There is nothing above that. If we simply start living according to those teachings, we naturally become a part of that sanskriti. We advance by embodying those values. Sanskriti is the foundation of everything. But somewhere along the way, I feel that foundation has been shaken. So, while teaching the children, keep in mind not to overanalyze or overcomplicate things. What Indian culture teaches us is simple and profound: one need not overthink; need not dissect it too much, or we'll lose its meaning. Instead, we need to treasure that essence and foundation. Focus on teacher who embodies those values. Then slowly, we move forward by nurturing that foundation in our children.

Economic growth should never come at the cost of values. If we uphold our sanskār while growing the economy, we will sustain it effectively. We need to learn and understand this. There's no need to rush; we must move steadily but work with determination to fulfill our collective vision—our family's well-being and prosperity.

Some might wonder, "Why is Dadashreeji talking about the economy? What is the need for this discussion?" The point is, some people say, "Dada, I am not spiritual. What should I do then?" I say this: the notion of being "not materialistic" or "not spiritual" is just an illusion. The truth is that every person is trying to achieve something. Saying "I am neither materialistic nor spiritual" is merely an imagination. Let go of this illusion. Simply act, perform your duties. You have something to achieve, and so do we. The difference is, our aspiration is only for the nation. But let's dissolve these differences—"you are there, I am here"; "you belong to this group, I belong to that"; "you follow this religion, I follow another." We must rise above such divides.

Whether you are the richest or the most powerful person, if your actions are solely for yourself, you will never experience true fulfillment. But even if you have nothing and serve society and the nation, your life becomes meaningful, complete — you attain liberation. There is no need for rigorous meditation or penance; simply serve others, serve your nation. It shouldn't require external motivation. The desire to contribute should arise

naturally from within. This is the mindset that has brought us here today. Transformation, true change, is the nectar (amrit) that we seek in this critical period of our nation's history and it requires patience for the sankalp poorti.

If you study civilizations, you'll find that every society undergoes a major transformation every 90-100 years, a more significant shift every 1,400-1,500 years, and an even greater evolution every 14,000 years. We are now at the threshold of such a major shift — this is our Amrit Kaal, the age of Transformation. This initiative is like the churning of the ocean, and the nectar of wisdom that when emerges will be the key to our nation's samruddhi.

We are embarking on this journey with this vision, and your support will be crucial in shaping and directing it. Through culture, collective well-being, and prosperity, we will realize this dream. Only then we can see India rise to the status of a global leader. If we truly wish to build a grand India, we must work towards making the Brand India. We invite you all to join us in this mission, and for that, we express our heartfelt gratitude. Your support, guidance, and presence contribute to establishing India as a global brand.

Our intention is to align with the economic and financial ministry's vision while integrating all ministries into this endeavour. We need to strengthen our nation economically, not just increase individual bank balances. If you focus only on your bank balance, we will not reach where we need to be. When the nation progresses, the government will provide the best of all facilities and support system for its members, everything will naturally come to you.

If success eludes you and you are met with failure, it means you are stuck somewhere in your past — trapped by an old idea or a limiting belief. If you free yourself from that, you will move toward the future, toward success. And if in the near future your income increases, you will, in some way or another, see a connection between that and this initiative.

Together we all will grow and create a Viksit Bharat.

Namaste!

Love and Blessings,

**Maitreya Dadashreeji**

# MAITRI CULTURAL ECONOMY SUMMIT- DELHI

## REPORT

6<sup>th</sup> July 2024



**Shri Nitin Gadkari**

Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways

### Special address by Shri Nitin Gadkari

नमस्कार, आदरणीय दादाश्रीजी, मेरे मित्र एवं सहयोगी गोपाल कृष्ण अग्रवाल जी, आदरणीय अलोक कुमार जी, राम बहादुर राय जी, और उपस्थित सभी सम्मानीय अतिथिगण भाइयों और बहनों।

हम सभी चाहते हैं कि हमारा देश पुनर्निर्माण के चरण में विश्वगुरु बने। विश्वगुरु बनने का जो सपना हम सभी देख रहे हैं, उसमें हमें क्या रोडमैप का पालन करना चाहिए, यह एक चिंतन का विषय है। यह कहना सही है कि दुनिया में, विश्व में, कई देशों में, नए मॉडल का निर्माण बहुत ज्ञान के आधार पर होता है, पर यह चिंता करने, योजना बनाने और मूल्यांकन करने की बात है।

मेरा मानना है कि हमारे देश की ऐतिहासिक संस्कृति और विरासत हमारी विशेषता है। मूल्यादित जीवन पद्धति और मूल्यादित परिवार पद्धति हमारी शक्ति है। आज भी पूरे विश्व और भारतीय संस्कृति में योग विज्ञान, आयुर्वेद, नेचरोपेथी का अनुकरण बड़े पैमाने पर किया जाता है। हमारे देश के संतों द्वारा हमारी भारतीय संस्कृति पर आधारित पूरे विश्व में

आयोजित जागरण सत्र को बहुत समर्थन मिला है। विवेकानंद जी ने सही कहा है “no philosophy can be taught to an empty stomach” इसलिए जैसा कि हम एक विकसित भारत बनाने का लक्ष्य रखते हैं, हमें अपने देश को समृद्ध और आर्थिक दृष्टि से संपन्न बनाने की भी आवश्यकता है।

हमारा समाज 3 मजबूत स्तंभों के समूह पर खड़ा है: एथिक्स, इकॉनमी, इकोलॉजी और एनवायरनमेंट। हमने अक्सर दुनिया भर में चर्चा में डोमेस्टिक हैप्पी ह्यूमन इंडेक्स के बारे में सुना है। हम अपनी संस्कृति में कहते हैं ‘विश्व का कल्याण हो’, हम यह नहीं कहते कि ‘मेरा कल्याण हो’। ‘सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः। सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः।’ हमारी भावना यही है इसलिए विवेकानंद जी ने शिकागो में अपने विचार रखते हुए कहा था कि ‘मैं यह बताने के लिए नहीं आया कि मेरा धर्म और मेरा भगवन श्रेष्ठ है, आप जिस भगवन में विश्वास रखते हैं, जिस धर्म में विश्वास रखते हैं, वो महान है और हम कोई भी भगवान् का ध्यान करें, हम सभी एक ही जगह पहुंचेंगे।’

संस्कृत में एक सुभाषित है – ‘आकाशात् पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम् सर्वदेवनमस्कारः केशवं प्रति गच्छति।’ जैसे जब आसमान से पानी गिरता है, नदी और नालो में मिलकर जाते हुए एक ही समुद्र में मिल जाता है, उसी प्रकार से हम किसी भी भगवान की भक्ति करते हुए आगे बढ़ें, हम सब एक ही जगह पहुंचते हैं।

मैं बहुत खुश हूँ कि हमारे देश के इतिहास में भगवान् गौतम बुद्ध से लेकर प्रभु रामचंद्र तक सभी ने हमारे जीवन पद्धति और सामाजिक व्यवस्थाओं को प्रभावित किया है, और इसमें लोगों की आस्था और श्रद्धा का काफी योगदान है।

आज पूरी दुनिया में हमारे इंजीनियर और डॉक्टर जाने-पहचाने काम कर रहे हैं। हमारे सॉफ्टवेयर इंजीनियरों को विश्व स्तर पर मान्यता प्राप्त है। अमेरिका में 10 अच्छे डॉक्टरों में से 5-6 डॉक्टर भारतीय हैं और ब्रिटेन में भी ऐसी ही स्थिति है। जिस तरह ज्ञान का महत्व है, उसी तरह हमारे पूर्वजों से प्राप्त परिवार, समाज और शिक्षा महत्वपूर्ण है।



आप सोच रहे होंगे कि हमारी संस्कृति और भक्ति हमारी अर्थव्यवस्था से कैसे जुड़ी है। हमने वर्तमान में चार धाम में सड़क संपर्क का 70-75% काम पूरा कर लिया है, इसलिए उत्तराखंड में यमुनोत्री, गंगोत्री, केदारनाथ और बद्रीनाथ की यात्रा करने के लिए हमने भक्तों में लगभग 3 गुना वृद्धि देखी। यह परियोजना 12,200 करोड़ रुपये की है। सांस्कृतिक पर्यटन में शामिल 49% व्यय रोजगार पैदा करने के लिए है। मानस सरोवर को पिथौरागढ़ से जोड़ने के लिए भी रूट बनाने की राह पर है। लगभग 255 किलोमीटर राम वन गमन मार्ग का 40% काम भी पूरा हो चुका है, राम जानकी मार्ग का 20-25% काम भी पूरा हो चुका है और यह प्रोजेक्ट लगभग 5,000 करोड़ रुपये का है। हम ब्रज में कोसी परिक्रमा की डी.पी. आर. पर काम कर रहे हैं, परियोजना लगभग 6,000 करोड़ रुपये होने की उम्मीद है। अयोध्या में रिंग रोड निर्माण करीब 5,000 करोड़ रुपये का है। हमने गौतम बुद्ध सर्किट के लिए 1,600 किलोमीटर की योजना बनाई है, जिसमें उनके जन्म, शिक्षा और बहुत कुछ शामिल हैं, जिसमें लगभग 22,000 करोड़ रुपये शामिल हैं। महाराष्ट्र में 12,000 करोड़ रुपये की पालखी मार्ग परियोजना पूरी होने वाली है। सभी परियोजनाओं को मिलाकर हम 1 लाख करोड़ रुपये सिर्फ उस संस्कृति के निर्माण और पुनर्विकास पर खर्च कर रहे हैं जो हमें हमारे पूर्वजों से मिली है।

इस पहल के पीछे का कारण लोगों को इन सांस्कृतिक स्थानों की यात्रा करने, ज्ञान प्राप्त करने, भारत को विश्वगुरु बनाने के लिए एक कदम उठाने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करना है। यह भारत को एक मजबूत अर्थव्यवस्था और एक मजबूत देश बनाने की दिशा में एक कदम है।

यह ध्यान रखना महत्वपूर्ण है कि टेक्नोलॉजी और ज्ञान का उपयोग कैसे किया जा सकता है। हमारा कृषि और ग्रामीण क्षेत्र भुखमरी, गरीबी और बेरोजगारी का सामना कर रहा है। एक सांस्कृतिक, सशक्त, समृद्ध और संपन्न देश बनाने के लिए काम करते हुए, हमें भुखमरी, गरीबी और बेरोजगारी जैसे मुद्दों को खत्म करने पर भी ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता है। हमें स्मार्ट गांव बनाने और वित्तीय समृद्धि फैलाने की जरूरत है। लेकिन अगर वित्तीय समृद्धि को संस्कृति से नहीं जोड़ा जाएगा, तो सामाजिक जीवन शैली और सामाजिक व्यवस्था में गिरावट आएगी, जिससे सामाजिक व्यवस्था के गलत दिशा में चलने की संभावना होगी। हमारा लक्ष्य एक ऐसा मॉडल बनाना है जिसमें वित्तीय समृद्धि, विकसित भारत और सांस्कृतिक ज्ञान शामिल हो ताकि हमारी दृष्टि का पालन किया जा सके।

समाज में सकारात्मक और नकारात्मक दोनों बातचीत होती है – सकारात्मक बातचीत को महत्व देना और नकारात्मक बातचीत को कम करना महत्वपूर्ण है। आज हमारे समाज में भी आतंकवाद है। हम हिंसा पर अहिंसा का समर्थन करने वाले लोग हैं लेकिन यह सच है कि केवल मजबूत लोग ही समाज में शांति स्थापित कर सकते हैं। हमारा लक्ष्य रक्षा और वित्त में मजबूत बनना है। हमें अन्य देशों पर हावी नहीं होना है बल्कि हम उनके विकास में योगदान देने की कोशिश करते हैं।

अगर हम समाज की सांस्कृतिक अर्थव्यवस्था में बदलाव लाना चाहते हैं, तो हमें शिक्षा में बदलाव लाने की योजना बनानी होगी। अगर हम गरीब और किसानों के जीवन में सुधार करना चाहते हैं, तो हमें जल, भूमि, जंगल और जानवरों की स्वतंत्रता के आधार पर पुनर्योजना करनी होगी।

हमारी दृष्टि एक आदर्श संस्कृति के साथ आर्थिक प्रगति की है। हम एक देश, एक परिवार हैं। हम मिलकर अपने देश को विश्वगुरु बनाएंगे। हम सभी को अपने साथ लेकर चलते हुए प्रगति की ओर कदम बढ़ाने का लक्ष्य रखते हैं। हम ऐसा मॉडल सबके सामने रखेंगे जो विश्व स्तर पर कल्याण प्रदान करता है। धन्यवाद।



**Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal**

Union Minister State, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs

### Inaugural address by Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal

आज मैत्री कल्चरल इकॉनमी सम्मिट के अवसर पर मैत्रेय दादाश्रीजी हम सभी को सात्विक ऊर्जा प्रदान कर रहे हैं। गोपाल कृष्ण अग्रवाल ने भारत की सांस्कृतिक अर्थव्यवस्था को देखते हुए इस कार्यक्रम को आयोजित करने की पहल की है।

मैं कबीर जी की दो पंक्ति और एक मीरा की कहानी से शुरू करना चाहता हूँ। *पोथी पड़ पड़ जग मुआ पंडित भयो न कोए ढाई आखर प्रेम के जो पड़े सो पंडित हो।*

जो आप प्रेम फैला रहे हैं, उसके लिए आप सभी का शुक्रिया।

अब अगर हम बात करते हैं मीरा की, जब वो श्री कृष्ण के दर्शन करने वृन्दावन मंदिर जाती है, वहाँ स्थित पुरुष मण्डली मीरा को दर्शन करने से मना कर देते हैं। पर मीरा को क्यों मना किया गया? जब मीरा पूछती हैं कि उन्हें क्यों नहीं जाने दिया जाएगा, वहाँ उन्हें बताया जाता है कि श्री कृष्ण के दर्शन सिर्फ पुरुष ही कर सकते हैं। जैसे ही मीरा ने सुना यह जीवा गोस्वामी जी ने कहा है, वो उनके पास जा कर बोलती हैं 'मैंने तो सुना था कि वृन्दावन में एक ही पुरुष रहता है, पुरुष और भी



रहते हैं क्या?’ जीवा गोस्वामी जी के समझ में आया और मीरा दर्शन करने के लिए चली गई। उसके बाद वृन्दावन में महिलाएं आने लगी और तभी से वहाँ की अर्थव्यवस्था बढ़ने लगी।

कुंभ हमारी भारतीय संस्कृति और सनातन संस्कृति का विषय है। लेकिन सनातन संस्कृति के खिलाफ उठने वाली आवाजों के बारे में चिंता करने की जरूरत है। मुद्दा यह है कि ऐसा क्यों हो रहा है और लोग इसे क्यों सुन रहे हैं। हमारा सामाजिक तानाबाना कब बिगड़ा? जब मोहम्मद बिन कासिम सिंध में विजय हासिल करते हैं और राजा दाहिर पराजित हो जाते हैं, ये चिंतन का विषय है। हमारी पहली प्राथमिकता हमारे समाज की कुरीतियों को दूर करना होना चाहिए। सरकार की पहली प्राथमिकता है भारतीय संस्कृति का विकास करना। समाज के बाकी सभी संगठन की पहली प्राथमिकता समाज की कुरीतियां दूर करना होना चाहिए, जैसे भारत का सांस्कृतिक मूल्य बढ़े और हम वैश्विक नेता बनें।

जब किसी स्थान पर मेला आयोजित किया जाता है तो यह सुरक्षा सेवाओं, पर्यटन और यात्रा, बोर्डिंग और लॉजिंग, आवास सेवाओं, भोजन, टूर गाइड, विपणन और विज्ञापनदाताओं, इवेंट मैनेजमेंट, कलात्मक और सांस्कृतिक गतिविधियों, खुदरा प्रदर्शनी, और हाट बाजार की मांग करता है। अगर हम बात करते हैं अमरनाथ यात्रा की तो वहाँ घोड़े वाले भी जुड़ जाते हैं और अगर भैरव जी का मंदिर है तो वहाँ कुत्ते भी जुड़ जाते हैं। हमारी भारतीय संस्कृति विशाल है जो सिर्फ मनुष्य का ध्यान नहीं रखती, हम सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः, उसका ध्यान रखते हैं। हमारी संस्कृति पर चोट लगने से इसमें कुछ मुश्किलें और कठिनाइयाँ आई हैं। जब भारत आगे बढ़ रहा था, विश्व व्यापार के योगदान में आगे आ रहा था, तब इसकी शिक्षा प्रणाली और संस्कृति को बाधित करने के प्रयास किए गए थे। कुछ हद तक यह प्रयास सफल हुआ क्योंकि हम जातियों में और नार्थ-साउथ-ईस्ट-वेस्ट में बंटे हुए थे।

अब यह 2047 तक अमृत काल का समय है जिसमें भारत को ऊंचाइयों तक ले जाने का अवसर प्राप्त हुआ है। प्रधान मंत्री जी ने इस अमृत काल में पाँच प्रण की बात कही है।

1. विकसित भारत का लक्ष्य
2. गुलामी के हर अंश से मुक्ति

अगर हम हमारे प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के प्रयासों के बारे में चर्चा करते हैं, तो उन्होंने 2013 केदारनाथ बाढ़ और बद्रीनाथ की स्थिति से हुई तबाही को ठीक करने के लिए कदम उठाए। इसके अलावा उन्होंने काशी को वैभवशाली स्थान बनाया, उज्जैन गलियारे के लिए पहल की और भगवान श्रीराम को अयोध्या में लाए। इसने आर्थिक गतिविधियों के साथ-साथ भारत की सांस्कृतिक विरासत को जन्म दिया।

मैं यह निष्कर्ष निकालना चाहूंगा कि हमारी भारतीय संस्कृति में हमारी भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था को बढ़ावा देने का साहस है। भारतीय आर्थिक गतिविधियों को बढ़ाने में भारतीय संस्कृति, संस्कार और परंपरा ने महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है। हमारा भारत उत्सवों, त्योहारों, और मेलों का स्थान है, जिसके कारण हमारी अर्थव्यवस्था कभी रुकती नहीं है, चलती रहती है। कभी-कभी यह कुछ गिरावट का सामना करता है, लेकिन फिर यह गतिविधियां अर्थव्यवस्था को बढ़ावा देने में मदद करती हैं।

मैं अपनी बात को एक पंक्ति से समाप्त करता हूँ जो दादाश्रीजी को समर्पित है:

जब वर्षा होती है तो प्रकृति खुश होती है,  
जब वर्षा होती है तो प्रकृति खुश होती है,  
और जब कोई संत आता है तो संस्कृति खुश होती है।

इसी के साथ मैं अपनी वाणी को विराम दूँगा।  
धन्यवाद।

## Session 1

### Theme: Temple and Festival Economics



Festivals and temples are an important part of our tradition and culture and have always been integrated in our day-to-day activities. Therefore, Temple and Festival Economics is the theme of the first session of our Maitri Cultural Economic Summit 2024.

In addition to their religious and spiritual importance, temples were designed to serve as commercial centres attracting tourists/pilgrims and support business activities in the areas of retail, transportation, and hospitality. Similarly, festivals also amplify and reinforce the economic activities of the region. They attract a wide range of tourists, leading to increased spending on traditional products, transportation, hotel and cuisine. All these activities create jobs, stimulate local production, and strengthen community relationships. Temples and festivals catalyze economic growth of the region. Furthermore, they act as cultural preservation centres.

To bring out all aspects of the above theme we have divided it into four sub topics, namely Unlocking Temple Economics: Case Studies and Insights, Festival Economics with reference to Case Studies, Cultural Connect: Performing Arts, and Economic and Social Linkages: Temple, Festivals and Performing Arts.

The session will focus on 'Temple and Festival Economics', featuring discussion from our esteemed speakers: Shri K. Nagarajan, Sushree Rashmi Samant, Dr. Ramesh C. Gaur, Shrimati Nalini Padmanabhan. The session will be moderated by Shri Gopal Kumar, ensuring engaging exchange of ideas.





### Opening Remarks by Shri Gopal Kumar

Namaskar.

Today is a very auspicious day. The topic of discussion is excellent, and the inaugural session has been quite informative. The way Gopal Agarwal Ji presented the comprehensive theme of the topic was wonderful. The summit is a great blend of Dadashreeji's blessings, context, and content. In the first session, we will build on this foundation.

We see two words: culture and economy, which seem to present a contradiction. Some people believe that economics scale culture and relationships, viewing them as oxymorons. Many think that culture unites people while money divides them. However, in this summit, we will aim to challenge these long-held beliefs.

If we examine the basic definitions of culture and economy, we find that their relationship is profound. Economics is the study of human behavior when we have scarce resources to achieve our goals; it encompasses more than just money, banking, and insurance. It involves studying human behavior, choices, and decision-making processes when resources are limited.

Culture is a powerful ecosystem shared through values and attitudes that influence our behavior. Culture affects our actions, and in economics, we analyze those behaviors. Thus, there is a relationship that can be both direct and indirect since culture also shapes our thinking, choices, and rationalizations concerning economic parameters.

The common thread here is human behavior, attitudes, and values. If there is a genesis, there is also a prognosis; if there is an evolution, there is a pattern. Our behavior originates from our culture, and the economy develops from that behavior. Therefore, we must understand the connection between these terms—not as a simple correlation but as a spiritual correlation.

Our first session will discuss temple economics and festival economics—how they connect with culture and their economic linkages. The term “temple” derives from the Latin word ‘templum,’ meaning a sacred zone. “Festival” comes from ‘festa,’ meaning a religious holiday for celebration. This represents a spiritual extension of our religious pursuits, while festivals serve as physical manifestations of our faith.

## 1

### Unlocking Temple Economics: Case Studies and Insights

Temples act as central figures within their communities, contributing significantly to regional growth and prosperity. Temple economics seeks to explore the multifaceted economic benefits generated by temples, extending far beyond their role as places of worship. This includes offerings from devotees, donations, sale of religious items, and the economic boost from pilgrim visits. Traditional art forms, music, and crafts are often showcased during festivals and supported by temples, ensuring their survival and furtherance to future generations.

#### OBJECTIVES FOR THE SESSION

- Assess the role of temples in preserving and promoting cultural heritage and its social and economic implications.
- Analyze how temples create jobs, stimulate local markets, and contribute to regional economic and infrastructure development.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Specific case studies on how building of Ram Temple at Ayodhya and rejuvenation of Kashi Vishwanath Temple corridor have propelled the economy of the region, attracting huge investments in infrastructure and all round development.
- Identification and preservation of temples and

developing them as centres for economic and cultural rejuvenation of the region.



### Address by Shri K. Nagarajan

Namaste,

**M**aitreya Dadashreeji, Shri Gopal Krishna Agarwal Ji, the panelists, and all the knowledgeable minds here. In this session, I will try to put forward some temple-related topics achieved through research and some senior experts. This should hopefully help you determine the role temples can and should play in our culture and economic resurgence.

Why do we go to temples? Why do temples attract us? What is it in a temple that motivates us to take an arduous pilgrimage - Mata Vaishnodevi Devi, Kedar Baba, Badri Vishal, Ayyappa, Pazhani, and Tirupati?

We travel long distances and take an arduous journey, just for that few seconds at the garbhagriha for a darshan of our ishta devata. How does one feel in front of the Devata or Devi? At that moment, we feel a sacred energy engulfing us, unburdening us from mundane day-to-day struggles. We are energized and return to our lives, motivated to face obstacles.

Our forefathers, gazing at the infinite cosmos, wanted to bring its energy down to earth. They conceived a temple as the manifestation of the cosmos on Earth. Each temple was meticulously planned as a grid of 8x8 squares or 9x9 squares

called Mandukya pada or Parameswara pada. Ashta dik palak representing eight cardinal directions each representing an energy element were consecrated around the square grid. The centre of the grid is Brahmasthan, the Garbhagriha, where the deity was established and sanctified. In the inner circle were the 12 Aditi and the next 27 Nakshatra.

Boundless cosmic energy is thus manifested in the temple and sustained by Nada Brahman consisting of mantra, tantra, and pooja paath. People were attracted to the temple and it is this cosmic energy that germinated all knowledge ganit, vyakaran, jyotish, ayurveda, nyay, and art - shilpakala, painting, music, dance, poetry, literature, and even justice. Naturally, temples where people could feel strong vibrations because of the Shraddha, Shudhata & Satvikta of Nada Brahman & Vastu Brahman, which sustained the energy, became popular. Temples became the centre of the community and the hub of the economy.

The Temple Economy has two dimensions. The first, obvious to all, visible to all, is the aarthik vyavastha of the temple. This also has a further two dimensions. One is the economy generated by the daily worship & the other is generated by Utsav and rath yatra like Puri Jagannath, Thiruvarur, Madurai, Chidambaram, Tirupati Brahmotsavam - all take place for around ten days, and interestingly, it is during the Grishma Ritu, a period which falls between Rabi Harvest & Khariff sowing, when the agricultural work is at the lowest. During these festivals the deity is carried in a large Rath - Bhagwan himself visits his bhakts. He tours around the community checking their welfare. It's a large mela, in some cases lasting 10 days. People are rich with harvest money. Beyond the massive rath, the decorations, offering of fruits and flowers, and musicians, local businesses also prosper.

The top ten such utsav generate around Rs. 100-200 crore of business around the temple. As we shall see, this economic value is much lower than what can be realized by the sookshma aarthikvyavastha.

The question is what do the artisans, the flower garland makers, musicians, and decorators do the rest of the year?

Now let us look at the economy of daily worship. The main beneficiaries are the pooja samagri vendors, budget hotels & restaurants at very few temple towns like Kashi, Somnath, Mahakal,



Pazhani, Madurai, and Tirupati - less than Rs. 100 crore across the country, while there are more than a million temples under active worship across the country.

Let us consider the economy of the richest temple in India in terms of yearly revenue. The Tirupati temple reported revenue of Rs. 5,142 crore in 2023-24. The biggest chunk goes towards salary for 22,000 employees, who on average take home Rs. 8 lakhs a year. Incidentally, less than 600 of the total employees of 22,000 relate to worship - maintaining the energy of the temple. Temple upkeep is around Rs. 150 crore, fairs and festival expenses are Rs. 48 crore, and colleges get Rs. 120 crore. The Government also collects a lump sum of Rs. 50 crore in addition to Rs. 350 crore charged for services rendered by the government.

The question is who is the main beneficiary of the richest temple in the country? The answer is obvious. State Government and the huge bureaucracy that lives off the temple. In the four southern states, more than 19,000 temples are directly managed by the respective state government through 'Executive Officers' and there are almost 1,00,000 temples under Government control.

Apart from the Bootha aarthik vyavastha of temples, there is the not-so-visible sookshma aarthik vyavastha of the temples. The wealth of Hindu temples endowed by kings and commoners

over several centuries is enormous. The respective State Government Endowment Acts primarily aimed at protecting the vast landed properties of the temples, helping temples realize due income from their immovable properties.

Collectively, temples of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Puducherry own immovable properties of estimated value of more than Rs. 22 lakh crores. This property should yield around Rs. 20,000 crores annually, which is even less than the market rates. The actual money the government collects is less than Rs. 500 crores. (Tamil Nadu endowments collected a lease rent of Rs. 151.65 crore during 2020-21 from properties of estimated value of Rs. 8.5 lakh crores). In the case of Karnataka, the Government does not even have any records of temple properties.

If every temple was autonomous as they were intended to be and managed by the traditional sampradaya to which the temple belonged, with due checks and balances of an arms-length government regulation, the enrichment of the Hindu community economically and culturally would be beyond imagination. Today, there is no role for the Hindu community in managing their temples. Temples as glue to hold the community together are lost.

To conclude,

संस्कृति से भरा हुआ, संस्कृति के ज्ञान का उपायोग करते हुए, विकसित भारत का निर्माण करने हेतु, हमारे मंदिरों का पुनरुत्थान आवश्यक है।

## 2 Festival Economics with reference to Case Studies

Festivals support economic growth along with religious fervor and faith. Participation in the festivals drives demand for hospitality, transportation, and retail, benefiting local businesses. Municipalities invest in infrastructure and temporary markets, creating jobs and enhancing long-term economic potential. Beyond commerce, festivals showcase local culture, fostering appreciation and promoting the culture.

This sub-topic will cover how festivals enrich the cultural experience for visitors and also promote a sense of identity and pride within the local community and drive economic development of the region and bring social cohesion among communities.

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE SESSION

- Evaluate the role of festivals in enhancing infrastructure and long-term economic potential.
- Quantification of the economic impact of festivals on local and national economy.
- Evaluating social cohesion and cultural integration brought about by festivals with discussions, debates, interactions, and community living at festivals like periodic Kumbh Mela and other conglomerations.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- The multiplier effect of festivals Economy.
- Developing ecosystem for festivals; investment needs in infrastructure by the government.
- Carrying capacity, defining boundaries of sustainability.
- Evaluation of human and social benefits along with economic considerations.

According to a CII report, Kumbh Mela in 2019 generated business of over Rs. 1.2 lakh crore, whereas UP had spent only Rs. 4,200 crores for the event.



### Address by Sushree Rashmi Samant

Namaste to Maitreya Dadashreeji,

Honorable Arjun Meghwal Ji, Gopal Krishna Agarwal Ji, and the august gathering here. It's an incredibly humbling experience to be among people who are so concerned about our festivals and temples. The topic is close to my heart as I come from the Southern state of Karnataka and I belong to a family that has been the custodian of the temples for the past seven generations.

The festival economy, a burgeoning sector within many countries, provides profound insights into the intersection of culture, commerce, and community. Festivals are not merely celebrations, they are economic engines that drive substantial revenue generation, job creation, and local development. Today, we will explore the festival economy through case studies, highlighting the immense economic impact of major festivals in India.

Kumbh Mela stands as a testament to the extraordinary economic potential of festivals. Held every twelve years, it is the world's largest religious gathering that attracts millions of devotees and tourists.

Statistics from the 2019 Kumbh Mela provide a vivid picture of its economic significance: Attendance is about 150 million people including over a million foreign tourists; Government investment excluding private sector investment is over Rs. 4,200 crores (USD 589 million); economic return is Rs. 1,20,000 crores (USD 16.8 billion); approximately 6,00,000 jobs were generated as per the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).



The 2019 Kumbh Mela exemplifies an exceptional return on investment yielding 12-15 times the initial expenditure. Such an appreciation of investment is virtually unheard of in other business sectors, underscoring the unique economic potential of large-scale festivals.

Predominantly celebrated in Maharashtra, Ganesh Chaturthi is another significant contributor to the festival economy. This festival is estimated to be an economic event of Rs. 40,000 - 50,000 crore in Mumbai alone. The preparation, celebration, and post-festival activities engage numerous industries, from artisans crafting idols to vendors selling festive goods. Navaratri and Durga Puja, especially prominent in West Bengal, generate around Rs. 40,000 crores in economic activity. These festivals involve extensive preparations, including the construction of elaborate pandals (temporary structures), cultural performances, and community feasts, all of which stimulate the local economy. Diwali, the festival of lights, has the most significant economic impact among Indian festivals. Annually, it creates opportunities worth approximately Rs. 1.25 lakh crore. The festivities involve massive consumer spending on goods such as sweets, decorations, clothing, and electronics, leading to a substantial boost in various sectors.

India's festival season spans from September to April, creating a sustained period of economic activity. The peak sales period, typically observed in the fourth quarter, extends due to the continuous celebrations, ensuring that businesses benefit from an extended festive season. This prolonged period

of high consumer spending has a lasting impact on the economy, driving growth and stability.

Festivals also have a lasting impact on local economies. While cities like Varanasi and Ayodhya are often cited, considering smaller towns like Udupi provides a broader perspective. Udupi, known for its Krishna Temple and associated festivals, experiences a significant influx of pilgrims and tourists year-round. This consistent visitation supports local businesses, enhances infrastructure, and promotes cultural heritage.

As per Karnataka Economic Survey 2021-22, the Gross District Domestic Product (GDDP) of Udupi is USD 5.19 billion at current prices and USD 3.8 billion at constant prices, and the per capita income is Rs. 2.9 lakhs which is double the national average. These figures highlight the substantial economic contributions of religious and cultural tourism in regions like Udupi, demonstrating the broad and enduring impact of festival economies.

Global market forces and cultural perceptions play a crucial role in shaping the festival economy. Despite their economic significance, Indian festivals often face criticism and lack institutional patronage. Popular culture sometimes vilifies these festivals, contrasting them unfavorably with Western celebrations like Christmas, which involves substantial tree cutting and meat production.

This hypocritical standard of evaluating festivals underscores a deeper cultural bias. An attack on Indian festivals is often a veiled attack on the cultural

identity and heritage of India. Such biases can lead to a gradual erosion of traditional practices, making Indians a consumer of Western festivals while neglecting their rich heritage.

Indians must resist these neo-colonial tendencies and re-centre themselves on their rich cultural heritage. Embracing and promoting traditional festivals can reinforce cultural identity, stimulate the economy, and preserve the societal values that have historically made India a thriving civilization.

I would like to conclude that the festival economy as illustrated by case studies like Kumbh Mela, Ganesh Chaturthi, Navaratri, Durga Puja, and Diwali, highlights the immense economic potential of cultural celebrations. These festivals not only drive substantial revenue and job creation but also have a lasting impact on local economies. In the face of global market forces and cultural biases, Indian stores must claim and celebrate their festivals, recognizing their profound economic and cultural significance.

### 3

### Cultural Connect: Performing Arts

Culture creates an ecosystem to establish and nurture connections through cultural activities among people across the social classes. This is facilitated by a sense of shared identity which may be based on common language, religion, customs, beliefs, values, and many such intangible unifying factors. The cultural traditions when expressed through storytelling, music, theatre, cinema, song, dance, or art bridge the gap in the social fabric. Brand Ambassadors from these fields enrich awareness.

#### OBJECTIVES FOR THE SESSION

- Study the role of Performing Arts in preserving and transmitting shared cultural traditions and a sense of civilizational continuity.
- Study the impact of cultural activities in creating social integration.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Explore how cultural traditions, expressed through diverse art forms, contribute to building shared identities and fostering social harmony within communities.

- Establishing an ecosystem to nurture connections between Performing Arts and the society at large.



#### Address by Dr. Ramesh C. Gaur

My greetings to Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal Ji, Shri Gopal Krishna Agarwal Ji, Maitreya Dadashreeji, and all the esteemed participants present here.

Before delving into the topic of Performing Arts, I would like to emphasize the significance of temples and festivals, which are integral to our cultural and social fabric. Temples and festivals serve not only as centres of spirituality but also as institutions that preserve our heritage and contribute significantly to the creative economy. Historically, they have functioned as hubs of cultural, social, and economic activities. However, there has been a gradual shift in many temples, reducing them to mere places of worship, which has led to the decline of their multifaceted roles.

A detailed analysis of temple management and promotion highlights the need for structured and strategic approaches. Large temples, with abundant resources, often operate on a grand scale, requiring professional management to optimize their impact. In contrast, smaller temples, which are scattered across the country, often lack adequate attention and support. The research conducted by many researchers, who have extensively documented Indian temples, underscores the need to incorporate findings into discussions to ensure balanced and inclusive development.

When it comes to festivals, especially those rooted in rural traditions, their significance extends far beyond celebration. Festivals like those held after Holi in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh include cultural competitions, craft markets, and other community-driven activities, which provide an economic boost to local artisans and craftsmen. These events act as a bridge, connecting traditional skills with modern audiences, thereby revitalizing rural creative economies.

Moving on to performing arts, it is undeniable that dance, music, drama, and theatre are the lifeblood of India's cultural heritage. While cinema and music industries have gained strong economic footholds, traditional art forms such as Swang, Nautanki, and Bhavai often struggle for survival. Institutions like the National School of Drama (NSD) primarily focus on mainstream or Shakespearean models, sometimes neglecting the vibrant diversity of regional and folk traditions. Policies and initiatives must prioritize the livelihood of theatre artists, promote regional theatres, and integrate performing arts into educational curriculums to nurture a new generation of culturally aware individuals.

Economic policies concerning the cultural sector must also address the well-being of artists. Challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerabilities of performing artists, whose livelihoods depend heavily on public performances. Many artists faced immense hardship due to the lack of opportunities during this period. It is essential to implement targeted measures to support artists, ensuring their welfare and integrating cultural activities into broader economic frameworks.

Promoting theatre and other performing arts goes beyond preservation; it involves ensuring their sustainability and accessibility. Public interest in theatre remains limited, often necessitating government support and innovative programs to make it financially viable. Initiatives such as street plays have proven effective in raising awareness about social issues while also promoting cultural heritage.

To further support the performing arts, the establishment of state repertory companies can provide a structured platform for budding theatre artists to perform and showcase their talent. This would also help in promoting regional languages and cultures, safeguarding India's cultural diversity while offering economic opportunities.

In conclusion, the intersection of cultural and economic policies is critical for India's holistic development. Supporting temples, festivals, and performing arts through professional management, structured training, and policy integration will not only preserve our rich cultural heritage but also drive economic growth. Such initiatives demand a collective vision and collaboration to build a sustainable cultural economy for future generations.

With this, I express my gratitude to everyone present here. Let us join hands to protect and promote our vibrant cultural legacy while ensuring a prosperous future for all.

Thank you.

**Moderator:** You have beautifully articulated that to develop performing arts, we must support artists and relate performing arts to social issues; this alignment will foster growth.



## 4 Economic and Social Linkages: Temples, Festivals and Performing Arts

Festivals, Temples, and Performing Arts transcend economic drivers, acting as architects of the social fabric. Shared rituals, traditions, and artistic forms solidify community bonding and a sense of belonging. Economic benefits derived from them can be reinvested in social programs, elevating public health and education and the growth of the economy. This virtuous cycle cultivates a more inclusive and resilient society, and cultural heritage flourishes alongside economic advancement.

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE SESSION

- Study economic and social linkages of the Temple, Festivals, and Performing Arts.
- How Temples, Festivals, and Performing Arts feed into one another.
- Assess the effectiveness of economic reinvestment from festivals and temples into social programs.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Establish economic linkages for sustaining social and cultural activities by identifying and preserving temples, organizing festivals, and promoting Performing Arts.
- Enhancing the values of Performing Arts and unlocking their potential as career opportunities for the youth.



Address by Shrimati Nalini Padmanabhan

Namaste to Maitreya Dadashreeji, Shri Arjun Meghwal Ji, Shri Gopal Krishna Agarwal Ji, and all the participants here. I come from the land of temples, that is, Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu is renowned for its rich tradition of temples which play a central role in the region's cultural and economic landscape. With approximately 44,000 temples under government management, the depth of Tamil Nadu temple's culture and arts is substantial. Although discussions about the revenue generated by these temples and their impact on social causes are complex, the focus here is on the positive economic contributions of vibrant temples.

Temples in Tamil Nadu serve three primary purposes: local temples, kuldevta (family deity) temples, and pilgrimage temples. Especially during festivals, these temples come alive with energy, providing joy and rejuvenation to countless visitors. This vibrancy is not only spiritually uplifting but also economically beneficial.

A recent study highlights that temples with active rituals and regular pujas significantly enhance the prosperity of their local areas through associated economic activities. The annual temple economy in India is estimated at around USD 40 billion, underscoring the need to channel these resources effectively for societal development.

I recently visited some prominent temples including Rameshwaram, which demonstrated the revitalizing effect of these sacred sites despite the challenges of travel. The need to ensure the economic sustainability of temples is evident.

An initiative called Infinite Seva was launched to address the issue of neglected temples. This organization focuses on revitalizing unattended temples, some being over 500 years old. By forming committees within a kilometer radius of these temples, opening bank accounts in their names, and funding daily pujas and maintenance, the initiative aims to restore prosperity to these areas. Ten temples have already been energized through this effort.

Temples in South India have historically been centres of education, charitable work, healthcare, and preservation of historical records. The Nellaiappar Temple with its 1,000 intricately designed pillars exemplifies the substantial costs associated with preserving such architectural marvels with repairs estimated at Rs. 18 crores per pillar.



Festivals associated with temples such as music festivals, are instrumental in the renaissance of arts and culture. I would like to conclude that the economic impact of temples and their associated festivals is significant. By ensuring that these institutions are economically sustainable and integrating them effectively into broader societal development, their contributions to culture and economy can be maximized.

I would like to extend my thanks for allowing me to share my thoughts on the immense cultural and economic potential of temples and festivals. Together, let us work towards preserving the sacred institutions and fostering their growth, ensuring they continue to enrich our heritage and uplift our society.

**Moderator:** A lot of statistics have been shared, and I would like to highlight one particularly relevant finding: the NSSO study indicates that domestic religious tourism now surpasses foreign visitors in number, with religious travel expenditures averaging Rs. 2,717 per day per person. This illustrates the potential of where we stand today and where we can go.

## Q&A Session

1) There is a topic named Temple Economics, I would like to know if we could really unlock the potential.

**Shri K. Nagarajan:** If I talk about the performance, then it is zero. The wealth, spiritual structures, and rituals of temples are gone. However, there is enormous potential. We need to unlock the potential by allowing the communities to handle

the temples. The economic resurgence is high. If I state some data then the property in Tamil Nadu is of about Rs. 9 lakh crores out of which the state government collects Rs. 340 crores. To collect Rs. 340 crores, the state government charges Rs. 450 crores as administration fees. They charge another Rs. 450 crores to audit the files. So, the economic resurgence is high but the key to this is to allow the local communities to handle the temples.

**Moderator:** We understand that there is a huge gap between our performance and our potential, and together we have to find a path and think about how we can achieve the potential.

2) It is said that banking started from temples and insurance started with our culture of sharing. Based on this, can we say that the economic activities have been an extension of the social and cultural needs or is it the other way around?

**Sushree Rashmi Samant:** I think that the economic activities have been an extension of the temple activities. I would like to state a real example. During my speech, I mentioned the temple town of India, Udupi, also the birthplace of Syndicate Bank. We see a modern sense of economics in a way embedded and find its roots around our temples. Statistics state that 92% of women and 90% of men are literate, which indicates that the temple is not just about culture, but also about the society around it. So the real-time data establishes the fact that it is indeed a source of all life in a particular society. Bharat is an example of a culture that will thrive no matter what the condition is.

3) When we say that culture, temples, and festivals contribute to the economy and its growth and development, there are tangible and intangible benefits to it. So, how can a proper analysis be

done and what exactly do temples and festivals contribute to the economy?

**Shrimati Nalini Padmanabhan:** Firstly, our temples teach sanskriti to our generations. When sanskriti is good, we believe our economy will grow positively. Temples teach us values in varied forms, creating an economic impact. A lot of economic activities can be seen around the temples but there is no particular tool to measure these activities. But it would be better to have indicators to measure both tangible and intangible benefits around the temples.

4) We have socio-economic linkages to our temples, festivals, and performing arts, and they play an important role in the national economy in terms of employment generation, international trade, etc. But we see that there is a lack of linkage with society. As it was said that performing arts has to grow, so for it to grow,

there is a need to take care of the artists' welfare as art will not grow unless artists grow. What steps can be taken to align these initiatives with the welfare of the country and the people?

**Professor (Dr.) Ramesh C. Gaur:** We need to understand that in the past, performing arts were connected with the masses. Now, performing arts have been restricted to a smaller population. There is a need to understand why theatre was popular earlier as it was not only promoting our culture but also our regional traditions. Regional theatre is important to keep the regional traditions alive but that is not being taken care of. There are a few groups who perform but most of them depend on government grants. So, I believe self-sustainability and assurance of the welfare of the artists are important. For this, the state government has to take the lead and need to reduce dependence on the Ministry of Culture and other institutions.

## Session 2

### Theme: Social Intelligence (Mutually sustainable ecosystem - Linking people, planet, and prosperity)



**S**ocial intelligence involves navigating social dynamics, cultural norms, and fostering collaborative efforts to achieve positive societal outcomes. It is the second theme of deliberations at the MCES, 2024.

The world is facing complex and ever-evolving challenges and needs collaborative efforts to overcome them. The threat to the global commons due to anthropogenic activities poses existential challenges. We have come to such a state because

the relationship between the environment and society is ignored by humans. Any attempt to address the global challenges must seek to understand and utilize the traditional wisdom and value system that still survives in our rural areas. It must also address the issue of rural growth because the lack of prosperity in rural areas itself is a genesis of many of today's problems.

According to the World Bank data, about 43 percent of the world's population still lived in rural

areas in 2023. Cultural wealth at the grassroots level can be used to propel the economy of societies and countries and at the same time preserve this wealth. However, there is a lack of understanding on how to put this accumulated cultural wealth over millennia to achieve economic growth.

The session encompasses four key areas: environmental stewardship and societal dynamics, rural growth and prosperity, effective governance and a cultural economic macro-model and have been coined under the theme of Social Intelligence. These areas highlight the importance of balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability.

Keeping the above factors in mind, we have divided the second theme of Social Intelligence into four sub-topics of Environment and Society, Rural Growth and Prosperity, Cultural Economic Governance and Cultural Economic Model.

The session 2 will focus on 'Social Intelligence (Mutually sustainable ecosystem - Linking people, planet, and prosperity)', featuring discussion from our esteemed speakers: Shri Gajanan Dange, Shri Debarshi Mukherjee, Shri Shrish Kalyani, Dr. Vinod Narayan Indurkar, Shri Sriram Balasubramanian. The session will be moderated by Shri Sambhrant Krishna, aiming for meaningful dialogue and actionable insights.



### Opening Remarks by Shri Sambhrant Krishna

Hello everyone!

**T**he second session is on social intelligence, a mutually sustainable ecosystem - linking people, the planet, and prosperity .

There is a feeling that human societies are in conflict

with the environment and there is an element of truth in it. If we achieve economic growth at the cost of the environment, then this growth will not be sustainable. For it to be sustainable, we need to alter the growth paradigm. We are fortunate that we can draw upon India's traditional wisdom to modify the growth patterns so that the conflict between the environment and society is mitigated and we can live in harmony with nature while achieving economic prosperity.

One major challenge that India faces is to lift our population from poverty, especially in the rural areas. The conventional wisdom says that people need to be taken out of agriculture and moved to the manufacturing sector; they need to come to the cities and be employed in the factories. Our manufacturing sector is good but we have experienced very dehumanizing conditions of labour in the factories, especially the bigger factories. Is there a way where we can use our cultural heritage and traditional arts and crafts to better the lives of the rural population without forcing them to migrate to the cities?

The third topic will discuss cultural economic governance. We have a cultural heritage that was not looked up to by the past governments as a form of wealth to propel economic growth so, what role does the government play now in leveraging this cultural heritage, converting it into cultural wealth, and then using it for economic growth?

The fourth sub-topic will discuss the cultural economic model. The whole discussion is about using our cultural wealth to generate economic growth, so can we achieve a theoretical economic model where we can say that this is the tangible outcome of this session where you put in these cultural inputs and that is the additional growth you are going to generate because of using culture as one of the inputs of growth.

## 1

### Environment and Society

The session on Environment and Society examines the intricate relationship between environmental sustainability and societal well-being, departing from traditional economic models focused on short-term gains. It emphasizes the critical integration of environmental considerations and the promotion of social cohesion within economic frameworks to

ensure sustained prosperity over time. Innovative frameworks such as ecological economics and sustainability compulsions advocate for responsible resource management, promoting equitable economic advancement while safeguarding natural resources for future generations.

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE SESSION

- Appreciate the integration of ecological concerns in traditional Indian lifestyle and value systems.
- Demonstrate how India's cultural tradition of trusteeship of natural resources and economic progress can mutually reinforce inclusive growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Outline a comprehensive strategy for building resilient socio-environmental ecosystems.
- Develop an economic growth model integrating Environmental and Social Sustainability.
- Policy formulation and implementation on ownership of natural resources on trusteeship model.



### Address by Dr. Gajanan Dange

पूज्य दादाश्री, सम्माननीय मित्रपर्ण जी, सम्माननीय गोपाल जी तथा उपस्थित सभी को सादर प्रणाम।

समूचे विश्व स्तर पर अर्थ प्रधान विकास के प्रतिमान पर तथा उसे प्राप्त हो रहे परिणामों पर भारी भरकम चर्चा हो रही है ऐसे समय में कल्चरल इकॉनोमी समिट जैसे कार्यक्रम के द्वारा विचार विमर्श हेतु जो मंच उपलब्ध कराया गया है, उसके लिए मैत्रीबोध परिवार को मन पूर्वक धन्यवाद।

वर्तमान विकास के चलते आज समूचे भारतवर्ष अनेकों अनेक यशोगाथाएं खड़ी हो रही हैं मगर उसके साथ-साथ कुछ प्रश्न भी उभरकर सामने आ रहे हैं।

प्राकृतिक संसाधन की क्षति, रोजगार के अभाव में गांवों से शहरों की ओर पलायन, कृषि में फसल चक्र बदलाव के साथ-साथ कृषि भूमि पर बढ़ता दबाव, खानपान से लेकर हमारे रहन-सहन में परिवर्तन हम सभी स्तरों पर देख रहे हैं। अब समय आया है कि केवल कार्यक्रमों उपक्रमों में परिवर्तन, सुधार की मर्यादाओं के मद्देनजर विकास की वैचारिक चिकित्सा करनी चाहिये। विचार ही विकास प्रक्रिया को संचालित करता है।

हर एक देश की सृष्टि उत्पत्ति की अपनी एक कथा होती है। उस कथा के आधार पर उस देश के समाज कि जीवनदृष्टी विकसित होती है। इस जीवनदृष्टी के प्रकाश में समाज अपने जीवन मूल्य तथा जीवनशैली विकसित करता है।

पिछले वर्ष भारत G20 राष्ट्र समूह की अध्यक्षता कर रहा था। G20 की प्रक्रिया में G20 अर्थात सिविल सोसायटी का एक गुट गठीत हुआ जिसमें पर्यावरण संमत जीवनशैली इस विषय पर सघन विचार विमर्श कर अपना नीतिगत सुझाव पत्र प्रस्तुत किया। विकास संबंधित अनेक सुझावों में महत्वपूर्ण सुझाव थे विकास की लक्ष्य आधारित ढाँचे के साथ मूल्य आधारित ढाँचे का पालन करना चाहिए। वर्तमान आर्थिक प्रतिमान केंद्रीकरण के सिद्धांत का पालन करता है, हालाँकि भारतीय चिंतन विकेंद्रीकरण के सिद्धांत का प्रतिपादन करता है। हम मास प्रोडक्शन के बजाये प्रोडक्शन बाय मासेस के पक्षधर हैं।

भारत ने हमेशा संसाधनों के शोषण के बजाये दोहन करने पर बल दिया है। हमने हमेशा संसाधनों के साथ रिश्ता अर्थात श्रद्धा पूर्ण संबंध बनाने का अभ्यास किया है। 'मातृभूमि पुत्रो अहम् पृथिव्यः' यह हमारा मार्गदर्शक मूल्य रहा है। इसी सूत्र को केंद्र में रख कर हमने हजारों वर्ष तक कृषि कार्य सफलतापूर्वक किया है। हम निरंतर उत्पादन भी बढ़ाते रहे तथा संसाधन को भी पुष्ट करते आये। हमने हमेशा भूमि के विश्राम की व्यवस्था कर फसल चक्र अपनाया है। कृषि हमारे यहाँ केवल व्यवसाय नहीं अपितु एक संपूर्ण जीवन पद्धति है।

अपरिग्रह, समन्वय, स्वावलंबन, परस्परवलंबन—इन जीवनमूल्यों को आधार बनाकर हमें भविष्य की विकास नीति तय करनी चाहिये। अपना परिसर अपनी पहचान होती है। प्रकृति के अधीन रहकर ऋतुचक्र का सम्मान करते हुए हमने हमारी आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति करते हुए विकास का सम्यक पथ अपनाया चाहिये।

शाश्वत विकास की अवधारणा को धरातल पर उतारने के लिए कुछ मूलभूत प्रयासों की आवश्यकता होगी। इन प्रयासों में सर्वप्रथम भूमि को संसाधन ना मानकर माता स्वरूप में भूमि के सुपोषण के लिए प्रयास करने होंगे। मानव तथा पशु चलित सुयोग्य यंत्र छोटे किसानों में प्रचार प्रसारित कर

भूमि के क्षरण को रोकना होगा। पारंपरिक बीजों के संवर्धन हेतु सुयोग्य व्यवस्थाएँ निर्माण कर भारत में कृषक द्वारा संवर्धित बीजों को यथोचित महत्त्व देना होगा। कृषि उत्पाद की भरण तथा प्रक्रिया की विकेंद्रित व्यवस्थाओं का निर्माण करना होगा। वनों के सामूहिक व्यवस्थापन पर बल देना होगा। विकेंद्रित, सृजनात्मक तथा को-ऑपरेटिव बिजनेस मॉडेल्स पर बल देना होगा। यह सारी व्यवस्थाएँ सामूहिकता समन्वय और समग्रता को केंद्र में रख कर निर्माण कर हम सम्यक पथ से सुमंगलम् की ओर बढ़ पाएंगे।

आइये हम भारतीय संस्कृति और परंपराओं के आधार पर विकास का एक ऐसा प्रतिमान तैयार करें जो न केवल आर्थिक समृद्धि लाए बल्कि हमारी भूमि, पशु, पर्यावरण और मानव के साथ संतुलन तथा सद्भाव स्थापित करें। यही हमारी सांस्कृतिक विरासत का सही संमान होगा।



### Address by Shri Debarshi Mukherjee

My greetings to Maitreya Dadashreeji, Gopal Ji, and all the esteemed co-speakers here.

If we talk about Social Intelligence, a book was launched here about this term. The term is not new as it was launched in 1920 by Edward Thorndike but it has suddenly started gaining currency in society. Have you ever met someone for the first time and after sharing words with that person, you feel happy? Do you know why it happened? It is because of the social intelligence developed within us that has made us a compassionate person. Now, who do we call an intelligent person? The research says a person who is numerically sound is intelligent; however, the Indian education system or Gurukul system never considered only one parameter to measure intelligence.

Human civilization is facing a social existential threat where individualism has overpowered collectivism at the micro, small, and macro level with a difference in applications and ramifications. The fabric of human society suffers badly when people living in it brace for choosing to live in silos thus rendering fractured pieces that are difficult to join together and bring back peace and harmony. Over-reliance on technology products has created a parallel world of digitization imbued with speed and convenience.

Tom Goodwin's seminal book coined the idea of digital Darwinism in 2005 which was later popularized by American journalist and technology commentator Brian Solis in his 2018 article titled 'Digital Darwinism Opens the Door to the Era of Assistance'. He talks about how society is maturing faster with the advent of technology than the people living in it and thereby causing a major disruption in terms of technology usage, acceptance, and survival. There is a pertinent anecdote where an expecting mother was having nightmares. She woke up one such night because she had bad dreams about a world where machines overtook human functions, people became jobless, and every step of human life was under technology surveillance. She was scared to bring her baby to such a world. Unfortunately, what was projected in that article or the book is happening before us at different magnitudes across the globe.

Today society needs what it suffers from, i.e., empathy. The growth paradigm of human societies evolved from society 1.0 where we were a cave dweller and hunting population to this day of society 5.0 embellished with superior technologies like IoT. In 2016, Japan brought us the idea of Society 5.0 or the smart society concept to relieve people from mundane chores and rather focus on higher order contributions for the welfare of the society and the country at large. It is interesting to note that the same country has learned to focus on its people more and is poised to encourage the idea of human centered society where people are more important than machines.

Social transactions can only prosper in a society where there is amity and brotherhood. Aspersions kill empathy. Given the prevailing socio-economic conditions, we need to propagate the idea of social intelligence more than ever. Ours is the only country in the world to have a two-dimensional name where the first part identifies with the

geo-political paradigm 'Bharat' and the latter explains the quantum of time dimension 'Varsh'. Since ancient times, we have been a society that celebrated diversity and collectivism.

Our Gurukul model of education system never believed in mere academic delivery professionally but rather trusted with the system of mentoring and hand-holding. Such an act of sheer empathy is enough to encourage students to scale up their efforts for superior performance. The relative importance of social intelligence rose on account of multifarious reasons, one of them being the rapid urbanization of societies where erstwhile social communions suffered a jolt for want of speed and prosperity. As we migrated from the village ecosystem to the urban ecosystem, we became individuals with zero or negligible community connections and started living in silos. Our ancient thought leadership has always preached about the efficacy of positive dialogue and mutual admiration of skills to foster a cohesive society which is the bedrock of social intelligence.

The century-old colonial dominance has trained us to think that only those with superior numerical abilities are intelligent but Robert Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory recognizes people with musical talents or sports abilities as intelligent as well. In ancient times, we also had this kind of scale to assess intelligence but it's worth pondering when and how we lost track of time and precipitated down to a unitary method of assessment.

Ours is an inclusive society that since ancient times

has been endowed with a multiplicity of thoughts, the confluence of different schools of thought with a solid intent to realize the true potential of human beings contributing to its development in tandem with the vital change forces interjecting intermittently.

Demography, competitive forces, and consumption patterns are some of the societal change agents that propel and compel social scientists to construct a grand design of a welfare society. As we talk about harnessing the rich cultural dividend of India for the economic prosperity and development of the country, we must revisit our consumption patterns. It is time we start with responsible consumption by replacing greed with need. The conscious decision to feel responsible about the communion, and design practices based on resource sharing would be a socially intelligent approach to mitigate the threats of resource crunch due to overconsumption.

I would like to share another anecdote to conclude my chain of thoughts. Once a young girl went to a grocer and the salesman asked her what she needed. The girl raised a list of a few items but the money she brought wasn't enough to purchase the listed items. Eventually, the salesman asked her to leave. As dejected, she was about to leave when the owner of the store noticed her. Upon hearing her requirements, the owner served her with all the items she needed but with reduced quantity which was enough to meet the immediate requirement. This story represents the first layer of social intelligence, i.e., empathy which is expected from



everyone to their fellow co-habitants of the society. The business ecosystem across the globe can thrive with newer designs engraved with empathy and emotion failing which the entire world order will collapse into an irretrievable situation without any social equilibrium, a situation undesirable to one and all.

## 2 Rural Growth and Prosperity

India's rural areas constitute a critical component of the nation's economic landscape, boasting significant potential in traditional crafts, cultural heritage, cottage industries, and handicrafts. However, rural communities often face barriers such as limited access to skills, resources, and markets, which hinder their economic prosperity. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to empower rural communities through targeted interventions in skill development, capacity building, and financial inclusion. This approach is essential for fostering sustainable and inclusive growth, ensuring that economic benefits are equitably distributed across the country, in line with India's constitutional goal of Political and Economic democracy.

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE SESSION

- Evaluate the economic and social impact of traditional arts and crafts on rural communities.
- Analyze how preserving and promoting cultural heritage influences income generation, employment, community pride, and boost rural growth and prosperity.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Integration of traditional knowledge into rural development strategies for enhancing local economies and preserving cultural identities.
- Revitalizing India's rural economy by leveraging traditional crafts and cultural heritage within modern development strategies.
- Promotion of Women Self Help Groups, Cooperatives, and Farmers Producer Organization to catalyze rural development.



### Address by Shri Shrish Kalyani

पूज्य दादाश्रीजी, मित्र पर्ण जी, गोपाल जी, और यहाँ उपस्थित सभी महानुभावों को सादर नमस्कार।

मुझे इस मंच पर बात करने का सौभाग्य मिला है और मैं आज तीन महत्वपूर्ण विषयों पर अपनी बात रखना चाहूँगा: 1. ग्रामीण विकास और समृद्धि का अर्थ 2. स्थान-आधारित आर्थिक अवसरों का सृजन 3. स्थानीय सामर्थ्य और सामुदायिक भागीदारी के माध्यम से विकास का मार्ग।

1. ग्रामीण विकास और समृद्धि का अर्थ: नीति आयोग की हालिया रिपोर्ट बताती है कि पिछले एक दशक में गरीबी में उल्लेखनीय कमी आई है, और यह अब एक अंक तक सीमित हो गई है। यह एक बड़ी उपलब्धि है। लेकिन जब हम शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, स्वच्छता और आर्थिक अवसरों की तुलना करते हैं, तो ग्रामीण और शहरी क्षेत्रों के बीच का अंतर अभी भी चिंताजनक है।

हम यह नहीं भूल सकते कि आज भी भारत की 65% से अधिक आबादी ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में रहती है। यदि हम 8 गरीबी दर की बात करें, तो यह लाखों नहीं, करोड़ों लोगों का प्रतिनिधित्व करती है। यदि हम मौजूदा गति और प्रयासों के आधार पर काम करें, तो गरीबी मिटाने में हमें 200 साल से अधिक का समय लग सकता है। यह स्वीकार्य नहीं है।

इस आलोक में हमारे प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी जी ने हमारे देश में गरीबी के स्तर को कम करने के लिए पिछले 10 वर्षों में विभिन्न नीतियों और कार्यक्रमों को लागू किया है।

2. स्थान-आधारित आर्थिक अवसरों का सृजन इसके पीछे एक महत्वपूर्ण कारण यह है कि कृषि लाभ कम रिटर्न का अनुभव कर रहा है। एक शोध में इस बात पर प्रकाश डाला गया है कि जब कोई व्यक्ति कृषि छोड़कर शहरी क्षेत्रों में रोजगार प्राप्त करता है तो वह कृषि के दौरान अर्जित आय से 4 गुना अधिक कमाता है। संगठित क्षेत्र



में काम में जुड़ने पर आय में वृद्धि होती है। यह एक और चुनौती है जिसका हम सामना कर रहे हैं। यदि हम ग्रामीण विकास और समृद्धि लाना चाहते हैं तो हमें पहले कृषि की समस्याओं को समाप्त करना होगा और फिर हमें अपने पारंपरिक व्यवसायों को प्रोत्साहित करना होगा। यह देखा गया है कि जिन स्थानों पर पारंपरिक व्यवसाय को प्रोत्साहित किया जाता है, वहाँ कमाने वाले लोगों की संख्या 25 गुना बढ़ गई है। पहले हमारे गाँव उत्पादन केंद्र थे और शहर व्यापारिक केंद्र। लेकिन अब शहरों ने उत्पादन केंद्रों की ओर रुख किया है और गाँवों ने उपभोक्ताओं की ओर रुख किया है जिससे यह एक चिंताजनक विषय बन गई है।

मेरी दूसरी सिफारिश स्थान-आधारित आर्थिक अवसरों के सृजन पर ध्यान केन्द्रित करने की है। व्यापार के अवसरों के लिए सरकार द्वारा बहुत सारी नीतियाँ लागू की गई हैं लेकिन हमने देखा है कि बड़े व्यवसायियों के मामले में भी 10,000 गतिविधियों में से केवल 1 या 2 ही सफल हो पाती हैं। शहरी क्षेत्रों में इन लोगों को सब्सिडी और भूमि जैसे कई लाभ मिलते हैं, हालाँकि, ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में हम सोचते हैं कि कौशल विकास कार्यक्रम और कुछ मौद्रिक लाभ प्रदान करने से ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों के विकास में मदद मिलेगी। लेकिन यह संभव नहीं है। इसके लिए हम हर गाँव में ग्रामीण विकास केंद्र स्थापित कर सकते हैं क्योंकि वित्तीय मदद देने के अलावा एक संपूर्ण परिस्थितिकी तंत्र बनाने की जरूरत है।

3. ग्रामीण विकास केंद्र: एक नई सोच। हमने यह महसूस किया कि केवल वित्तीय सहायता या कौशल विकास कार्यक्रम ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों के लिए पर्याप्त नहीं हैं। हमें एक संपूर्ण स्थानीय आर्थिक इकोसिस्टम की आवश्यकता है। इसी सोच के तहत हमने एक प्रयोग के तौर पर एक ग्रामीण विकास केंद्र स्थापित किया। इस केंद्र पर वर्कशेड,

इनक्यूबेशन सुविधाएँ, व्यावसायिक बुनियादी ढाँचा और सेवाएँ उपलब्ध कराई गईं।

केंद्र को स्थापित करने में लगभग 1 करोड़ रुपये लगे। अब आप सोच सकते हैं कि हमारे पास 6 लाख गाँव हैं तो इतने सारे संसाधन कैसे लाए जाएँगे। हमारे पास एक समाधान है। मनरेगा के लिए हमारा वार्षिक निधि आवंटन 80,000 करोड़ रुपये है और हमारे पास 2.5 लाख ग्राम पंचायतें हैं। यदि हम प्रत्येक पंचायत में केन्द्र बनाना शुरू करते हैं तो इसके लिए 2.5 लाख करोड़ रुपये की आवश्यकता होगी, अर्थात्, मनरेगा के लिए 4 वर्षों का आवंटन। हम मनरेगा योजना को रोक नहीं सकते हैं इसलिए यदि हम इन केंद्रों की स्थापना के लिए मनरेगा का केवल 10% धन आवंटित करते हैं तो अमृत काल के अंत तक हम सभी गाँवों में इन केंद्रों को स्थापित करने में सक्षम होंगे। वर्किंग शेड, इनक्यूबेशन सेवाएँ, व्यावसायिक बुनियादी ढाँचा और सेवाएँ अन्य सेवाएँ सभी गाँवों को उपलब्ध करवाएंगे। यह केंद्र एक मॉडल के रूप में काम कर सकता है। यदि हम प्रत्येक ग्राम पंचायत में ऐसा केंद्र स्थापित करें, तो यह गाँव के आर्थिक और सामाजिक विकास का केंद्र बन सकता है। हमें हर गाँव में एक ऐसा ऐतिहासिक मंदिर मिलता है जिसका उस क्षेत्र के सभी लोगों पर धार्मिक प्रभाव पड़ता है। इसमें एक मंदिर भी शामिल होना चाहिए जिससे यह इन सभी आर्थिक गतिविधियों का केंद्र बन सके। गतिविधियों को शुरू करने के लिए मंदिरों को प्रारंभिक सहायता दी जा सकती है। यह सभी गाँवों में सांस्कृतिक अर्थव्यवस्था की एक श्रृंखला बनाने में मदद करेगा।

4. सामुदायिक भागीदारी की आवश्यकता अब सवाल उठता है कि यह कैसे किया जाएगा? सरकार ग्रामीण समृद्धि के लिए काम अकेले करती है तब ज्यादा असर देखने को नहीं मिलता। पूरे समुदाय को विकास में खुद को शामिल करने की आवश्यकता है क्योंकि जब लोगों को लगेगा

कि यह उनका निजी काम है तो वे अधिक गंभीरता से काम करेंगे। हम स्थानीयता अवधारणा नामक एक नई अवधारणा लेकर आए हैं। हम हर इलाके में महिला समूह पाते हैं इसलिए हमें उन समूहों को लक्षित करने की आवश्यकता है। एक बच्चा इलाके या स्कूल की तुलना में घर पर अधिक समय बिताता है। उनके स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा और पोषण का ध्यान घर पर रखा जाना चाहिए जो अब स्कूलों और अन्य संस्थानों को आउटसोर्स किया जाता है। इसलिए हमें इन महिला समूहों के साथ सहयोग करने की आवश्यकता है ताकि उन्हें सकारात्मक बदलाव की दिशा में एक कदम उठाने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया जा सके।

आज हम सबके सामने यह अवसर है कि हम अपनी जड़ों को मज़बूत करते हुए, एक समृद्ध और आत्मनिर्भर भारत का निर्माण करें।

- पारंपरिक व्यवसायों को पुनर्जीवित करें।
- स्थान-आधारित आर्थिक अवसरों को बढ़ावा दें।
- और सामुदायिक भागीदारी से एक सशक्त ग्रामीण भारत की नींव रखें।

आइए, मिलकर एक ऐसा भारत बनाएं, जहाँ हर गाँव न केवल उत्पादन का केंद्र हो, बल्कि समृद्धि का प्रतीक भी बने।

धन्यवाद।

### 3 Cultural Economic Governance

Cultural economic governance emphasizes the role of government in fostering and promoting cultural activities as a means of stimulating economic growth. The government plays a crucial role in creating an enabling environment for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, arts, and traditional practices, recognizing their potential to contribute significantly to the economy. Governance can create right ecosystem for Cultural Economic Development, with Policy formulation and effective implementation.

#### OBJECTIVES FOR THE SESSION

- Highlight the significant role of government in fostering and promoting cultural activities to stimulate economic growth.
- Underscore the contributions of existing government initiatives in nurturing cultural activities and integrating them into broader economic frameworks.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Deepen the integration of cultural activities into economic policies, thereby ensuring sustainable development and heightened cultural appreciation.
- Propose novel policies and innovative governmental strategies aimed at further enhancing the efficacy and efficiency of cultural economic governance.
- Identifying infrastructure and financial needs of an ecosystem for growth of Cultural Economy.



#### Address by Dr. Vinod Narayan Indurkar

नमस्कार

बैलगाड़ी में सबसे महत्वपूर्ण चीज क्या है? अगर मैं सिर्फ एक ही बात पूछता हूँ तो कुछ लोग कहते हैं कि गाड़ी महत्वपूर्ण है, जबकि कुछ बैल, ट्रैक या बैल चलाने वाले को महत्वपूर्ण मानते हैं। बैलगाड़ी में एक चीज जो सबसे महत्वपूर्ण है वह है बैलगाड़ी का कांसेप्ट। कांसेप्ट सबसे महत्वपूर्ण है क्योंकि बाद में टेक्नोलॉजी, डिज़ाइन, परफॉरमेंस, और इंजीनियरिंग है। इसी तरह कला में कांसेप्ट महत्व रखता है।

कला में हमेशा 2 शर्तें होती हैं: एसेंशियल कंडीशन (आवश्यक स्थिति) एंड सफ़ीसिएंट कंडीशन (पर्याप्त स्थिति)। आवश्यक स्थिति कांसेप्ट है और पर्याप्त स्थिति मंच पर इसका प्रदर्शन है। हमें कला के अर्थशास्त्र के बारे में समझने के लिए पहले उसके कांसेप्ट को समझना होगा। हमें इसके लेवल्स, कंडीशंस, कम्युनिकेशन, और फंक्शन्स के बारे में समझना होगा।

जब हम कला को परिभाषित करते हैं तो यह सीधे हमारे जीवन से जुड़ा होता है। कहा जाता है कि कला के माध्यम से मेडिटेशन संभव है। कलाकार पूरी तरह से कला में शामिल हो जाता है और विचारहीनता के चरण में आ जाता है, जिससे

वह मेडिटेशन बन जाता है। इसलिए कला के माध्यम से हमारे जीवन में मेडिटेशन संभव है। कला हमेशा संस्कृति से जुड़ी रही है। हमें कला और संस्कृति के इर्द-गिर्द एक आर्थिक मॉडल बनाने के लिए कला को समझना होगा।

मैं पिछले एक साल से सेंटर फॉर कल्चरल रिसोर्सिज एंड ट्रेनिंग का अध्यक्ष हूँ। वहाँ हम सभी कला रूपों सहित कला, संस्कृति, शिक्षा और साहित्य में सरकारी स्कूल के शिक्षकों को ट्रेनिंग देते हैं। हम उन्हें ट्रेनिंग देते हैं और फिर उन्हें काम करने, त्यौहारों का आयोजन करने और फिर कला के माध्यम से भारतीय ज्ञान प्रणाली को समझने के बारे में जागरूकता फैलाने के लिए कहते हैं। इसलिए हमने कन्सेप्चुअल, अकादमिक, और प्रैक्टिकल स्तर पर ट्रेनिंग प्रदान की है। इसके अलावा हम कला के प्रदर्शन को मापने के तरीके पर चर्चा करते हैं।

लेकिन अब सवाल यह है कि क्या सरकार के साथ निजी संगठन अलग-अलग स्तरों पर कला और संस्कृति को बढ़ावा देने के लिए काम कर रहे हैं? हाँ, वे पहल कर रहे हैं। मैं आपको एक वास्तविक उदाहरण देता हूँ। विदर्भ में 3 जिले हैं: भंडारा, गढ़चिरौली, चंद्रपुर। सभी 3 जिलों में थियेटर का नाम झड़ीपट्टी रंगभूमि है। यह रात 10 बजे से सुबह 5 बजे तक चलता है। दूर-दूर से लोग एक्ट देखने आते हैं। एक गाँव में 5 अलग-अलग जगहों पर एक प्रदर्शन चलता है जिससे एक गाँव में कुल 5 प्रदर्शन होते हैं। लगभग 10,000 लोग एक प्रदर्शन देखते हैं। 3 महीने यानि जनवरी, फरवरी, मार्च के दौरान गाँव में 16 करोड़ रुपये का कारोबार होता है। प्रदर्शन स्थानीय कलाकारों द्वारा किया जाता है और प्रदर्शन स्थानीय लोगों द्वारा देखा जाता है। यह जानने के लिए एक अध्ययन किए जाने की आवश्यकता है कि यह कैसे संभव है क्योंकि सरकारी हस्तक्षेप के बिना होता है और अच्छी मात्रा में राजस्व अर्जित करता है।

परफॉर्मंस, अकादमिक, और फेस्टिवल के लेवल पर इतना काम हो रहा है और उसी माध्यम से कला में संस्कृति परिलक्षित हो रही है। मैंने कुछ मॉडल के बारे में सोचा है जिन पर हम संस्कृति और अर्थव्यवस्था, दोनों के विकास के लिए काम कर सकते हैं।

मेरा मानना है कि हमें 4 स्तरों पर काम करने की जरूरत है: शहरी, ग्रामीण, सहयोगी, अंतर्राष्ट्रीय। हम ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में सांस्कृतिक केंद्रों पर प्रदर्शनियों, कार्यक्रमों के साथ-साथ काम कर सकते हैं। हम सांस्कृतिक संगठनों और उद्योगों के साथ सहयोग कर सकते हैं ताकि लोगों को जागरूक करने और उन्हें रोजगार प्रदान करने के लिए प्रशिक्षित और जागरूक किया जा सके। मॉल में प्रदर्शन और प्रतियोगिताओं का आयोजन करना संभव है।

मैं यहाँ कुछ रेकमेंडेशन्स बताना चाहूँगा। अर्बन सेटिंग्स के

लिए हम सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रमों और त्यौहारों का आयोजन कर सकते हैं, सांस्कृतिक पर्यटन के बारे में लोगों को जागरूक कर सकते हैं और आर्ट गैलरी प्रदर्शनी शुरू कर सकते हैं। ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में हम ग्रामीण परंपराओं को बढ़ावा देने के लिए हैंडीक्राफ्ट और कारीगरों के लिए एक बाजार स्थापित कर सकते हैं।

अतः हमें कला और संस्कृति को एकीकृत करते हुए एक समग्र आर्थिक मॉडल तैयार करने की आवश्यकता है, जो हमारे समाज के हर स्तर पर प्रभाव डाले। मैं इस अवसर के लिए आप सभी का आभार व्यक्त करता हूँ और आशा करता हूँ कि हम सब मिलकर भारत की सांस्कृतिक और आर्थिक विरासत को समृद्ध करेंगे। धन्यवाद।

## 4

### Cultural Economic Model

A Cultural Economic Model refers to an economic system that integrates cultural values, heritage and creativity into its framework, recognizing them as essential components of economic development and social well-being. Unlike traditional economic models, a cultural economic model emphasizes the role of culture in fostering sustainable communities, enhancing social cohesion, and promoting environmental stewardship.

#### OBJECTIVES FOR THE SESSION

- Illustrate the potential of the Cultural Economic Model in fostering economic growth and social well-being.
- Discuss methods and challenges in quantifying the value of cultural assets and activities for economic modeling.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Exploring strategies geared towards surmounting obstacles of data, measurement etc. in the development of Cultural Economic Model.
- Laying the groundwork for cultivating a dynamic and robust cultural economic model that fosters prosperity while safeguarding cultural heritage.
- Identifying variable and their interrelationship for evidence-based decision-making and resource allocation.



### Address by Shri Sriram Balasubramanian

I thank everyone for inviting me to this event. I would like to divide my discussion into 3 parts: cultural economy, challenges, and solutions to address issues we see in our cultural economy.

During 5 years of research for my book 'Kautilyanomics: For Modern Times', I noticed that for over 5000 years including the present, culture had played a very important role in economic decision-making. Culture plays a crucial role in rural and urban areas when people make behavioral choices. For example, irrespective of the RBI's interest rate, we celebrate Diwali with full enthusiasm and we don't look at the other conditions to celebrate our festivals. This is unique to Bharat as economic choices and decisions here are driven a lot by culture. The role of culture is integral to a broader economic picture.

Unfortunately, there is a disconnect between the policies made by the policymakers and the way of life we have. The policies made are either inspired by the West or other things whereas the life governing these choices is different. This is what we have to look up in the Cultural Economic Model.

If we discuss the challenges then the biggest challenge for policymakers is to be aware of such a model as there is limited literature available and most of the research is on formal economy and Western thoughts. As the research is limited, there is a lack of awareness among the decision-makers about the importance of culture in economic policies. A second major challenge is the lack of data on the cultural economy. If we discuss the temples in India, do we have a centralized database of the temples in each state, their revenue, income, and economic activity around temples? A third challenge is for the bureaucrats, who make policies, to understand and formulate policies based on abstract thinking. There is a need for cultural economic models to help them formulate policies for better cultural awareness.

A major solution to the problem is to organize conferences to spread awareness and encourage people to do qualitative and quantitative research. We also need to look at how we can integrate the cultural model into the current economic set-up. For example, RBI brought a sovereign gold scheme where you go and deposit any amount of gold, buy a bond, and at the maturity of the bond, they give you a new gold with an interest rate. The first experiment failed as most of the Indian women demanded the same gold back at maturity as gold in India has a cultural importance. If RBI



had designed a policy considering the cultural economy, their step would have been successful.

If we have a look at the Swachh Bharat scheme, it is more effective in rural areas as compared to urban areas. Therefore, there is a need to construct policy-making along the way of life and not the other way around.

So, let us work together to bridge the gap between culture and policy, creating a holistic economic model that respects our way of life and drives inclusive and sustainable growth for Bharat. Thank You.

## Q&A Session

1. कर्जत, महाराष्ट्र के ग्रामीण इलाके में अपने काम के दौरान मैं सभी किसानों को एक साथ लाई और एक अनुभवी कृषक को बुलाया जिसमें उन्होंने कृषि करने के पारंपरिक तरीकों के साथ-साथ मॉडर्न तरीकों का साझा किया। उनकी शिक्षाओं के इम्प्लीमेंटेशन के साथ हमने देखा कि कृषि उपज दोगुना हो गई। तो क्या हम ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में खेती को अधिक उत्पादक बनाने के लिए ऐसी चीजें कर सकते हैं?

**डॉ. गजानन डांगे:** जबसे भारत में जैविक कृषि की चर्चा चालू हुई है और श्रीलंका का उदाहरण आया है तबसे काफी लोग यह सोचते हैं कि अगर वह मॉडर्न एग्रीकल्चरल प्रैक्टिस को छोड़कर पुराने तरीकों को फिरसे आजमाए तो उत्पादन घट जाएगा। मैं अगर आपको सूची दूँ तो ऐसे किसान हैं जिनके मॉडल फार्म्स हैं, जिन्होंने अपनी भूमि को स्वस्थ रखते हुए अच्छा उत्पादन किया है। अभी यह भी विचार रखा गया है कि यूनिवर्सिटीज के पास भी ऐसे मॉडल फार्म्स बनाए जाए क्योंकि उनके पास भी यह नहीं है। दूसरा, हम लोग देशज बीज के द्वारा भी अच्छा उत्पादन कर सकते हैं।

2. जैसा आपने बोला कि भूमि भी रजस्वला होती है और उसको भी आराम की ज़रूरत होती है। पुराने ज़माने में हम बस एक या दो फसलें लिया करते थे जो अब बढ़कर चार या पाँच हो गई है। आपने सिर्फ दो से तीन जगह का उदाहरण दिया पर अगर हम पूरे भारत में पुरानी एग्रीकल्चर प्रैक्टिस लाए तब क्या जो उत्पादन होगा व हमारी पूरी जनसंख्या की ज़रूरत पूरी कर पाएगा?

**डॉ. गजानन डांगे:** हमें एक बार पीछे मुड़कर आंकड़े देखने चाहिए कि हमने हमारी ज़रूरतों को कितना बढ़ाकर रखा हुआ है। अगर यह देखना प्रारम्भ कर देते हैं तब हमें ध्यान में आएगा कि सबके लिए वर्तमान में हम पर्याप्त उत्पादन तैयार कर सकते हैं। उदाहरण के लिए भारत आयल सीड रिच कंट्री था और पूरे भारत को आयल सीड के उत्पादन के लिए कुशल माना जाता था। पिछले वर्ष के पी.एम.ओ का आंकड़ा कहता है कि हम लोग ने 75,000 करोड़ रुपये का आयल इम्पोर्ट किया है और 60% आयल की आपूर्ति हमने इम्पोर्ट से की है। तब यह बात हुई कि क्या भारत में पर्याप्त तेल नहीं बनता? इसका जवाब देने के लिए अलग-अलग रिपोर्ट्स हैं। एक रिपोर्ट कहती है कि हम आज 18 किलो तेल पर कैपिटा खा रहे हैं जिसको हमें 24 किलो तक ले जाना है क्योंकि चीन 26 खाता है। यदि हम 18 और 24 को ध्यान में रखते हुए गणना करते हैं, तो हम इस तथ्य से डर जाएंगे कि क्या हम कभी खाद्य की आवश्यकता को पूरा कर पाएंगे। हम लोगों ने बहुत गलत पद्धति से अपने खानपान की पद्धति का प्रोजेक्शन करना प्रारम्भ किया है। मेरा मानना है कि हम अपनी आपूर्ति और फसल पैटर्न को सुधारने में सक्षम होंगे जिससे हम सभी लोगों को भोजन उपलब्ध कराने में आत्मनिर्भर हो जाएंगे।

**श्री श्रीश कल्याणी:** कन्वेंशनल एग्रीकल्चर की परिभाषा पश्चिम में और भारत में काफी अलग है। हमारे यहाँ कन्वेंशनल एग्रीकल्चर का मतलब है पुराने तरीकों से की हुई खेती हालाँकि US में कन्वेंशनल फार्मिंग का मतलब केमिकल का इस्तेमाल करना है और आर्गेनिक फार्मिंग को वहाँ प्रोग्रेसिव फार्मिंग कहते हैं। जो आपने कहा वह हमने दन्तेवाड़ा, छत्तीसगढ़ जिले में किया है। हम सभी किसानों को एक साथ लाए और जैविक खेती पर काम करना शुरू किया। 5 साल के भीतर जिले के सभी किसानों ने अपनी केमिकल फार्मिंग को नकार दिया। जिला अब केमिकल मुक्त है और केवल जैविक खेती करता है। समस्या इकोसिस्टम के साथ है क्योंकि आज हमारे पास मोनोक्रॉपिंग की प्रणाली है और नीतियाँ और सब्सिडी केमिकल फार्मिंग पर ध्यान केंद्रित करती हैं। जिस दिन हम केमिकल फार्मिंग से इनपुट हटा देंगे, हम अपने इनपुट कीमतों में गिरावट, मजबूत बाजार संबंध देखेंगे और फिर हम जैविक खेती और केमिकल फार्मिंग से प्राप्त आउटपुट की तुलना भी कर पाएँगे।

## Session 3

### Theme: Creating Economic Linkages for Cultural Activities



Creating Economic Linkages for Cultural Activities explores the vital intersection between cultural activities and economic opportunities. Cultural activities, ranging from arts and crafts, music and dance, culinary and cuisine, cinema and theatre, health and wellness, and handicraft and cottage industries, hold significant potential to drive economic growth and community development. By integrating cultural activities into economic frameworks, we can unlock new avenues for innovation, tourism, and local enterprise.

However, these activities often face several challenges that hinder their potential. A large number of cultural activities and practices are dying due to lack of patronage from the Government and the society. Comprehensive support is crucial to bridge this gap, enabling cultural activities to thrive and contribute to broader economic goals. By establishing robust economic linkages, we can enhance funding opportunities, stimulate job creation, and promote these cultural activities.

This session focuses on the following four sub-topics, namely Performance and Potential Indicators, Monetization and Financing of Cultural Activities, Health and Wellness, and Skilling and Capacity Building.

The session 3 will focus on 'Creating Economic Linkages for Cultural Activities', featuring discussion from our esteemed speakers: Dr. Shamika Ravi,

Shri Suman Billa, Dr. Jaideep Arya, Shri Surender Kumar. The session will be moderated by Shri Anil Sharma, engaging ideas to lead to takeaways.



#### Opening Remarks by Shri Anil Sharma

Mitra Parn Ji, Gopal Ji, Dadashreeji, my esteemed panelists, and all the intellectuals in this auditorium, Namaskar.

The theme for the session is 'Creating Economic Linkages for Cultural Activities'. Before this, you listened to speakers on Temple Economy, Cultural Economy, and Cultural Economic Model. When we say cultural activities, we include art and craft, music and dance, cinema and theatre,

culinary and cuisine, and health and wellness. When we bring these cultural activities within an economic framework, there is a rise in economic opportunities. Economic opportunities linked with innovation, local enterprises, cottage industries, or tourism lead to job creation, skill development, funding opportunities, and economic development in that geographic region.

We all now know that culture is driving the economy. There are financial and non-financial benefits so we need to know how to assess these benefits to see whether that particular cultural activity has to be taken up or needs some modifications.

## 1 Performance & Potential Indicators

Performance and Potential Indicators are essential metrics used to assess the effectiveness, impact, and future prospects of initiatives aimed at creating economic linkages for cultural activities. This topic focuses on performance and potential indicators of cultural activities to analyze its linkages with economic growth. The focus will extend to exploring matrices with the potential to serve as effective tools for evaluating both performance and potential in this context.

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE SESSION

- To explore potential indicators to forecast the growth and sustainability of cultural activities within the economic parameters.
- Foster a deeper understanding of how cultural vitality can serve as a catalyst for sustainable economic development.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Devise methods to help stakeholders understand the benefits and shortcomings of Cultural Activities and strategize interventions and policy formulations.
- Propose strategies to optimize resource allocation and investment in cultural initiatives based on insights from performance and potential indicators.
- Setting up matrix indicators to serve as effective tools for evaluating both performance and potential for the Cultural Economic Model.



### Address by Dr. Shamika Ravi

Namaskar, thank you very much for the opportunity.

It's a long time since we put a structure to culture. Culture is like a black box. Let me give you an example through a study published in 2006 in the Journal of Political Economy where it was mentioned about the culture of corruption. Through a natural experimental setting, it showed that in a city like New York where diplomats are present from all over the world, can we link parking violations of diplomats from the region they belong to? It was found that there is an index called the Corruption Index and they showed when around 2001 immunity was removed from parking violations, the number of violations came down. So firstly, laws have an actual impact on the behavior of the people. Secondly, the country of origin strongly explains the violations done by the diplomats stating that countries with high corruption do more violations. Here the corruption was placed in a black box which explains the corruption behaviour. But to me, it means that we are culturally corrupt, and therefore, what is the policy implication?

There is another index called the 'Government Effectiveness Index' where culture as an explanation drops out. It states that in a country where there is effective governance and enforcement of rules, the people of that country behave better. It tells us about the government's capacity, how are bureaucrats selected, what is the nature of that training, and how much public institutions and public capacity exist. Government effectiveness is a much stronger variable for the behavior of people.

When we look at government effectiveness beyond corruption behavior, one aspect is to see how we recruit our bureaucrats and how we train them. Besides, the capacity of the institutions matters. Let me give you an example from Delhi. Have you seen people in Delhi running behind the buses? Today we have many more buses but in the early and mid 90s, we did not have that many buses, so you used to run and look for seats. Now, have you observed the behavior of the same citizens in the Delhi metro? The people follow an order, stay in line, and no chaos can be seen. Then why do the same people behave differently in buses and metros? There is no interference of cultural concepts in this but it has to do with the fact that buses are relatively uncertain and the metro has a certain time of arrival. It explains that when infrastructure is built, people behave accordingly.

I am often asked that Indians spit on the side when in India but when they visit Singapore, they are very well-behaved. It explains that we are not culturally filthy or corrupt but it has to do with development, amount of institutions available, and capacity with the public infrastructure. So, we need not put culture in a black box. When we look at policy implementation, we need to see what can be done to create a better culture.

In health and wellness, AYUSH has received a lot of bad names in a relatively scientific community. There are many people in this room who might follow Ayurveda and Yoga, the things we have inherited from our families. We believe in systems that have existed for 1000s of years but why do we become defensive when it comes to its

effectiveness, efficacy, etc? Why do we wait for the Western countries to measure it, test it, and patent it to begin to value it in-house? The reason is while we have inherited these rich cultures of well-being, we have somewhere down the centuries forgotten the scientific inquiry, the documentation, the measurement of effectiveness, and the scientific nature of a lot of these things, and that is all we are getting as a reflection from the West. They are putting it through a system of scientific inquiry and a peer review process or a randomized control trial to measure its effectiveness.

Today we need to go back to the scientific inquiry sentiment, we need to document a lot, we need to read, write, test, experiment, and publish.

The family structure is another critical area. The breakdown of family units, particularly in Western societies has been linked to negative social outcomes such as decreased life expectancy among certain demographics. In contrast, traditional societies including Japan and South Korea face challenges related to declining fertility rates and family support systems. Research and policy development in this area are crucial for creating supportive infrastructures for both children and the elderly. I recently worked on a white paper on developing the care economy and infrastructure in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development, addressing the need for comprehensive care systems for both children and the elderly, emphasizing the importance of family and cultural support.

In conclusion, understanding and improving cultural practices and institutional effectiveness are



essential for enhancing societal well-being. A shift from cultural determinism to practical solutions will contribute to a more nuanced and effective approach to addressing cultural and economic challenges.

**Moderator:** If we want to do some cultural activity then it would require a lot of funding. So what are the sources to generate funds? Are we only looking at the donations to carry out these cultural activities or is there any formal structure? Can we market culture to generate funds for cultural activities like building temples?

## 2 Monetization and Financing of Cultural Activities

Strategies for the monetization and financing of cultural activities are of paramount importance as cultural activities are not merely expressions of artistic creativity but they are also powerful economic drivers.

The topic will centre on developing innovative strategies for financing and monetization of cultural activities. Additionally, it will highlight the pressing need to identify and mitigate existing barriers to financing and monetization through collaborative efforts and targeted interventions. Thus, this topic aims to pave the way for a more sustainable and prosperous future for cultural activities.

Only about 20% of Cultural organizations worldwide consider themselves financially sustainable.

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE SESSION

- Discuss the current challenges hindering the financing and monetization of cultural activities such as music, dance theatre, visual arts, festivals, crafts, etc.
- Identify innovative and sustainable instruments for the financing and monetization of cultural activities.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Policy initiative and strategies for addressing current challenges such limited market reach, monetization of cultural output, and inconsistent funding sources.
- Use of Social Stock Exchange as an effective tool for generating financial resources for social and cultural sector.

- Enhancing the role of Women Self Help Groups, and the Cooperative sector in Monetization and Financing of Cultural activities



### Address by Shri Suman Billa

Namaskar.

The opportunity to discuss the integration of culture into the economic sphere is both timely and crucial. The presence of many committed individuals highlights the importance of advancing these efforts collectively and diligently.

Globally, it has been observed that culture is strongest in economies that are doing well. Research conducted with the World Tourism Organization and UNESCO revealed a correlation between economic surplus and cultural preservation. Countries with significant economic surpluses tend to excel in maintaining and rejuvenating their cultural heritage. For instance, Japan has transformed the value placed on its traditional products, reflecting the economic premium associated with handcrafted items.

I come from Kerala where there are handloom weavers who make handloom sarees, dhotis, etc., but there are also machine-made fabrics available. The handloom fabrics are much more breathable and comfortable but the cost is 5-6 times more than the machine-made fabrics. When common people go shopping, their choice is clear. When they can get something for Rs. 150 then why would they pay Rs. 800 for a similar product? So, in India, a major challenge is bridging the economic gap between traditional and machine-made products. India is the fifth-largest economy in the world and as it progresses towards being the third-largest

global economy, the focus must shift to preserving and promoting cultural assets alongside economic growth.

Currently, India lacks a comprehensive mapping of its cultural heritage and ecosystem. Effective mapping is crucial for understanding and supporting cultural industries. We did various projects and one of them is the Braj circuit in Uttar Pradesh which focuses on traditional crafts such as Tulsi malas. We mapped how tulsi malas are made. There is a village that grows the tulsi plants, the second village makes them into stems, the third village cuts them into smaller pieces, the fourth village makes beads and puts them into a kachcha dhaga, and it is knitted into one in the fifth village. The mala as a final product is not made in just one village so they won't get the economic premium by selling those directly in the market. There are exploitative systems that can stop only when we are able to map them effectively and when we decide to work collectively on how it can be done. This highlights the need for precise ecosystem mapping to ensure fair market conditions and support for local producers.

Several steps are necessary to address these issues. First, it is essential to establish a clear understanding of India's current cultural landscape and then we need to project it to Viksit Bharat 2047, identifying and focusing on critical areas that can drive cultural and economic development. We can drill it down to a 5-year plan, so today we are in 2024, we can project what we are going to do in 2029, and what steps we need to take to get to that stage. Due to multiple things in India, the problem arises on where to start and where to end. As a result, we spread ourselves too thin but our resources are finite and we receive incremental effects. There is a need to discover some key areas of intervention and make them happen in the best possible manner.

Developing world-class cultural sites and models can set a standard of excellence. Creating iconic cultural destinations similar to the Sardar Patel statue in Gujarat can inspire further investment and development. We also need to work on hygiene, that is, improving the basic amenities at cultural sites and enhancing storytelling to provide context and value to cultural experiences. Effective storytelling and high-quality visitor experiences can attract and retain interest.

It is important to explore independent revenue

streams for cultural sites such as retaining a portion of ticket proceeds for local maintenance and development. Integrating cultural activities and merchandise can boost revenue and support sustainability. Aligning cultural sites with market demands by offering high-quality souvenirs and creating engaging visitor experiences can enhance their appeal and profitability.

By focusing on these strategies, India can better integrate culture into its economic framework, ensuring that it not only preserves but also capitalizes on its rich cultural heritage. The goal is to transform cultural assets into vibrant economic contributors while maintaining their historical and cultural significance.

Let us commit to mapping, preserving, and elevating our cultural heritage to create a Viksit Bharat by 2047. I thank you all for this opportunity to share my thoughts and look forward to working together on this transformative journey.

### 3

## Health and Wellness

Health and wellness is a big business at the global level. It is immune from macroeconomic cycles of recession and the demand for health and wellness is going to increase exponentially with rising incomes. India has already established itself as a centre of medical tourism.

The rise of Yoga, Ayurveda, and Spiritual Tourism represents a significant trend within the health and wellness sector for India. These forms of cultural tourism attract global audiences seeking holistic health and spiritual experiences, contributing to local economies and promoting cultural exchange.

This subtopic focuses on the economic potential of integrating traditional wellness practices into tourism, creating new revenue streams, and enhancing awareness and acceptability of Indian traditional health and wellness practices across the globe.

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE SESSION

- Discuss the potential of traditional health and wellness practices in Indian Culture like Yoga, Meditation, Pranayama, and traditional alternative medicinal practices like Ayurveda, Naturopathy and Herbal medicines.

- Study the potential of traditional health and wellness practices in promotion of the tourism sector in India.
- Identifying the challenges hindering the widespread adoption of these traditional health and wellness practices and creating global awareness and acceptance.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Create global awareness and acceptance of Indian traditional health and wellness practices like International Yoga Day.
- Promotion of research, development, data assimilation, and setting global standards for traditional alternative medicines and practices.
- Global acceptance of Ayurvedic products as medicines and not as food supplements alone.
- Assessing infrastructure and financial challenges to boost Indian health and wellness tourism industry.
- Promotion of sectors like Spiritual Tourism, Yoga and Meditation Retreats, Naturopathy Centres, Kerala Ayurvedic Oil, and Massage Therapy etc.



### Address by Dr. Jaideep Arya

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः ।  
 सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।  
 सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु ।  
 मा कश्चित् दुःख भाग्भवेत् ॥  
 ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

संस्कृति जीवन का एक तरीका है और योग एकजुटता, भाईचारे, एकता, और सद्भाव की संस्कृति है जो वसुधैव

कुटुम्बकम में भारतीय विश्वास के साथ प्रतिध्वनित होती है – यह विचार कि दुनिया एक परिवार है। यह सांस्कृतिक दर्शन सामूहिक कल्याण पर जोर देता है, जैसा कि संस्कृत वाक्यांश “सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः” द्वारा समझाया गया है, जो साझा स्वास्थ्य और समृद्धि के महत्त्व पर प्रकाश डालता है। COVID-19 महामारी ने इस परस्पर संबंध को रेखांकित किया, यह दर्शाया कि व्यक्तिगत स्वास्थ्य व्यापक समुदाय को कैसे प्रभावित करता है।

कल्चर भारत की भारतीयता में है। योग और आयुर्वेद का सांस्कृतिक महत्त्व भारत की पहचान का अभिन्न अंग है जो इसकी समृद्ध विरासत और आर्थिक क्षमता दोनों को दर्शाता है। ऐतिहासिक रूप से इन परंपराओं में गर्व कोलोनीयल प्रभावों से ढका हो सकता है लेकिन सांस्कृतिक विरासत के लिए सच्चा सम्मान केवल इन प्रथाओं के वास्तविक आलिंगन के माध्यम से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। योग और आयुर्वेद में गहराई से निहित भारतीय संस्कृति, ऐतिहासिक विरासत से कहीं अधिक का प्रतिनिधित्व करती है – यह एक जीवित परंपरा है जो समकालीन जीवन और वैश्विक पहचान को प्रभावित करती है।

उदाहरण के लिए, योग में शारीरिक अभ्यास से अधिक शामिल है; इसमें अहिंसा, सत्य, ब्रह्मचर्य और आत्म-अनुशासन जैसे सिद्धांत शामिल हैं। इन मूल्यों ने उल्लेखनीय आँकड़ों को प्रेरित किया है और सांस्कृतिक ताने-बाने, प्रथाओं, और दृष्टिकोणों को आकार देने में सक्षम हैं। जैसे-जैसे योग के आर्थिक निहितार्थ पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया जाता है, इसके व्यापक लाभों को पहचानना आवश्यक है: शरीर का विषहरण, बौद्धिक स्पष्टता और आध्यात्मिक संबंध बढ़ाना। ये पहलू पारंपरिक शिक्षाओं को दर्शाते हैं और आधुनिक आर्थिक रणनीति के साथ सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों को एकीकृत करने के लिए एक आधार प्रदान करते हैं।

पतंजलि योग सूत्र में एक तत्त्व है: ‘योगाङ्गो नुष्ठानादशुद्धि क्षये ज्ञानदीप्तिराविवेकख्याते:’।

योग करने से क्या होगा? सबसे पहले अशुद्धि का क्षय हो जायेगा मतलब आपका शरीर डिटॉक्सीफाई हो जाएगा, दूसरा, आपका इंटेलेक्ट बढ़ जाएगा; तीसरा, वह आपको परमात्मा से जोड़ देगा। यह है योग, हमारी विषियों की संस्कृति, और हमारा कल्चर। योग हमारे रिपेयर, हारमनी, इंटरनल स्ट्रेस को रिस्पांस देने का काम करता है।

योग क्या है? योग प्यूरिटी, हैप्पीनेस, और कंसंट्रेशन है। कोई भी काम अगर आप प्यूरिटी, हैप्पीनेस, और कंसंट्रेशन से कर रहे हैं तो वह भी योग कहा जाता है। स्किल और एक्सीलेंस को योग कहा जाता है। हमारे प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी जी ने योग को जिस तरह से प्रस्तुत किया है, उसके बाद अब पूरी दुनिया योग के बारे में सुन रही है।

अब हम योग के वैश्विक बाजार के बारे में चर्चा करते हैं। यह 9.6% की वृद्धि दर के साथ 80 बिलियन का वैश्विक बाजार है। आज हर व्यक्ति को अपने घर में पर्सनल योग ट्रेनर की जरूरत है, जिम की बहुत डिमांड है और योग प्रशिक्षकों की मांग भी बढ़ रही है। अगर मैं नोएडा, गुडगांव, और करनाल

जैसे क्षेत्रों की बात करूं तो एक योग शिक्षक 40 मिनट की एक कक्षा के लिए 10,000 से 15,000 रुपये की मांग करता है फिर भी हम कौशल की कमी के कारण योग शिक्षकों की आवश्यक संख्या की आपूर्ति करने में असमर्थ हैं। जब से लोगों को योग के महत्त्व के बारे में पता चला है तो उन्होंने व्यक्तिगत योग शिक्षकों को काम पर रखना शुरू कर दिया है।

वेदांता ने योग के महत्त्व और इसकी मांग के बारे में समझा और उनके स्थान पर अब योग का विकास केंद्र और प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा का केंद्र है। मैंने रिसर्च की है और पाया है कि ओबेसिटी, कार्डियक, और डायबिटीज सभी परस्पर जुड़े हुए हैं। मोटापा इन सभी बीमारियों की जड़ है। अगर हम अतीत में लोगों को देखें, तो वे पतले थे और कम खाते थे और अब उसी संस्कृति को अपनाने की जरूरत है। COVID महामारी ने हमें अपने आस-पास एक-दूसरे की देख-भाल करना सिखाया है। यह योग की एकजुटता और खुशी की संस्कृति है। हमें भारत को विकसित करने में मदद करने के लिए फिर से परिवार की संस्कृति को अपनाने की जरूरत है।

वेलनेस टूरिज्म, स्पा और वर्कप्लेस वेलनेस जैसे क्षेत्रों को शामिल करने वाले वैश्विक वेलनेस मार्केट का मूल्य 2022 में USD 4.9 ट्रिलियन था और 2025 तक यह बढ़कर USD 7 ट्रिलियन होने का अनुमान है। योग का बाज़ार अरबों में है लेकिन आयुर्वेद का बाज़ार ट्रिलियन में है। हमारा हर्बल बाज़ार 5000 करोड़ रुपये का है। अगर मैं पतंजलि योगपीठ की बात करूं तो इसका एक साल का टर्नओवर 30,000 करोड़ का है, यानि दुनियाभर में हर्बल आधारित प्रोडक्ट खरीदे जाते हैं। यह लगभग डेंगू का समय है, लोग पपीते के पत्तों से बने रस का सेवन करके खुद को डेंगू से प्रभावित होने से रोकेंगे क्योंकि यह प्लेटलेट्स को बढ़ाने में मदद करता है। अगर हम इसे पैक करने, विज्ञापन करने, और बाज़ार में लाने की कोशिश करते हैं तो यह लोगों और भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए फायदेमन्द होगा। साथ ही गिलोय, नीम, तुलसी, और आंवले में बहुत सारे लाभकारी तत्व होते हैं जिन्हें हम कहीं न कहीं भूल गए हैं।

हमें संस्कृति को पुनर्जीवित करने की जरूरत है। सारी दुनिया बीमार होने के बाद ठीक होती है परंतु योग कहता है कि हम बीमार ही नहीं होने देंगे और यही वह संस्कृति है जिसका हमें निर्माण करना है। इससे भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था अपने आप महाशक्ति बन जाएगी।

इस प्रकार, योग और आयुर्वेद न केवल हमारी सांस्कृतिक धरोहर हैं, बल्कि भारत को एक वैश्विक नेतृत्व प्रदान करने वाले आर्थिक स्तंभ भी हैं। आइए, हम सब मिलकर इस प्राचीन परंपरा को अपनाएं और दुनिया को एक स्वस्थ, सुखी और समृद्ध भविष्य की ओर ले जाएं।

धन्यवाद!

**Moderator:** योग काफी लोकप्रिय हो गया है। लेकिन क्या भारत इसे एक आर्थिक मॉडल के रूप में रखने में सक्षम है? यदि हाँ, तो योग में हमारे पास क्या कौशल उपलब्ध है और क्या संभावनाएँ हैं कि हम एक बेहतर आर्थिक मॉडल बनाने के लिए योग और आयुष को जोड़ सकते हैं?

## 4 Skilling and Capacity Building

Skilling refers to the process of acquiring specific skills and knowledge necessary to perform tasks or jobs effectively. Capacity building goes beyond mere skill acquisition. It involves enhancing the ability of individuals, organizations, and communities to identify, plan, and implement activities that contribute to their long-term development goals. Both skilling and capacity building are integral components of cultural economic development strategies.

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE SESSION

- Examine the hindrances confronting skilling and capacity-building initiatives, infrastructure gaps, language and literacy barriers, funding constraints, etc.
- A comprehensive examination of the need for training programs, workshops, and educational initiatives aimed at enhancing the skills of artists, cultural managers, and other stakeholders.
- Study the provisions of the New Education Policy in skilling and capacity building in the areas of Vocational Studies such as artisans, artists, tourist guides, etc, and promotion of carriers in Cultural Activities.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Develop and promote careers in such areas, as archaeology, museum science, preservation and study of ancient manuscript, languages etc.
- Identify the skilling gap in capacity building for artisans, artists, etc. in taking up cameras in cultural activities. Suggest ways and means of filling these gaps in the educational institutions and universities under the New Education Policy.
- Promotion of specialized institutions and specific courses in current educational streams.
- Only 10% of rural artisans have access to formal training programs according to a report by the Ministry of Rural Development.



### Address by Shri Surender Kumar

**T**hank you so much for having me here. One of our speakers mentioned culture as a black box where it was mentioned that corruption or low economic growth is certainly because of cultural reasons. But I believe that culture does not work in isolation, it can be referred to as an endogenous factor. Culture is decided by the environment we are working in and the government structure. Culture is a way of life and the economic activities are integrated with that.

India has a celebrated history of an ancient civilization dating back thousands of years with periods of high prosperity and a rich cultural heritage. Numerous economic activities originate from social, religious, and cultural activities. The flourishing cultural and creative sector will not only generate economic activities, it will also enhance the country's profile on the global scene.

A thriving cultural economy provides employment opportunities at a large scale to artists, craftsmen, and technicians. It attaches commercial value to cultural products, services, and experiences, and is a driver of economic growth. A flourishing cultural economy attracts investment in tourism and related businesses, drives greater tourist inflow, and creates avenues for interaction between artists, content writers, consumers, and institutions. It not only generates economic revenues but the cultural exports of ideas, values, and knowledge traditions enhance the soft power of the country.

Before the British rule, the Indian economy was prosperous; Indian cultural products such as handicrafts, spices, and handloom products were

the major items of international trade. India's share in the world economy was almost equal to or more than the entire Europe's share in 1700 AD; it was about 23% and it declined to less than 4% on the eve of independence. It all happened during British rule; the Britishers demolished Indian cultural and traditional handicrafts and products to aggressively sell their factory products. In 1835, Lord Macaulay suggested bulldozing the traditional Indian education system to make Indian Englishmen by taste to establish permanently their sovereignty over India. After independence, for the growth of domestic markets and exports, economic policies were focused more on adapting imported technology for domestic applications and less on the development and commercialization of indigenous technology. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on skilling and capacity building for the growth of the cultural economy and productivity employment generation in the country.

In 1985, the Government of India set up seven cultural zonal centres to strengthen the ancient roots of Indian culture. According to the India Brand Equity Foundation, there are about 7 million artisans in the pool of 200 million informal workers who work for the production of handicrafts. India is the fifth largest exporter in the world in the art and craft sector which involves carpets, celebration goods, yarn products, and wickerwork. We provide 90% of the world's hand-woven textiles and are the second-largest producer of silk. According to UNCTAD's Creative Economy Outlook, the value of exports from this sector was about USD 20 billion in 2015. However, it should be noted that India's share was only USD 1.5 billion in world trade of USD 35 billion in the art and crafts sector in 2015. Similarly, in 2017, the country's share was only USD 402 million in world trade of USD 4.62 billion in the Ayurvedic market. Moreover, there is huge potential to be harnessed in the tourism sector; International tourist arrival was only 17.42 million in 2019.

As a result of some recent initiatives of the Government, health, wellness, beauty, food and beverages, fashion and accessories, and home decor and furnishings attracted investment to the tune of about USD 1.8 billion in 2021. In 2022, the Government of India set up an animation, VFX, gaming, and comics (AVGC) task force for framing a new national policy. However, the sector remains confined to the lower end of the value chain and exports low-cost skilled labor products.

To be a prominent player in the sector, the Government needs to recognize and define cultural entrepreneurship. At present, the policy initiative responsibility is spread over 16 different central ministries and different state governments. A nodal agency should be set up under DPIIT to promote the interests of cultural enterprises. An enabling environment for cultural entrepreneurship should be created at the state level. An action plan should be formulated with three overarching goals: creating new jobs, strengthening India's leadership in the global cultural and creative economy, and fostering an environment for creative talents as well as cultural entrepreneurs. Special efforts should also be made to improve market linkages for the enhancement of the cultural economy.

Efforts should be made to encourage innovation in the sector and intellectual property rights should be protected. Artists should be made aware of Indian Copyright and other Acts that protect their interests. Region-specific traditional skills can be a significant source of employment and sustainable production practices. India has incorporated handicrafts within the Geographic Indication of Goods Act, 1999 as a part of WTO's TRIPS obligations that protect these cultural product producers' interests.

The persistence of traditional skills of cultural economic activities increases both the number of people employed in the sector and the value people receive for their work. Emphasis should be put on promoting design and creating problem-solving thinking and abilities in students from an

early age. Entrepreneurship development and innovation centres should be opened across the country to foster local talents and eliminate barriers to pursuing entrepreneurship in the sector. To enhance skill development capacity, universities and schools should be involved and vocational programmes should be integrated with mainstream education. For this purpose, a specific fund should be created for setting up skill centres of excellence for promoting these traditional skills inside educational institutes campuses. Initiatives should also be taken to develop and promote mobile training and skill development units in rural and tribal areas that fulfill local skill and livelihood gaps.

To obtain the status of an inclusive developed economy and generate productive employment to which the country aspires, the development and enhancement of the cultural economy can play a major role. We need to focus on creating innovative and contemporary skills and products aligning with Indian culture, understanding market trends, participating in digital supply chains, meeting regulatory and quality standards, and investing in creating value-enhancing products, services, and experiences among others.

In conclusion, it is crucial that we embrace our cultural economy to unlock its immense potential for growth, employment, and global recognition. By investing in skill development, fostering entrepreneurship, and promoting our rich cultural heritage, we can elevate India's standing on the global stage. Thank you!



**Moderator:** When we talk about taking up any activity in a structured manner, in addition to finances we also require a skilled workforce. When it comes to cultural activities, we require a workforce that has received proper training. We have often heard that if we encourage our artisans to pursue similar work then is it sufficient for them to maintain a good standard of living? What is the skillset required for cultural economic development and what can be done to improve it?

## Q&A Session

1. अगर हम आयुर्वेद को शोध आधारित साक्ष्य के रूप में देखें तो हम अब तक एक्सपेरिमेंटल साक्ष्य क्यों नहीं बना पाए हैं? योग और हमारी पारंपरिक सांस्कृतिक स्वास्थ्य देख-भाल परंपराओं को विश्व स्तर पर स्वीकार करने की क्या आवश्यकता है? साथ ही, अक्सर यह देखा जाता है कि आयुर्वेद के अधिकांश पेटेंट अन्य देशों द्वारा बनाए गए हैं, न कि भारत द्वारा, भले ही यह हमारी संस्कृति का हिस्सा है, इसलिए इसे रोकने के लिए क्या किया जा सकता है?

**डॉ. क्षमिका रवि:** इन सब चीजों में थोड़ा वक्त लगता है, रिसर्च कैपेसिटी और डॉक्यूमेंटेशन कैपेसिटी बनाने में समय लगता है। हमारे यहाँ अलोपथी और मॉडर्न मेडिकेशन में ज्यादा रिसर्च नहीं हो रही है। अगर हम तुलना करें तो अलोपथी रिसर्च में हम बैकेंड सपोर्ट प्रदान कर रहे हैं और आयुर्वेद में हमें फ्रंट-एन्ड सपोर्ट करना पड़ेगा क्योंकि हमारे पास इसका प्राचीन ज्ञान है। इसमें समय लग रहा है पर ये नार्मल है क्योंकि रिसर्च कैपेसिटी को बिल्ड करने में समय लगता है। अगर हम पेटेंट्स की बात करें तो भारत ने दस गुना ज्यादा पेटेंट्स पिछले एक साल में दिए हैं। पहले सरकार की तरफ से काफी प्रतिबंध था पर हम उन प्रक्रियाओं को सरल कर रहे हैं। इस क्षेत्र में बहुत सारी गलत सूचनाएँ हैं। हम नकली आख्यानों के युग में रह रहे हैं इसलिए हमें नए साक्ष्य-आधारित आख्यान बनाने की जरूरत है। हम रिलायबिलिटी और ट्रांसपेरेंसी सुनिश्चित करने के लिए वहाँ पहुँच रहे हैं।

## Concluding Session

The session was concluded by: Shri Nitin Gadkari, Shri Gopal Krishna Agarwal, Shri Alok Kumar, Shri Ram Bahadur Rai, Maitreya Dadashreeji, highlighting the key takeaways from the session and cultural economy of India.



Address by Shri Ram Bahadur Rai

आदरणीय अलोक कुमार जी, गोपाल अग्रवाल जी, और मित्रों।

मैत्री या मित्रता की अवधारणा लंबे समय से भारतीय दर्शन और संस्कृति की आधारशिला रही है। समकालीन समय में यह प्राचीन आदर्श आधुनिक समाज की जटिलताओं को संबोधित करने के लिए एक शक्तिशाली शक्ति के रूप में फिर से उभरा है। मैत्री के सिद्धांतों पर केंद्रित एक बढ़ते आंदोलन का उद्देश्य समुदायों के भीतर एकता, सद्भाव और करुणा को बढ़ावा देना है।

इस आंदोलन के केंद्र में मैत्री संगठन है जिसकी स्थापना मैत्रेय दादाश्रीजी ने की थी। संगठन एक ऐसी दुनिया बनाना चाहता है जहाँ विविध पृष्ठभूमि के व्यक्ति शांति से, सह-अस्तित्व में रह सकें। आंदोलन के समर्थकों का तर्क है कि विभाजन और कलह से चिह्नित युग में मैत्री उपचार और सुलह की दिशा में



Shri Nitin Gadkari



एक मार्ग प्रदान करता है। हालाँकि, गहरी जड़ें मैत्री की खेती में बाधा डालती हैं। पिछले अनुभव, सांस्कृतिक कंडीशनिंग और सामाजिक मानदण्ड अक्सर एकता और सद्भाव के लिए बाधाएँ पैदा करते हैं। वक्ता ने इन बाधाओं को स्वीकार करते हुए कहा, हम सभी अपने अतीत के उत्पाद हैं। वास्तव में मैत्री को गले लगाने के लिए, हमें इन सीमाओं को पार करना होगा और सार्वभौमिक भाईचारे की भावना पैदा करनी होगी। वक्ता ने धर्म को जीवन के एक ऐसे रूप में परिभाषित किया जिसमें केवल एक धार्मिक संबद्धता के बजाय सेवा, करुणा और सद्भाव की विशेषता थी।

आंदोलन एक ऐसी दुनिया की कल्पना करता है जहाँ जीवन के सभी क्षेत्रों के व्यक्ति शांति से सह-अस्तित्व में रह सकते हैं। परस्पर जुड़ाव और साझा मानवता की भावना को बढ़ावा देकर, मैत्री का उद्देश्य विभाजन को पाटना और अधिक सामंजस्यपूर्ण समाज बनाना है। जैसा कि वक्ता ने स्पष्ट रूप से कहा, हमें एक ऐसी दुनिया बनाने का प्रयास करना चाहिए जहाँ जीवन के सभी क्षेत्रों के लोग सद्भाव और शांति से रह सकें। मैत्री आंदोलन इस लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने के लिए एक रोडमैप प्रदान करता है।

एकता और करुणा के लिए वक्ता की भावपूर्ण अपील दर्शकों के साथ प्रतिध्वनित हुई जिसने उज्ज्वल भविष्य के लिए आशा को प्रेरित किया। मैत्री की परिवर्तनकारी शक्ति पर जोर देकर आंदोलन सकारात्मक परिवर्तन का एक लहर प्रभाव पैदा करना चाहता है जो इसकी मूल सदस्यता से बहुत आगे तक फैला हुआ है।

आंदोलन में एक प्रमुख व्यक्ति ने इस तरह की पहल की तत्काल आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया। उन्होंने कहा कि हमारा समाज एक चौराहे पर खड़ा है। उन्होंने कहा 'हम धार्मिक एवं सामाजिक तनाव से लेकर निजी चिंताओं तक विभिन्न चुनौतियों

से जूझ रहे हैं'। मैत्री के सिद्धांतों पर आधारित एक आंदोलन एक बहुत जरूरी संतुलन प्रदान कर सकता है।



### Maitreya Dadashreeji

वक्ता ने एकता और सद्भाव पैदा करने में सचेतनता और धैर्य की अपरिहार्य भूमिकाओं पर प्रकाश डाला। माइंडफुलनेस हमें पल में उपस्थित होने और दूसरों के साथ गहरे स्तर पर जुड़ने की अनुमति देती है, उन्होंने समझाया। धैर्य हमें अनुग्रह और समझ के साथ चुनौतियों का सामना करने में सक्षम बनाता है।

अंत में, हमें एक ऐसे समाज की दिशा में काम करना चाहिए जहाँ मैत्री, करुणा और सद्भाव का प्रकाश हर दिशा में फैल सके। यही वह आधार है जिस पर हम एक शांतिपूर्ण और समृद्ध भविष्य की नींव रख सकते हैं।

धन्यवाद!



### Address by Shri Alok Kumar

हाल के दिनों में, यह देखा गया है कि हिंदुओं के रूप में हमारी एक विशिष्ट सांस्कृतिक पहचान है। हमारे पास एक अलग वैचारिक विशेषता है, और इसे स्वीकार करने में कोई हिचकिचाहट नहीं है। हम इसके बारे में रक्षात्मक नहीं हैं; बल्कि, हम इस तथ्य पर गर्व करते हैं कि हमारे पास दुनिया को देने के लिए कुछ मूल्यवान है। हमारा योगदान पूरे विश्व के कल्याण के लिए है।

मैं इसके दो या तीन पहलुओं पर बात करूँगा। गोपाल जी और मैंने विषयों को विभाजित किया है; मैं संस्कृति पर बोलूँगा और वह अर्थव्यवस्था के बारे में बताएँगे। मेरा मानना है कि हमारी महत्वपूर्ण विशेषताओं में से एक यह है कि हमने इस सृष्टि की विविधता को स्वीकार किया है। हम समझते हैं कि सभी को एक जैसी दवा नहीं दी जा सकती। कुछ लोगों को अपने मन को एकाग्र करने और परमात्मा से जुड़ने के लिए भौतिक मूर्ति की आवश्यकता हो सकती है, जबकि अन्य सत्य और अहिंसा जैसे गुणों की पूजा कर सकते हैं, और कुछ निराकार को चुन सकते हैं। हमने यह भी स्वीकार किया है कि कुछ लोग परमेश्वर में बिल्कुल भी विश्वास नहीं करते हैं। हम इन सभी रास्तों को मान्य मानते हैं।

संसार भर में कई स्थानों पर संघर्ष उत्पन्न होते हैं क्योंकि लोग मानते हैं कि उनका धर्म, पुस्तक या भविष्यवक्ता पूर्ण सत्य हैं और जो कोई भी अलग सोचता है, वह गलत है और उसके विरुद्ध अवश्य लड़ा जाना चाहिए। धर्म के नाम पर कई युद्ध लड़े गए हैं। हालाँकि, हमारी अनूठी विशेषता विविधता पर हमारे द्वारा दिए गए महत्व में निहित है। हम मानते हैं कि जो एक के लिए सच है वह दूसरे के लिए सच नहीं हो सकता है, और हम इसका सम्मान करते हैं।

एक और अनूठा पहलू प्रकृति के साथ हमारा संबंध है। विभिन्न धर्मों में अलग-अलग अवधारणाएँ हैं कि ब्रह्मांड कैसे अस्तित्व में आया। कुछ का मानना है कि भगवान ने छह दिनों में दुनिया बनाई और सातवें पर विश्राम किया। पर छठे दिन

भगवान ने सबसे अच्छी मिट्टी और पानी मंगवाया और 1 मनुष्य और एक स्त्री बनाए। भगवान ने उस मनुष्य और स्त्री को कहा कि यह सारी पृथ्वी उनके उपभोग के लिए है। अब अगर पृथ्वी उपभोग के लिए है तो हमारा उसके प्रति कोई कर्तव्य नहीं है, जितना उपभोग हम प्राप्त कर सके उतना करेंगे। इससे पर्यावरण का क्षरण हुआ है। इसके विपरीत, हमारी संस्कृति हमें सिखाती है कि प्रकृति जीवित है और हम इसका एक हिस्सा हैं। हमें प्रकृति को वापस देना चाहिए क्योंकि हम इससे लेते हैं। यह सिद्धांत मनुष्यों और पर्यावरण दोनों के संतुलन और स्वास्थ्य को बनाए रखने में मदद करता है।

इसके अलावा, हम मानते हैं कि जैसे-जैसे व्यक्ति बढ़ते हैं, उनकी पहचान की भावना का विस्तार होता है। प्रारंभ में, एक बच्चा केवल अपनी जरूरतों से चिंतित हो सकता है, लेकिन जैसे-जैसे वे बड़े होते हैं, वे अपने परिवार, फिर अपने गाँव, अपने प्रांत और अंततः अपने देश की देख-भाल करना शुरू कर देते हैं। विस्तार की यह भावना पूरे ब्रह्मांड में भी फैल सकती है, जैसा कि हमारे षियों के मामले में देखा गया है जो खुद को ब्रह्मांड के नागरिक मानते हैं।

हमारी संस्कृति किसी परिवार या समुदाय के भीतर अधिकारों के लिए संघर्ष को बढ़ावा नहीं देती है। जीवनसाथी, बच्चों या माता-पिता के अधिकारों को लागू करने के लिए कानूनों या पुलिस की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है। इसके बजाय, यह विस्तार की एक प्राकृतिक प्रक्रिया है, जहाँ व्यक्ति एक बड़े पुरे में बढ़ता है।



### Shri Mitra Parn

इस सांस्कृतिक प्रतियोगिता में हमें अपनी अनूठी सांस्कृतिक पहचान को खुशी, धैर्य और आत्मविश्वास के साथ गले लगाना चाहिए। ऐसा करके हम अपने सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों को अपने जीवन में, भारत के जीवन में, प्रकट कर सकते हैं और विश्व को सुख, शांति और आनंद का मार्ग प्रदान कर सकते हैं। धन्यवाद!

# **MAITRI CULTURAL ECONOMY SUMMIT- MUMBAI**

## **REPORT**

**8<sup>th</sup> October 2024**



### Inaugural Address by Shri Mohan Jayakar

**W**ho's behind the MaitriBodh Parivaar that is drawing people from all walks of life? The first time—why, where, when, and how—such questions usually arise. But after seeing Dadashreeji for the first time, all my questions disappeared.

According to me, the initiative started by Dadashreeji is fantastic. Today, I find myself a bit controversial, a bit argumentative. The reason is that we need to develop spiritual tourism in our Maharashtra. Our state has numerous temples; of course, there are the famous ones like Siddhivinayak, Tulja Bhavani, Akkalkot, Kolhapur's Mahalaxmi, Nashik's Trimbakeshwar, and Shirdi's Sai Baba. But beyond these grand temples, there are so many smaller temples that often go unnoticed. These temples need to be promoted, and the areas around them need to see progress and development.

For such temples, their initiatives and festivals need to be supported with proper motivation. Additionally, providing detailed information about these temples and their historical, cultural, and spiritual significance is equally important. When people understand the meaning and relevance behind these festivals and initiatives, they naturally feel more connected and involved. Raising awareness and creating interest through such efforts will ensure that these traditions continue to thrive across generations.

There are so many things happening that lack spirituality, and as a result, we are drifting further away from it. Dadashreeji's perspective is that

spirituality should be the focal point of our lives. When spirituality is present in your life, true growth happens.

Dadashreeji says that when Saraswati (knowledge) is with you, Lakshmi (wealth) stays with you too. Without Saraswati, Lakshmi is unstable, and no one knows when she might leave. If Lakshmi is to stay, it requires proper knowledge, which comes from Saraswati. Today, during Navratri, this message feels even more significant. If we can strike a balance between Saraswati and Lakshmi during this auspicious time, it leads to endless prosperity. This synergy between knowledge and wealth is what will drive Maharashtra to unparalleled heights of prosperity and spiritual fulfillment.

Maharashtra has been blessed with saints like Nivrutti, Namdev, Sopan, Muktabai, Tukaram, and others. These saints lived about 100 to 200 years ago, and their teachings still resonate deeply with us. However, when we take a step back and look at the bigger picture, we realize that India—our Bharat—is the oldest civilization in the world. Everything started here—religion, sciences, philosophy, spirituality—it all originated in Bharat.

Today, if we truly wish for India to rise to the top of the world, we must revive it—not just economically but also its spiritual essence and practices. It is through spiritual discipline that we can elevate the nation. This is precisely Dadashreeji's vision that India should not only be economically prosperous but also stand as a spiritual beacon in a world engulfed by turbulence.

For India to lead, not just materially but spiritually, we must rekindle our ancient wisdom and values. Only then we can guide the world as a lighthouse of peace and harmony amidst this stormy sea.

Dadashreeji's message is crystal clear: if we truly wish to promote global peace, it must begin with global understanding and spiritual understanding. There needs to be a spiritual mindset, a spiritual perspective, guiding all actions. Without this foundation, lasting peace will remain a distant dream.

Only when spirituality becomes a driving force, we can witness our country prosper—not just economically or politically, but in the truest sense of growth. A spiritually rooted nation can withstand



challenges, resolve conflicts, and set an example for the world to follow. This is the path that can lead us to peace and progress.

Dadashreeji is effectively trying to promote the philosophy of Advaita. The Advaita philosophy teaches us that what is in you is also in me, and what is in me is also in you. Therefore, we are the same—we are one. With this understanding, it is not just about taking Maharashtra forward, but also about taking Bharat as a whole towards progress.

If we start promoting spiritual tourism, our festivals and cultural traditions can play a significant role. For example, during Navratri, the Raas Garba in Gujarat is not just a dance; it is an offering to the Goddess. Gujarat has transformed it into a massive event, and it has become one of the state's biggest cultural highlights.

In Maharashtra, we have something equally grand and spiritually significant—the Pandharpur Waari. According to me, the Waari is one of the biggest spiritual events in Maharashtra. However, currently, only a particular stratum of society participates in it. Why can't others join? There should be an initiative to promote tourism around it, making people aware of its significance. The Waari is not just a physical journey; it's an emotional and spiritual experience. When a Warkari finally reaches Pandharpur after days of walking, the thought in his heart is, "Now I will see Panduranga. After all these days of

walking, today I will meet my Lord." This emotional connection with God is what makes the Waari so profound, and this is what we need to share with the world through spiritual tourism.

There is a particular message from Dadashreeji that I would like to read because I feel it holds immense importance: with this initiative, we aim to bridge Maharashtra's rich cultural heritage with modern economic strategies, paving the way for a future of holistic growth—where spirituality and prosperity unite to shape an economically strong and culturally vibrant state. Today's initiatives and seminars cover topics like agriculture, film, television, and the media industry. Discussions will also touch upon temples and festivals.

Before I conclude, a dialogue comes to mind—a memory of Sarojini Naidu. When she attended the Round Table Conference, Mahatma Gandhi asked her to deliver a speech. She stood there, looked around, and said, "I see men of law, I see men of labor, I see men of politics, and I'm beginning to wonder what place I can fill in a crowd like this. I'm too small a person."

Similarly, today, I find myself in front of so many eminent individuals with knowledge a hundred times greater than mine. Yet, with utmost humility, I have spoken from my heart.

Thank you!



### Address by Shri Rahul Narwekar

Speaker, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly

Greetings,

At today's event organized by the MaitriBodh Parivaar, titled 'Sanskriti Samashti Samruddhi' Cultural Economy Summit, I extend my heartfelt regards to all the dignitaries present, the office bearers of various organizations, and all the members associated with them.

As we all know, the pace at which our nation is progressing today is remarkable. Currently, India has emerged as the fifth-largest economy in the world, and in just a few years, we are poised to become the third-largest economy globally. This is a dream we all share — that soon, we will also stand as the most powerful economy in the world.

The way our nation is progressing and the rising aspirations of its people, it is evident that there is no force left that can truly halt this progress. There is no power capable of stopping this advancement. However, this progress has been made possible because even today, spirituality holds a revered place in this country. The faith people have in spirituality, the sentiments about it within the common populace, have allowed us to preserve our values and our thought processes in the most appropriate manner.

"Spirituality is the guiding force behind development." Saying this would not be an overstatement. And hence, the more we promote

spirituality, the more we spread awareness about it among people, I firmly believe that we will continue to guide our nation and the world towards sustainable development in the truest sense. And that is precisely why programs like these play a crucial role in providing direction. Through such initiatives, society is undoubtedly guided on how sustainable growth should be achieved and how, through spirituality, we can consciously contribute to socially beneficial efforts, thereby fostering progress. This realization and understanding are imparted through programs like these.

In recent times, we have all observed that the science of yoga, which originated in India and dates back to ancient Indian times, is now being utilized and appreciated in every corner of the world. While this is the case, it is also essential to note that the number of people practicing and benefiting from yoga is higher outside India than within the country itself.

"India is a machine for dispensing knowledge." Whether it is spiritual knowledge, scientific knowledge, or mathematical knowledge, all of this has originated from India and has been shared with the world. Spirituality, too, is a profound form of knowledge — a conscious awareness — that India has introduced and disseminated globally. It continues to contribute to the prosperity of the world, spreading its light and wisdom from India.

We believe in the ideology of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' where we consider the entire world to be our family. We look forward to keeping the entire world happy and satisfied, thereby ensuring peace in this world. I think spirituality is at the epitome of any such movement, and therefore, such programs must be promoted.

I fully support the mission undertaken by MaitriBodh Parivaar in the times to come. This organization has relentlessly worked towards consciously bringing change in the common man's mind and way of living. My best wishes to them and their future endeavors.

Thank you for having me here today and giving me an opportunity to share my thoughts.

Thank you. Jai Hind! Jai Maharashtra!

## Session 1

### Temple and Festival Economics



#### Opening Remarks by Shri Rajendra Patankar

**G**reetings to all present here. I extend a heartfelt welcome to everyone attending this discussion session on “Temples and Festivals”. When we hear the word “temple,” certain meanings and images come to mind. A temple symbolizes purity, sanctity, and spirituality.

Today’s discussion is exceptional. Let us begin by acknowledging and appreciating the contributions of these distinguished speakers with a hearty round of applause. Though the focus is on culture, community, and prosperity, I feel the discussion will bridge the past with the present.

Let me start by sharing a simple example from earlier times, before the invention of mobile phones. Back then, temples had signs reading, “Keep your mobile phones switched off.” A few years later, these signs evolved to “Please keep your mobile on silent mode.” Today, some temples have adopted signs like “Selfie with God: Rs. 500.”

This transformation reminds us of the timeless wisdom in the Bhagavad Gita that says, “Change is the law of the universe.” We must embrace change while moving forward with our traditions. Let us now hear from our esteemed speakers.

Greetings to everyone. I am deeply grateful for being given this platform.

**F**irst of all, if you see, where do we Hindus go? Many will say, “Temple.” Where do Christians go? “Church.” And Muslims? “Mosque.” If you check the dictionary definition of a “temple,” it refers to the place of worship for pagans.

Who are pagans? They are those whose civilizations have been lost, like the Egyptians, Mayans, Greeks, and Romans. However, our temples are very different. Churches and mosques are places where people gather to worship. In contrast, we place a deity in our temples, perform Prana Pratishtha (consecration), and invite the divine presence, making it the house of God. That’s why we call it a Mandir or in Tamil, Govind.



### Address by Shri Sandeep Singh

The first thing we must do is correct the nomenclature. If we call the house of God by a wrong name, everything will go astray. Imagine being called by an incorrect name—how would it feel? Similarly, we need to consciously and consistently refer to it as a temple. It won't happen overnight, but gradually, with persistent effort, this understanding will spread.

Today, we seem fascinated by the revenue generated by temples—crores of rupees—be it from temple terraces, rents, or donations. However, the economic system is a broader and more significant concept. Revenue and economics are not the same.

Consider GDP, a term coined in the 1930s. Does this mean there was no wealth before 1930? Of course not. Wealth existed, but they needed a metric to determine which economy was the largest. However, GDP as a concept is crude. For instance, the IMF reports that many European countries fail to report revenue generated from prostitution. This shows the darker side of GDP. Similarly, wars contribute to GDP—destroying and rebuilding—but is this true growth?

Our economic system is rooted in dharma (moral principles). In Hindi, we refer to profits as “Shubh Laabh” (auspicious gains), not just “Laabh” (gains). Profits earned unethically or at the cost of others are not acceptable. When we understand our temples and economic systems rooted in dharma, everything else will align.

Take Detroit, for example, the most modern industrial town where Ford began car manufacturing. With cars came auxiliary units, and Detroit flourished. But when cheaper cars were produced in Japan, Korea, and India, the city's economy collapsed. Today, Detroit is a ghost town. Similarly, in Russia, China, and Europe, many cities have suffered the same fate. In contrast, consider the world's oldest cities like Ujjain, Pushkar, Rameshwaram, Pataliputra, and Varanasi. Despite lacking modern industries, these cities continue to thrive because they are sustained by a temple-based economy.

Think about saris like Banarasi, Kanjivaram, Sambalpuri, and Dhakeshwari. These are named after the temples where they originated. Temple-based economies have sustained communities for centuries. The borders of these saris often depict temple spires. The architectural styles of temples in North India, South India, and East India influence the designs in the saris made in these regions.

During Portuguese rule in Goa, saris were banned because they symbolized Indian culture. Yet, the weavers secretly preserved this art. This is the sacrifice our ancestors made to safeguard our culture.

Our temples are marvels of architecture and science. Consider the Brihadeswara Temple, built thousands of years ago. The lost wax technique used to create the Nataraja statue is over 4,500 years old and still relevant today. The Nataraja represents the cosmic cycle of creation and destruction, embodying Lord Shiva's role. It is no wonder that this statue is displayed at CERN in Switzerland, symbolizing cosmic balance.

Zero was first inscribed in a temple in Gwalior. Our temples have been the source of knowledge in mathematics, astronomy, and metallurgy. Unlike Europe, where science was controlled by the Church, our temples were centres of learning and innovation. The philosophical essence of infinity and the Shanti Mantra, “Purnamidam Purnamidam,” originated here, emphasizing wholeness and balance.

Our ancient rituals, like offering rice varieties to deities, preserved biodiversity. The Green Revolution, while necessary at the time, displaced



traditional crops. In Odisha, the Jagannath Temple's ritual of offering a new grain daily ensured the survival of native rice varieties. Without temple-based practices, many communities and traditions would have vanished.

Today, religious tourism is often mistaken for pilgrimage. Visiting a temple should be an immersive spiritual experience, not a VIP darshan followed by selfies for social media. Pilgrimage involves engaging with people, understanding cultural narratives, and fostering devotion. VIP darshans dilute this essence. True VIPs are the unsung heroes—the parents raising multiple children against societal odds, contributing selflessly to our future.

The responsibility to preserve our temples and culture lies with us. Instead of forwarding WhatsApp messages about issues, let's take action locally. The vision is clear: dedicate the next decade to temples, irrespective of age or status. Even visiting temples regularly can contribute significantly to their preservation.

Temples are not just places of worship; they are centres of learning, culture, and economy. By reconnecting with their true purpose, we can restore balance to our society and guide the world with the wisdom of our heritage. Let's pledge to protect and propagate this legacy for future generations.

**Moderator:** Giresh Ji, I would like to ask you. If we want to progress spiritually, then our temples and festivals are very important. First of all, is there such a thing? And if there is, how is it? What do you think about it?



#### Address by Shri Giresh Kulkarni

Namaskar to everyone. Today, through the medium of the MaitriBodh Parivaar, we offer our respectful salutations to Dadashreeji.

I have been associated with an organization called Temple Connect. For the past 21 years, I have worked on digitizing around 9,500 temples across

57 countries. People often ask me, “What exactly do you mean by digitization?” My answer is simple: think of Wikipedia. Wikipedia hosts vast amounts of information uploaded by contributors, which people then access and use for their own knowledge or research.

About 23-24 years ago, during the dot-com boom, individuals began choosing niche topics and creating platforms to disseminate information. Among these, “temples” became a favorite subject for me. My background in media communication, brand strategy, and events equipped me to explore and present this subject effectively. Through this initiative, we successfully reached around 9,500 temples, collecting and sharing their information online.

One of the fundamental questions I often pose is, “What is the difference between devotion and spirituality?” Devotion encompasses all external expressions of worship—rituals, offerings, use of sacred items like Rudraksha, Ratnas, and karmakanda (religious ceremonies). Spirituality, on the other hand, involves internal practices—pranayama, meditation, chanting, and chakra healing, often away from the hustle of daily life. The two are interconnected yet distinct. Devotion is visible and outward, while spirituality is internal and experiential.

A temple is not just a place of worship; it is a complex institution involving: safety and security: crowd management, surveillance, disaster planning; operations and management: fund management, sustainability efforts, solid waste management, queue management, branding, advertising, and revenue collection.

In fact, over 650 distinct operational aspects work simultaneously to ensure the smooth functioning of temples. From managing wheelchairs for senior citizens to setting up separate queues for expecting mothers, the effort behind the scenes is immense.

What do most people do after visiting a temple? They comment, forward WhatsApp messages, and often criticize, “Oh, that wasn’t clean,” or “This wasn’t managed well.” However, how many of us take action to address these issues?

As Gautama Buddha wisely said, “An idea in action is far better than an idea in thought.”

While working with temple-related issues, we didn’t just analyze; we also focused on implementation. We sought to understand the temple economy, leveraging insights from experts like Mr. Singh.

Two initiatives were launched: ‘Temple Next Door’ that is highlighting the importance of supporting



local temples near our homes; ‘Support Existing Temples’ that is encouraging temple trusts to prioritize the maintenance and sustainability of temples within a 300 km radius before constructing new ones.

Why do we go to temples? Often, it is transactional—offering something to God in exchange for blessings. This “trade relationship” with temples undermines the deeper purpose of connecting with divine energy. Instead of rushing through VIP darshans, we should pause, absorb the sanctity, and reflect. Unfortunately, temple visits are increasingly treated as a form of religious tourism—focused on convenience rather than devotion. To truly benefit, we must sit, reflect, and engage meaningfully.

Temples are more than structures of worship; they are centres of learning, culture, and community. By understanding their true essence and purpose, we can uphold the legacy of our ancestors and pave the way for a harmonious future.

The temple economy in India is vast—estimated to be around Rs. 5.5 lakh crores, with a margin of Rs. 25,000-30,000 crores. This is a significant figure. However, apart from donations, what do we contribute to this economy? If every individual commits to visiting a temple once a week for the next 10 years and engages sincerely with it, we can channel this economy meaningfully.

When discussing temple-related activities, several categories form its ecosystem: God, devotees, temple administration, shops and food stalls, accommodation facilities, local transport, long-distance connectivity. All these categories generate transactions, revenue, and commercial value, which can be organized better.

One aspect of temples that has sparked debate is the VIP culture, which many people dislike. For example, during major festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi, some mandals handle darshan with remarkable efficiency, catering to lakhs of people in a single day. Yet, in other places, there are issues such as favoritism, delays, or contradictions in how darshan is organized. Instead of criticizing, we need to explore what more we can contribute to improve the system.

The temple economy starts not with thousands of crores but with small contributions. Even a commitment of Rs. 1 can make a difference.

As someone rightly said, the temple is the body, and culture is the soul of our civilization. It’s through this synthesis that we derive our strength and ensure the preservation of our heritage. Let us use this opportunity to enrich not just ourselves but also the larger society.

Thank you very much. It’s been a beautiful and enlightening discussion.



## DISCUSSION

**Moderator:** I noticed a point in the social issue raised when Sandeep Sir mentioned the development of VIP culture in temples. You used a different term for it—"Jugaad"—but the essence of the issue remains the same. This phenomenon is real and is indeed happening. The question is, why is it happening? Why aren't adequate measures being taken to address it? Sandeep Ji answered this aptly during his speech. He said that if it takes 3-4 hours to visit a temple, those 3-4 hours represent something deeper than just waiting in line.

When all of us come together and collaborate, only then we can begin to see true progress. Without cultural development, economic development cannot take root. It is through these seemingly small steps—be it following a tradition or participating in a cultural event—that we lay the groundwork for greater things, including economic progress.

**Sandeep Singh:** I want to share my perspective whether it is economic, intellectual, or spiritual progress, we, as a society, are constantly moving forward.

I began writing my book during the pandemic, in May 2020. One incident that profoundly impacted me during COVID-19 was witnessing people walking back to their homes—migrants traveling on foot to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and other distant corners of India. These were distances of 1,600 to 2,000 kilometers.

Where does this courage come from? It comes from two primary sources:

People believe that when they reach their villages, society and temples will take care of them. I calculated that during COVID-19, just 8 or 9 temples spent over Rs. 100 crores feeding people. If we scale this to the whole country, the contributions would be immense.

In India, we are accustomed to walking for pilgrimages like Vaishno Devi Yatra, Amarnath Yatra, Ganga Sagar, Sabarimala, and Pandharpur Yatra. Those who walked during COVID-19 were often the same devotees.



This mindset of evaluating temples based on profitability is dangerous. Tomorrow, we might rank temples as profitable or unprofitable and decide to shut down those deemed unprofitable. This has already happened—cow shelters have been removed from some temples because trustees felt they were not 'profitable.' But temples were never meant to be profit centres. The economic activity surrounding temples is remarkably equitable. For instance, in Pandharpur, about 25% of the revenue benefits local residents, while the remaining 75% supports people from nearby villages. The road economy, which includes small vendors selling goods and food, benefits significantly from pilgrimages.

Our traditions, whether in music, food, or craftsmanship, have been preserved through temples and pilgrimages. Pilgrims often depend on the community for food and shelter during their journeys. This community support system highlights the resilience and generosity of our society. If we abandon our pilgrimages, we risk losing these invaluable aspects of our heritage. The simple act of walking to a temple or participating in a yatra strengthens our connection to our roots and ensures that future generations inherit a rich cultural legacy.

**Moderator:** As Sandeep Ji mentioned, the commercialization of temples is indeed a concerning issue. The sanctity and prosperity of temples must remain intact.



Today, due to caste discrimination, this feeling has been lost and divisions have taken place. The reason for this is either the British or our present situation. But this is a controversial truth. Economic growth is also very important and if you want to achieve economic growth or any kind of growth, you need to have a strong foundation. While going towards prosperity, we will have to think about the inequality of wealth.

**Giresh Kulkarni:** Thank you very much. I was surprised to hear this. One year ago, Mumbai University, Pune University, Welingkar Institute, and 27 other universities collaborated with us to launch a Diploma in Temple Management course. Along with this, we are set to launch an MBA in Temple Management in the upcoming academic year.

As mentioned earlier, temples have existed for a much longer period, even before our country gained independence. Temples have always been integral to our heritage and society. However, due to a lack of innovative presentation, people have not been actively involved.

When we were children, visiting the family deity's

(Kul Devata) temple was a tradition. It wasn't just about a pilgrimage; it was about contributing economically to that region. However, in recent times, the concept of holidays and vacations has shifted focus. People earn money here and then travel to Singapore, Malaysia, or Hong Kong, spending their earnings abroad. While this benefits foreign economies, our earlier practice of visiting the family deity's temple contributed directly to local economies. It is essential to revive this tradition. Visiting your family deity's temple—be it a God, Goddess, or Guru—is necessary.

**Moderator:** As you mentioned in the beginning Sandeep Ji, culture is our root, and it is action that forms the foundation of culture. Unless we preserve and nurture our culture, we won't be able to undertake meaningful work. Spirituality and devotion, though interconnected, hold distinct meanings. Walking with our bodies, using our senses and feet, is one aspect. However, unless the mind's strength and focus align with these physical actions, we cannot truly move forward. It's the power of the mind that ensures our steps have purpose and direction.

The question then arises: What exactly should we

do to harmonize these external rituals with inner devotion and channel this union toward prosperity?

**Giresh Kulkarni:** “Common Man’s Money Should Be Utilized for the Benefit of the Common Man.”

In every temple, there are organizations like ISKCON that not only sell, donate, and distribute books but also actively promote religion. Through the funds they generate, they build temples, provide food donations, and engage in commendable community service. This is undeniably good work. However, if I were to ask you to name five more such temples that follow a similar model, could you? Personally, I can’t immediately think of five names.

Beyond ISKCON, why isn’t there a larger network doing the same? For example, if a Hanuman temple publishes and sells Hanuman Chalisa for a modest Rs. 2 or Rs. 5, they could bring the sacred text to millions.

This distinction between personal devotion and collective responsibility is crucial. While we all can think about it, only actions—good deeds—can create change. It’s not enough to reflect; we must participate actively in bettering our community.

**Makarand Deshpande (Audience):** Namaskar, I am Makarand Deshpande. Speaking about the temple economy, I believe there is no one more

powerful than God. This inherent power creates an economy. Historically, it was observed that the God who is perceived as more powerful often attracts greater devotion and offerings. This is why certain temples, which we call Jagrut Devsthan (Awakened Temples), hold more significance in people’s minds.

The question remains, how do we decide which temples are considered “awakened”? Is it only when miracles occur? Is that the only measure? If so, what happens to temples where such phenomena are not reported? For instance, if I mention Lalbaugcha Raja, people immediately recognize them. However, what about other temples? There are Ganpati temples nearby that people are unaware of. They don’t have the same popularity around them. Why does this disparity exist? How do we bring attention to these lesser-known temples?

**Giresh Kulkarni:** Thank you for bringing up this question. When we look at our God, the connection we feel comes deeply from our personal and familial experiences. Each person’s relationship with their deity is unique and relative. For instance, I know of a Ganesh Mandir committee where people once doubted its potential. Over the past 15 years, however, they’ve transformed it. Earlier, it might have been modest, like an “AB series” concept, but now it has evolved into something much larger and impactful.





The fundamental purpose of visiting a temple is not transactional—it's about aligning yourself with the energy, the aura, and the frequency of the divine presence there. However, many people today are drawn to large, popular temples because they've become symbols of faith. Take, for example, Lalbaugcha Raja during Ganesh Chaturthi. People flock there in massive numbers, driven by an almost frenzied devotion.

But here's the question—why don't they establish that fervor and devotion to a year-round temple instead of a temporary, 11-day one? The answer lies in the relationship they've cultivated with that specific deity. They believe that the Ganpati idol at Lalbaugcha Raja has delivered on their prayers.

What we see today—the marketing, the packaging, and the commercialization of devotion—requires thoughtful discussion. These temples have been marketed in a way that sometimes aligns with modern consumerism. But the essence of spirituality remains in the genuine connection between the devotee and their God.

**Moderator:** Thank you for sharing such a profound perspective. It is a humbling reminder of the relationship between devotion and divinity.

Your first point, “Devotees make God great,” touches on a truth that is often overlooked. The greatness of God, in a human sense, is magnified through the faith, devotion, and rituals of the devotees. Without

devotion, temples are just structures, and idols are just sculptures. It is the collective belief and worship that transform these into centres of divine energy and sanctity.

This reminds us that our connection to God is not one-way. Devotees play a pivotal role in manifesting divinity in the physical realm.

**Audience:** Is that not a hunting ground for any government to take over the temple? I mean, history says so.

**Giresh Kulkarni:** So, thank you for bringing this up. I understand there is significant legal complexity in this journey, and it's an important task that we are addressing. When we organize the International Temples Convention and Expo, our perspective is to bring together people dealing with diverse challenges to evolve and derive solutions from these meetups. Practically, it's an initiative designed to ensure that individuals with similar problems can connect and address issues collectively, given the lack of a common connectivity platform.

Now, there are five states in India where temples are managed under the Endowment Board: Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. In these states, temple management and financial control systems are distinct. When organizations like ISKCON or Swaminarayan build temples, they are controlled by their respective organizations. Their administrative structure is

strong, and government interference or takeovers are rare. Conversely, in states like Maharashtra, where significant funds flow into temples, the government often takes control to oversee administration and operations. This creates a dynamic where political and financial interests may influence temple management.

Ultimately, political agendas also play a role. However, we remain neutral in our approach, focusing on promoting positive outcomes. We aim to extract the best practices and implement them for the greater good. At the same time, we pray for wisdom and good intentions to prevail among those in power, so that their decisions serve the temples and their devotees faithfully.

## Session 2

### Art, Theatre, and Film Economics



#### Opening Remarks by Shri. Rajendra Patankar

So, let us give a big round of applause for Shri Makarand Ji and Shri Bharat Ji!

**W**hat does “uniqueness” truly mean? Earlier, we discussed the contrast between the past and the present, and it’s true that reflecting on both perspectives adds value. In fact, when considering creative fields like the arts, cinema, or theatre, there’s no harm in viewing them through the lens of then and now. The landscape has undergone significant transformations. Yet, when we discuss culture, collective welfare (samashiti), and prosperity (samruddhi), it’s essential to assess whether our progress aligns with these values. If we were to evaluate this in the context of theatre and the film industry, very few individuals could contribute as meaningfully to the discussion as Makarand Ji and Bharat Ji.

Now, how do we relate these decades of artistic exploration and achievements to culture? Our theme today is Sanskruti, Samashti, and

Samruddhi—culture, society, and prosperity. Much has changed in this regard. In earlier times, the concept of plays and performances had a different form of existence. Drama, music, and dance often emerged through the efforts of a single person—be it a storyteller, a kirtankar, or a traditional performer. These individuals would travel from village to village, combining literature, music, dance, and drama into one seamless narrative. That era has transformed, and we are all witnesses to the evolution of art today.

I have observed the changes between the past and the present, and now, with another esteemed speaker joining this discussion, we are further connected to today's era. As a result, the topic of past versus present has become even more focused and relevant, which I truly feel in my heart.

My question to all three of you is this: in the work you do today in the creative field—be it in the theatre industry or the film industry—how do you think this field contributes to connecting and aligning with our culture (sanskriti)? What methods or approaches are being employed to strengthen this connection?



### Address by Shri Makarand Deshpande

Namaskar!

**E**ssentially, I've come to realize what it means to be born and to live in this world. It's as though silence and stillness contain the essence of life, where emotions are diminished through practices, which we refer to as sanskar (values or virtues). And the way we live those values becomes our sanskriti (culture). So, when sanskriti exists, it shapes us. For instance, if someone becomes an artist, it feels predestined—as if the

reason for their existence is to express themselves through art. I never consciously decided to become an artist. It wasn't a dream or even a premonition. I feel that sanskriti lessened my internal chaos and made me an artist. When I reflect on my journey, it seems clear that art has a unique role to play. Life always throws challenges at us, and sometimes, we feel overwhelmed. But art pulls us back, reminding us of what lies within. Even suffering becomes a rasa (emotion) through art—it binds us to the essence of life. That's why I feel that because of sanskriti, I am Makarand Deshpande. And because I am Makarand Deshpande, I exist in this nation, in this world.

Despite the advancements in technology and external influences over centuries, the essence of sanskriti has endured. It has weathered invasions and challenges, yet it remains deeply ingrained. So when we ask if art contributes to prosperity, it's important to distinguish between the material and the intangible. Material prosperity is visible—it's quantifiable and measurable. But sanskriti connects to something deeper. It's tied to the subtle aspects of existence: sukshma sharir (subtle body), bhav sharir (emotional body), atma sharir (soul body), buddhi sharir (intellectual body), and nirman sharir (creative body). When you delve into these aspects, sanskriti is what truly binds them together, and art is the medium through which we navigate these dimensions. Art is not merely an expression; it is a journey inward, into these interconnected layers of existence. That's where the true essence of sanskriti and art resides.

In Western culture, the Vidushak is typically a gesture, a clown, or a joker whose primary role is to entertain through humour. Sometimes, they may pose a question to the king, which leads to the unfolding of a narrative or a play. However, the ultimate tone of these stories often ends in tragedy. In our culture, the Vidushak has a deeper and more meaningful role. Here, the concept of Bharatvakya is central. What is Bharatvakya? It is the concluding statement of a play—the ultimate truth or message that ties the narrative together and elevates it to a spiritual or philosophical level.

The Vidushak in Indian culture isn't merely a source of humour but a character who provokes thought, inspires introspection, and leads the audience towards understanding a larger truth. This is where our cultural depth sets us apart. Through such

nuances, our art serves as a medium to explore profound ideas and connect with the essence of sanskruti.

Festivals in our culture align with this perspective. They provide an opportunity to transcend sadness, humiliation, and ego. Festivals remind us to celebrate life and acknowledge a higher power—God. They act as a cultural reset, allowing us to forget our worries and embrace collective joy.

In my family, worship is a tradition that embodies giving and openness. The doors are always open, and meals are always shared. Guests, whether known or unknown, are welcomed as a part of this cultural practice. This way of living has been deeply ingrained, reflecting a sense of community and humility.

My parents never dictated my path, allowing me the freedom to find my way. This has taught me that life is a mix of activity and inactivity. We are employed only momentarily, while much of life involves waiting or introspection. The ability to embrace this balance is a cultural and spiritual strength. The periods of “unemployment” allow us to reflect, grow, and prepare for the next phase of purpose.

Spirituality, as I understand, it is about making life auspicious. It's about maintaining cleanliness—not just of our surroundings but also of our culture and thoughts. This repeated effort to purify and align ourselves with higher values is what defines spirituality for me. It's less about rituals and more about cultivating a harmonious mind.

Even though we engage in visible, tangible work—be it in the arts or elsewhere—true fulfillment comes from the integration of body, mind, and spirit. This awareness, this alignment, is what makes life meaningful. It is a fortune to experience and cultivate this harmony.

**Moderator:** Wonderful. And as you said, For example, if a friend who is with me is a zero, then I have to write my one behind him. I have to do this. So there will be 10 of those zeros. And if I take that zero with me, not just one, but if I take a few zeros with me, then the more zeros I have in front of my one, the more my value will increase. This is friendship. That's why this friendship is important.

This is absolutely true. Bharat Ji, in this context, your journey towards this culture, because people reach you openly, and they reach you in a different way, and they take you to the current topic, then you give them a message through that. A good lesson, for those who haven't understood this incident, they don't know why it happened in a different way, but they should be attracted to it, and they should know that people are in great need these days.

The work of bringing them to the ground or to the vehicle happens mostly through your speech.



### Address by Shri Bharat Dabholkar

So, this is a kind of cultural exchange. There is a very good thing in our Hindu religion, that if you say mama, you don't have to speak further. When we touch each other and say mama, we think that we are thinking. Because we both are two-headed people. Not only this, in the last 30 years, I have directed and acted in 33 plays. Makarand directs 33 plays in a month. So, this is a big surprise for us.

In my opinion, the highest level of culture is spiritualism. The rest is social traditions, social customs, religious performances. I don't think culture has anything to do with it. That's my opinion. When I act in a play, I'm in advertising, that's a profession for me.

When we take money for it, it becomes a commercial activity. Then, rather than culture, commerce becomes more important. No producer

tells us to do a good play. It doesn't matter if people don't watch it. We have to do something good. We haven't met anyone who has done a good play or a good movie. We have to do something good. We don't want to earn money from it. I haven't met anyone like that. Everyone says, we do it, we invest money.

We need to make a profit. So, in my opinion, in the field of commercial entertainment, I don't think it's related to culture. This is my personal view.



### Address by Smt. Anusha Srinivasan Iyer

I want to share something very simple. Imagine if I gave everyone in this room a pot, wrote Sanskrit on it, placed a hammer beside it, and said, "Break it, and I'll give you 10,000 rupees." Would anyone break it? No, because everyone values Sanskrit deeply.

We once organized a forum on the economics of art, theatre, and film. For example, we could invite two Tutari players or two Nashik Dhol players and pay them 20,000 rupees. When the Tutariwalas (Tutari players) and Nashik Dhol players arrived, we gave them an opportunity to showcase their art.

Think about this: if the song Aali Apsara from Bajirao Mastani didn't have Chandanshive's contribution, it wouldn't have been the same. His name is in the top five credits for that reason. Why? Because we rarely recognize or encourage folk art. We talk about it, but we don't act on it. Even if a folk artist were to sit here, few would recognize them. That's the problem—we need to honor our folk artists.

The essence of true music, true dance, and true song lies within us, in our roots. Bharat may have the face of a Shah Rukh Khan, but the soul—the folk musician—is playing in the background, unrecognized.

A single live artist paid 5,000 rupees can make a significant difference. It's like this: if there are 500 starfish stranded on a beach and you save just one, someone might ask, "Why bother? It doesn't make a difference." But to that one starfish, it makes all the difference. That's the impact we can have. One by one, you make the ocean. The ocean doesn't come together. Count it. And at one time, when you give back, then it makes a big difference. Then everything falls in place.

If you put a photograph in a corner, under any banyan tree, we become God. Our culture gives us the opportunity to worship every person. The Mughals came, so many people came, Indian culture took over, but we didn't all become Muslims. Our culture still holds us there. And it is time that we give the culture back what we got. And when we do that, it makes a lot of difference, and there is no need to do anything big for it.

## DISCUSSION

**Moderator:** In previous session we had said that culture is based on words and actions but in second session there was a mention that our culture is shown to people through our attitude. And I feel that even if you don't agree with this, the art forms that you have created today, they are all present here. And you haven't seen any lack of culture in it, even if you have taken money from it. But it is natural for you to not go beyond the boundaries of your culture. This is the culture.

**Makrand Deshpande:** See, when we say that art is self-realisation, it is also a popular religion. There was a period when the music industry and film industry were borrowed. Now the question is about the same thing, that can you? Shahrukh was part of Swades. Now the film where he is Swades became deeply rooted. So that means the culture is close to you.

We can shake hands and talk to each other, but in western culture, we don't like this. In our culture, even today, we go home, wash our feet, go inside the house, wash our hands, this has become common in COVID, but we really go inside, this has been in our culture.



**Moderator:** Absolutely true. Now, from the point of view of culture, we take the society together and go towards development. Now, this is again an explanation of development. So, in the beginning, let us think that development means physical, intellectual, spiritual development of all these subjects. And then, we come to the subject of wealth. So, is our culture developed with all these qualities through art?

**Anusha Srinivasan Iyyer:** If we give a chance to art and folk traditions, it will enrich our lives. For instance, songs like Bumro Bumro or the beautiful folk-inspired song Sasural Genda Phool from Delhi 6 have left a lasting impact. In fact, the song's popularity was so immense that they even named a TV show after it.

In the past, why were our old songs so memorable? Because they had depth and power that made us remember them for generations. Today, we often can't recall more than the hook line of a song, as they lack the same emotional strength. If we want to revive that essence, we need to return to folk music. Unfortunately, many folk instruments are vanishing in our country, and we are losing that rich heritage.

Music and dance have the power to evoke deep emotions within us. Take Hema Malini, for instance. If you invite her for an event, she might charge Rs. 20 lakhs for an appearance. But if you ask her to perform for Maa Durga, she won't even talk

about money. Why? Because that is culture. This cultural spirit must be integrated into our films—not as a replacement for mainstream stars but as a complement that enhances the storytelling and emotional connection.

**Bhushan Kulkarni (Audience):** Namaskar. My name is Bhushan Kulkarni. Makrand Ji, my question is for you.

In the last few years, we have seen, like in COVID, people were watching a lot of Ramayana and Mahabharata. After that, a lot of culturally driven movies like Kantara, Brahmastra, Kalki, a lot of such movies are coming. So do you feel that the current content, people are more driven towards, resonating towards culturally driven content now? And why?

**Makrand Deshpande:** During COVID, I think it was valid because I experienced it myself—we didn't even understand what hit us. Suddenly, they announced, "You can't go out for 21 days." Being confined, a person naturally turns inward.

You mentioned if people are drawn to movies like Kantara now. There's a wave. In every era, there's a man of the age—a thinker, a scholar, or a creator who resonates with the people of that time. In these times, we revisit the gods and their stories with new perspectives, finding assurance and meaning in them.

Why do people connect with movies like Kantara? It's because people are drawn to mystery. Mystery intrigues us, and when we are intrigued by mystery, we naturally become more spiritual or religious. This wave of interest in such stories is undeniable. However, this might lead people to say, 'Now let's create something like Ramayana or Mahabharata.' But before we do, we must ask: do we truly understand these stories? Do we understand who Ram really was, why he went to pluck the skin of a tree or a deer? Do we comprehend Krishna's essence, including his last moments? Until we grasp these deeper meanings, our understanding remains incomplete.

**Dr. Uma Rayleigh (Audience):** Hello. I am Dr. Uma Rayleigh, Bharatanatyam dancer. The situation of classical dance is similar to the one we discussed of classical music. But I feel that reinterpreting is very important. And now, not just the three of us, but I feel that the art of being creative is little different.

**Bharat Dabholkar:** This is what's wrong with the entire system—the question of whether culture is considered your wealth or whether it is tied to economics. That is the issue. When we talk about something good, like a Bharatanatyam dancer performing beautifully, we must ask: will that dancer draw the same crowd as a popular bar dancer or a celebrity performing the same style?

My point is this unless we align our intent with

promoting what is inherently good, this gap between sanskriti and economics will remain. We all hold the responsibility for preserving and promoting our cultural values. For instance, in my Marathi-medium school, we had an annual Bhagavad Gita exam. We were taught a variety of subjects in school, yet this focus on cultural grounding was integral.

I'm not against spreading cultural values. What I'm against is the perspective people have. A good Bharatanatyam dancer might not draw a large audience, but if Hema Malini performs Bharatanatyam, she will. And the crowd isn't coming for the art—they're coming to see Hema Malini. This is the problem.

The value of the art itself diminishes in the face of fame. If someone else were to perform the same dance with equal or even greater skill, they wouldn't receive the same audience or appreciation. That's the issue I see. It's not about the art—it's about the face attached to it.

**Suhas Joshi (Audience):** I'm Suhas Joshi. I have a question for you. You mentioned culture. In theatres, people tend to go less. Actually, when a play is going on in a theatre, half the seats are not even filled. So, how do we change the culture of the play?

**Anusha Srinivasan Iyyer:** That's the problem. There's no finance for the plays. I'll give one example. Tata Theatre, NCPA, which is supposed to promote



theatre, they charge Rs. 3 lakhs per one session. And the Bhava Theatre, I believe, charges them Rs. 5 lakhs per session. How can a good theatre afford that? How can a good Marathi play or a good Hindi play afford that?

You have to do foreign plays. For example, Mamma Mia in Nita Ambani Centre. Mamma Mia runs for 15 days. Why can't we do a play here? Because we can't afford. My producers can't afford Rs. 3.5 lakhs. Again, the cost of the artists, the cost of the set, it's unaffordable. Why don't we get good things in the society? Because there's an economic barrier to this.

**Makrand Deshpande:** Certainly, a different answer can be given, and I appreciate Suhas Joshi's perspective. Culture in Maharashtra, for instance, has deeply integrated theatre as part of its identity. Watching plays has become a tradition. Whether it's the 11 a.m. show or even a late 9 p.m. performance, people consistently show up.

I remember noticing during Ganesh Chaturthi how cultural programs were an integral part of the celebrations. Every evening, after the puja, there would be a performance—devotional songs one day, Bharatanatyam the next, followed by discussions or plays. It was a continuous cultural feast. Sadly, such practices are diminishing now.

Performing arts may face challenges, but their spirit persists. For instance, bringing in someone like Hema Malini might raise ticket prices, but it also highlights the enduring allure of live performance. This brings me to another example. You've probably heard of Murari Bapu and his Ram Katha or Ramcharitmanas. Evenings filled with storytelling programs like these draw massive crowds.

Theatre remains a unique medium that allows us to explore profound ideas and connect deeply with audiences in ways no other art form can replicate.

**Moderator:** In this regard, I would like to add one thing. As you said, things change according to the times. When television came, everyone was afraid that the radio would be completely extinct. But even after 30-40 years, the radio is still alive. And people still talk about it.

So the point is to say that some waves come in such a way that for a short period of time, they fill that place with water, but in a short period of time, that wave goes back into the sea, and you see the original place again with the help of light.

**Bharat Dabholkar:** There is another reason for the radio. The radio is a passive medium. My father used to put on the radio at 6 in the morning. My mother used to eat, I used to study, my father used to work. It used to go on till evening.

Television is an active medium. You have to give up everything else and watch what the program is happening. Radio is passive but you never have to concentrate on that. You can keep doing your thing, and passively, it hits you.

## Session 3 Agricultural Economics



### Address by Dr Gajanan Dange

**M**any people present here, whether directly or indirectly, have a connection with agriculture. However, since the number of people directly involved in farming is relatively low, delving into this subject becomes a challenge in itself—a test of our understanding and ability to connect with its nuances. First and foremost, I offer my respects to the honorable leaders for bringing this significant topic into focus. Slowly but steadily, this subject will gain attention across the nation and become a part of the broader discourse.

We all recognize the unique character of Indian society—it neither accepts change abruptly nor rejects it outright. It has its own rhythm, its own pace, and it moves forward in a balanced and measured manner. This inherent rhythm defines our approach to progress and adaptation. This subject, which had been somewhat overlooked in the past few years, is now being brought back

into focus, thanks to the tireless efforts of our honorable leaders. It is regaining its rightful place as a matter of priority and importance.

For many years, we were taught that India is an agrarian country. However, what we were taught was only half the truth—deliberately so. The complete truth is that India is a country based on agriculture, cow protection, and trade. This full statement reflects the true identity of our nation. It is crucial for us to understand this in its entirety to truly appreciate the depth of our cultural and economic foundations. We were capable of everything—trade, efficient agriculture, and value addition. This is why, until the 17th century, India had the highest GDP in the world. Over time, this scenario changed. When we think about Indian agriculture today, a clear picture emerges before us: What is the true essence and nature of Indian agriculture?

Understanding this helps us recognize not only its historical importance but also the potential it holds for shaping our economy and society in the modern era. This reflection is crucial to re-establishing the role of agriculture as a cornerstone of India's prosperity. The nature of Indian agriculture is such that around 75-80% of farmers in India are small-scale farmers.

Understanding this helps reduce the confusion and unrealistic comparisons we often make with

other countries. Whether it's competing with other nations or aligning with their policies, keeping the unique structure of our agricultural sector in mind ensures that our strategies are grounded in reality and tailored to our needs. India is a country where 75-80% of the population comprises small and marginal farmers. These are farmers with holdings of 2, 2.5, or 3 acres of land. Only a small proportion of farmers own 5-7 acres of land, and an even smaller number, very few, have 10 acres or more.

Understanding this helps us frame our agricultural policies and initiatives in a way that truly supports the majority of our farmers. When discussing Indian agriculture, there are some key characteristics to consider: dependence on rain-fed agriculture—even today, 60% of Indian farmers rely on rainfall for their agriculture; small farmers as guardians of food security— the small and marginal farmers, who form the majority, are the ones sustaining India's food security and ensuring internal stability.

If we understand this image clearly, it sheds light on our journey—from being a prosperous agricultural nation in the past to the challenges we face today. The British systematically shut down small-scale industries in villages, while larger industries were established through centralized methods.

This process significantly impacted Indian agriculture, and today, we find ourselves at a crossroads. Across the country, in almost every



village, there is a common sentiment among farmers: 'I want my child to get a job now. That's enough. We've done our share of farming; our children won't farm anymore.' Even within villages, this sentiment is evident. When it comes to arranging a marriage for a daughter, the top priority often becomes whether the prospective groom has a job outside the village. Families hesitate to marry their daughters into farming households because of the uncertainty and challenges faced by farmers today. When we meet people from different regions, the prevailing atmosphere in agriculture appears bleak. There is a widespread sense of disappointment and discouragement in the farming community. This stark reality forces us to question: What has led to this state of affairs in Indian agriculture?

From a vibrant and self-sustaining system, agriculture has now become a source of despair. This calls for deep introspection and action to address the systemic issues and restore pride and viability to farming as a livelihood. This sense of despair among farmers has reached a critical point where many feel utterly trapped, as if their individual efforts cannot bring them out of this situation. This leads to a desperate search for solutions, often in multiple directions, but with limited success.

In the past few decades, modern agriculture practices have introduced new challenges under the banner of innovation. What's interesting is that many solutions implemented 20 years ago to

address pressing issues at the time are now giving rise to entirely new problems. When we provide solutions to societal problems, we must carefully consider whether these solutions will inadvertently create new challenges in the future. For instance, the Green Revolution was introduced to address the urgent need for food security in India. It was undoubtedly necessary and played a pivotal role in overcoming a crisis. However, over the years, its long-term consequences have begun to emerge, such as soil degradation, water scarcity, and dependency on chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

The challenge now is to devise solutions that not only address immediate issues but also ensure sustainability for future generations. The urgency to reflect on this and take proactive steps cannot be overstated.

Scientists from ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) have published a Natural Resource Index for India, presenting the situation graphically. The graph reveals that 81 districts in India have reached a critical point where the natural resource index is alarmingly low. A declining natural resource index has a direct impact on the livelihoods of the people in these regions. As natural resources deplete, people are compelled to migrate to urban areas in search of better opportunities. This mass migration is not just an economic challenge but also a cultural one, as it disrupts the socio-economic fabric of villages and contributes to urban overcrowding. It's time to address these issues holistically, ensuring that solutions prioritize sustainability, soil health, and the well-being of rural communities.



Recently, ISRO released a study highlighting the alarming rate at which soil is eroding in India. Tonnes of topsoil are being washed away annually, taking with it tons and tons of essential nutrients. This has a cascading impact. Look at clinics today compared to a decade ago—there's a marked increase in patients suffering from various deficiencies. The realization is clear now: soil health, plant health, animal health, and human health are all interconnected. But with soil health in such a dire state, the entire agricultural system of India is struggling. This disproportionately affects small farmers who are already vulnerable.

There was a time when a study revealed that India's per capita milk availability was alarmingly low. In response, policymakers launched a mission to increase milk production. Committees were formed, and decisions were made to provide milk to the entire country. At this juncture, there were two paths available: 1. Upgrading indigenous cow breeds, which would have taken about 14 years. 2. Crossbreeding with foreign breeds, which promised quicker results. We chose the second path. Foreign breeds like Holstein-Friesian and Jersey cows were introduced via crossbreeding programs. Alongside, a castration program for native bulls was implemented, effectively sidelining indigenous breeds. This led to the large-scale adoption of foreign semen technology for crossbreeding throughout the country. The White Revolution followed. Milk reached every household, fulfilling the short-term goal of increasing milk production. But years later, research on A1 and A2 milk raised questions about the long-term health implications of this approach. We realized that the original A2 milk—considered healthier—is primarily produced by India's indigenous cow breeds. Today, the world acknowledges that these indigenous breeds are unique to India. However, due to past decisions, many of these native breeds are now at risk of extinction.

**This serves as a stark reminder:** while immediate results may seem beneficial, long-term strategies require careful consideration. The decisions we make today must be rooted in sustainability and a deep understanding of their far-reaching consequences. And so, the central government had to introduce the Gokul Mission to address this issue—a complete U-turn in India's agricultural policy.

This exemplifies how critical it is to make thoughtful and informed policy decisions, especially at such important crossroads. The topic we are discussing



today—how to develop agricultural economics based on cultural values—is incredibly significant. A culturally-rooted agricultural economic system is not just relevant but will likely become an essential topic of discussion for every household in the near future.

When we talk about agriculture, for instance, India has never viewed it as merely a commercial activity. Agriculture is a complete way of life—an integrated system that sustains not just individuals but the entire community. This holistic perspective is what sets India apart, and it is crucial to revive and apply it to today's agricultural and economic policies. By doing so, we can ensure sustainable progress that aligns with our cultural and environmental ethos.

When people were living in the most underdeveloped conditions, around 10,000 years ago, the Krushi Parashar text was written in India. It's hard to imagine today, but visionaries like Dr. Nene visited the Krishi Tulya library, retrieved a copy, and even added modern agricultural commentary to it. This ancient text, viewed through the lens of modern agriculture, remains a remarkable piece of work.

From that time onward, India has meticulously developed its agricultural framework, and as a result, Indian culture is widely recognized as an agriculture-based culture—an Aaranyak culture rooted in forests and agriculture. If we are to solve contemporary agricultural challenges, it is imperative to restore cultural values not just in agriculture but across economics, development, and at every societal level. Globally, the problems



are severe, and many are grappling with solutions, often looking toward India for guidance. This puts a great responsibility on us to reintroduce cultural morals as a foundation not just in agriculture but in the broader development sector.

**Key Value for Change:** Decentralization: The primary value we must emphasize is decentralization. Across all aspects of life, decentralization needs to be restored. One of the most significant failings of India's development path has been our over-reliance on centralization. This centralization has eroded our traditional, decentralized flavors of development. For instance: Across India, we shifted to a rice and wheat pattern, ignoring the regional diversity in food production and dietary habits. The result? Traditional food systems were abandoned, and rice-wheat monocultures dominated our agricultural landscape.

**Reintroducing Shri Anna (Millets):** Now, as a corrective measure, we are talking about Shri Anna (millets)—a term reintroduced in this year's Indian budget by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, complete with special provisions. Why? Because it's now evident that the rice-wheat pattern is a water-intensive system, unsustainable in the long run. Previously, millets were referred to as "Bharad Dhanya"—a term so undervalued that it reflected societal disregard for these crops. Millets were relegated to a secondary status. Today, with a modern rebranding and increasing awareness, millets have found their way into shopping malls and in discussions about sustainability.

India's journey from Sujalam Sufalam to water crises highlights the urgent need to rethink development. If we act with vision, rooted in cultural wisdom, we can restore not just India's agricultural vitality but its global leadership in sustainable development. We must i) decentralise in every sector; ii) reconnect with our traditional crops and food systems, like millets, that are not just sustainable but also culturally integral and iii) base our policies on cultural values, ensuring they reflect our ancient wisdom while addressing modern needs.

When cotton is grown on one lakh hectares, traditional crops like jowar (sorghum), bajri (pearl millet), moong (green gram), urad (black gram), and maize are displaced. These crops provided essential by-products, such as fodder for cattle. With the disappearance of these crops, the fodder supply also vanished. This shortage, in turn, severely impacted the village cattle population, as there was nothing left to feed them. The once-thriving interconnected system of crops, livestock, and local resources was disrupted, leading to cascading challenges. This cycle illustrates how a short-sighted focus on cash crops can have far-reaching consequences, depleting local resources and increasing dependency on costly external inputs. As a result, the very foundation of sustainable agriculture is eroded, creating long-term challenges for farmers and the agricultural ecosystem.

In the interim, we visited several locations across Maharashtra. Many villages were in such a state that they no longer had a single pair of bullocks left. Farmers had to celebrate Pola (a festival that honors cattle) using mini tractors. This shift, while seemingly practical for mechanized farming, starkly highlighted the loss of traditional agricultural practices and the critical role livestock once played in rural life.

If sustainability is to be maintained, then faith rooted in our cultural values becomes essential. Our sages and seers had the foresight to recognize the potential misuse of resources. To prevent this, they linked all resources with a sense of reverence. Thus, terms like Matrabhumi (Mother Earth) and Prithvi Putra (Sons of the Soil) were coined. The idea was to view Earth as a mother, not as a commodity. When you call her "land," you can exploit her—turn her into a dumping ground. But when you call her "mother," exploitation becomes unthinkable. Similarly, rivers were referred to as Lokmata (Mother of the People), and cows as

Gomata (Mother Cow). This faith-based approach fostered a highly scientific way of interacting with resources. If we are to halt exploitation, we must embrace these cultural values that inherently bind resources with respect and reverence. Restoring these values is the essence of a cultural economy.

The global agricultural community now acknowledges that practices like 24/7 intensive cropping patterns and multiple cropping systems have led to adverse effects such as soil fatigue. Centuries ago, Indian sages had already established the principle that the land requires rest—a concept deeply rooted in Indian agricultural wisdom. They explained this through a simple yet profound cultural analogy: the land is feminine in nature. Just as a woman experiences menstruation, the land too undergoes a similar natural cycle.

An excellent example of this understanding is the Rajoparva Utsav in Odisha, celebrated just two months ago. This festival commemorates the “menstruation of the Earth” and underscores the principle of giving the land rest. The cultural reverence during these four days extends to such an extent that people refrain from even stepping on the land wearing footwear. This is not just tradition but a deeply scientific approach camouflaged in cultural faith. Similar festivals are celebrated across India: the Ambuvachi Utsav in Assam, the Radhni-Snapn Utsav in Kashmir, and the Tripunithura Festival in Kerala. All these events are intrinsically linked to the “menstruation of the Earth,” highlighting the deep connection between traditional celebrations and ecological sustainability.

The agricultural festival isn't merely about rituals but a reminder to let the land rest, nourish it with organic matter like manure and ghee, and prepare it for the next cycle. However, the modern agriculture system, with its intensive practices and reliance on chemical fertilizers, has dismissed these core principles. It prioritizes yield over sustainability, and as a result, the balance has been disrupted. By stripping these essential components from farming, we are left chasing “green” initiatives that often lack depth and authenticity. True sustainability cannot be achieved with superficial measures like using buzzwords or temporary fixes. The global efforts to implement such practices have largely failed.

Across the country, this question is often raised: Are we taking our nation backward? If so, what will happen to our food security? With such a

vast population, how will we provide food to billions of people? Are we rushing into this without preparation?

The answer lies in understanding that change doesn't happen overnight. Nobody is advocating for an abrupt shift tomorrow. These transitions need to happen gradually, with careful planning and awareness. The first step is to establish a framework that supports the desired changes. This framework must gain acceptance and credibility, starting with our educators and policy-makers. Once they are convinced and engaged, the changes can be incorporated into curriculum and policy discussions. Beyond academic circles, the message must reach millions of people through festivals, traditions, and cultural practices that align with our agricultural goals. Change at this scale requires a deep-rooted approach, one that connects with people at every level of society.

We are not in a rush, but as visionaries like Dadashreeji emphasize, we are at a critical juncture. The situation in India, as reflected in numerous alarming reports, demands urgent attention. Our generation has the responsibility to prepare a comprehensive framework for the future. This framework must be grounded in value-based principles, drawing on our cultural heritage and moral values. By reviving these cultural principles and aligning them with modern challenges, we can build a robust, culturally rooted economy that is capable of addressing the needs of our vast population while preserving the essence of our heritage. This is not just an opportunity—it is an urgent necessity.

Dhan is not limited to money but includes all resources essential for a fulfilling life. It recognizes health, longevity, natural resources, and societal balance as the true wealth. This reflects the duty-based foundation of Indian culture, as envisioned by our sages. It's a call to action, reminding us that rights come after duties. Unlike the right-based societies of the West, which emphasize individual entitlements (rights for dogs, cats, children, the elderly, etc.), Indian society was designed to revolve around kartavya (duties). This is a value-based framework, where prosperity flows naturally when duties are fulfilled.

The Bhumi Sukta reveres the earth, acknowledging it as the source of all sustenance. When we take from the earth—be it grains, minerals, or any other resources—the Bhumi Sukta reminds us of our duty: to replenish what we take and restore the

balance before exploiting it further. It's a deeply scientific and sustainable principle woven into our culture, serving as a vision document for the world.

These ancient scriptures and declarations are not just hymns; they are guiding frameworks for life, governance, and economics. Gradually, we need to incorporate them into academic curriculum and develop study modules based on their principles. These modules can then serve as the foundation for policies and practical strategies, ensuring the balanced integration of traditional values and modern innovations.

The revival of duty-based economics, rooted in cultural values like those outlined in the Shree Sukta and Bhumi Sukta, is essential. By understanding and implementing these values in our education, policies, and actions, we can move toward a future that is sustainable, ethical, and prosperous. This transformation will require thoughtful planning and a holistic understanding of our traditions, blending ancient wisdom with modern practices.

Last year, I attended a PMO meeting discussing India's edible oil scenario. You would be surprised to know the figures: India imported Rs. 75,000 crores worth of edible oil last year. Currently, 60% of India's edible oil requirements are met through imports, and most of it is blended oils like palm oil and soybean oil, which are not suitable for our health. According to agro-ecological zones, we should consume oils and foods that are naturally suitable for our bodies and climate. This is not a new idea—'From the region, for the region' is a concept India has followed for centuries. Locally grown, fresh food is ideal for our health.

This brings us to the critical need to revise our policies and re-establish traditional practices. For all the scientists and agricultural thinkers here, we need a complete U-turn in four areas related to Indian agriculture: Seeds, Breeds, Tools, Techniques. These four aspects are crucial to reshaping India's agricultural policies. This is not optional; it is imperative for our survival. If we delay, nature will force this change upon us, just as we witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic was a reminder from nature about the consequences of unsustainable practices.

Keeping the small farmers in focus, we need to address critical aspects and implement changes even in small areas. This includes rethinking our land use patterns, developing a new farmer-centric

seed system, and revisiting our approach to mechanization in agriculture. While modernization is necessary, blind adoption of policies can lead to disastrous outcomes. Take the example of mechanization. The current trend equates mechanization with tractors, which is a problematic approach.

As cities expand, several concerning terms have emerged in agriculture, one of which is market-driven agriculture. While it sounds appealing at first glance, the reality is quite different. For instance, during a visit to a village, I asked a farmer what it meant. He replied, "Jo bikega, vohi ugayenge" (We'll grow only what sells). I then asked, "And what if it's unsuitable for your soil?" He responded, "We don't think that far. We just grow what the market demands." This disconnect from the land's needs shows a lack of understanding and foresight. Concepts like market-driven agriculture need a deeper examination.

At the core of Indian economics lies the principle of Aparigraha (non-possession or minimalism). This foundational value must guide our approach to economics and agriculture. We must revisit and incorporate Aparigraha into our daily practices. For instance: Rethinking transactions, that is, Indian traditions emphasize balance and respect in daily transactions, even when consuming food; sacred practices in agriculture that is, before consuming food, our ancestors taught us to offer it to the Agni (fire) as a ritual, to ensure gratitude and respect for the elements that sustain us. It wasn't merely a tradition—it was sustainability in action, deeply rooted in cultural values.

Today, as we aim to increase food production, let us ensure that we revisit and adopt these values in a modern context. This is how we can establish a culturally rooted and sustainable agricultural economy for the future.

Re-establishing our Cultural Foundation by revisiting these timeless practices: we can rebuild cultural values that form the core of our society and economics, this would not only enrich our personal lives but also guide a sustainable economic model.

Let's not merely look back with nostalgia but redefine and adapt these values to contemporary needs. These cultural values, when embedded into our systems, naturally give rise to economics driven by sustainability and equity.

Thank you.

## CONCLUDING SESSION



### Concluding Remarks by Shri Balasaheb Thorat

Member of Maharashtra Assembly - Guest of Honour

I come from a farmer's family and have personally worked in agriculture. My education has been well-balanced.

In 1999, when I first became a Minister and later again in 2004, Vilasrao Ji asked me, "Which portfolio would you like?" Since I had a close relationship with him, I responded, "I want the Agriculture Department and Water Conservation." Vilasrao Ji started laughing because no one usually asks for these portfolios. He even warned me, saying, "You are trapping yourself! No one voluntarily takes up this department." But I still insisted on taking the responsibility. I always felt that a farmer's son should, at least once in his life, become the agriculture minister. I held this position for six years—I completed my full five-year term and then continued for another one year.

It is true that agriculture is a highly complex and challenging subject, with many intricate aspects. The insights Dange Sir shared about agriculture are indeed thought-provoking. There may be differences in opinion, but one thing is certain—agriculture is a culture, and it must be preserved. A farmer often says, 'Farming is my duty,' and that is absolutely true.

Since independence, we have seen major changes in agriculture. There was a time when India's population was just 35 crore, around the 1960s-70s, and we had to import wheat from foreign countries.

When that agreement was signed, there was a collective sense of relief because people were desperate for food security. At one point, Lal Bahadur Shastri Ji even urged people to skip one meal a day to ensure food availability for everyone. That was the situation we faced back then.

In response to this crisis, we made several agricultural adaptations: hybrid crops, chemical fertilizers, pesticides. At that time, these measures were absolutely necessary. The primary goal was to feed the population twice a day—that was the biggest challenge of that era. Some of the senior people here might remember that there was a time when getting a single bottle of milk required a permit from the government. You had to visit the Secretariat, get the Minister's approval, and only then would you receive that one bottle of milk.

This was the state of affairs in India 70 years ago. Then came the era of hybrid cattle breeding. Foreign semen was imported and used to inseminate local cows, leading to a significant increase in milk production. This transformation took place over 25 years, from the 1970s to the mid-1990s. Within this period, we saw a massive shift—from struggling to get food to becoming self-sufficient in food production. Today, we have reached a point where India is self-reliant in food grains.

If agriculture has progressed so much, why are farmers still committing suicide? This question persists, regardless of who is in power or which political party governs. Even today, in Vidarbha and Marathwada, farmer suicides continue to be a tragic reality.

This raises a crucial point—what have we truly achieved? Despite all the advancements in agriculture, if the farmer himself is suffering, then we must reassess our progress. This is an undeniable reality. In every era, decisions were made according to the needs of that time. However, even today, the core issue remains unresolved—ensuring the well-being of our farmers.

That is why I appreciate the vision of Dadashreeji and MaitriBodh Parivaar—the idea that our culture must be preserved while also advancing our economic growth. This concept is something I truly resonate with. At the same time, we must also focus on development—economic growth, prosperity, and ensuring the well-being of our people. A truly successful society is one where citizens are happy, financially secure, and content.

Our Constitution has provided us with a structured democracy, with a ruling party and an opposition—both have their roles to play. Having differences in opinion is part of this democratic process, and there is nothing wrong with that. These ideological differences exist within the framework of democracy. However, our ultimate goal must be clear—ensuring a better life for the last person in society while preserving our culture. This is what true governance and meaningful progress should look like.

One major issue that we must address is that despite having such a vast agricultural system, we are still spending thousands of crores on importing oilseeds and edible oils. This raises serious concerns: Why is this happening? Where is the gap? What needs to be investigated and improved? We have all the capabilities to produce enough and even generate surplus. However, if the farmer is still not happy, then we must ask why? As Mr. Rangaswamy mentioned, the overuse of chemical fertilizers and pesticides has exhausted the soil, reducing its natural fertility. This is absolutely true, and I do not deny it.

Moving forward, we must focus on two major aspects: How do we reduce production costs in agriculture? How do we improve soil health and sustainability?

If we examine closely, we will find that many agricultural problems stem from fundamental soil health issues. Instead of relying on chemical pesticides and fertilizers, we must shift towards organic and sustainable alternatives. There are numerous natural solutions available that can help restore soil health and increase productivity.

To achieve true agricultural progress, we need a reform-driven approach that prioritizes sustainable farming methods, cost-effective agricultural practices, and farmer-centric policies. If we correct the course now, we can redefine the future of agriculture—one that ensures both prosperity and sustainability for our farmers.

Another critical sector that requires reform is dairy farming. The milk industry is a multi-billion-dollar sector that will continue to grow. However, two key issues need urgent attention: reducing the cost of milk production, ensuring chemical-free milk. The economic disparity in milk pricing is another problem. If one liter of milk costs Rs. 7, many people can afford it, but low-income families still struggle to buy nutritious milk. Meanwhile, large-scale dairy farmers do not get fair prices for their milk.

The corporate sector's growing involvement in dairy farming has made it even more difficult for small farmers to survive. A government-backed dairy model in Maharashtra could be a solution, but it requires a structured policy and proper execution.

Many farmers are abandoning cattle because they cannot afford the high costs of fodder and maintenance. This has resulted in a rise in stray cows, which is becoming a serious issue. If proper steps are not taken, we may soon see cattle farming decline drastically. Farmers must be given financial incentives to continue raising cattle, and a structured plan should be implemented to preserve traditional dairy farming.

Many farmers are shifting towards cash crops as a survival strategy. Crops like Bharat Dhania have gained popularity, but the question remains—is this shift sustainable in the long run?

Current farming methods cannot be replaced overnight but if farmers continue chasing short-term gains, they might face bigger economic challenges in the future. Instead of abandoning food crops, we should create a balanced farming model that includes both staple crops and high-value cash crops.

India has one of the strongest agricultural sectors in the world, but the current farming model is not sustainable. Even today, many farmers struggle to earn a stable income despite producing essential commodities. The failure to modernize and restructure agriculture is a major reason for rural distress and farmer suicides. Some key areas that need urgent attention include: fair pricing mechanisms for farm produce, reducing input costs for farmers, encouraging natural and organic farming, providing better financial models for small-scale farmers, improving storage and distribution channels to prevent wastage.

The root cause of farmer suicides is not just financial debt—it is the lack of long-term security and sustainable agricultural practices. To build a strong and resilient agricultural sector, we need to: empower farmers with knowledge and technology, promote eco-friendly and chemical-free farming, create better financial support systems for farmers, integrate modern agricultural technology with traditional farming methods.

One of the biggest challenges for farmers today is price fluctuations in crops like onions. Every season, millions of farmers cultivate onions with

great effort. However, when the supply increases, the price crashes. Politicians may discuss onion pricing and government intervention, but the reality is that when the market becomes oversaturated, the price drops drastically. Unlike businesses that store goods until market conditions improve, farmers must sell immediately due to lack of proper storage facilities. Why don't we create a system where farmers get a fair price for their produce? Customers get access to fresh produce without harming farmers' profits? Instead, the current system exploits farmers by lowering their earnings. This is a serious issue that must be addressed through proper policies and economic strategies.

I also want to highlight some successful agricultural projects in our state: a former minister, at the age of 57, initiated large-scale agricultural reforms and was reappointed in 2009. A 100-acre polyhouse farm in Gulab is setting new benchmarks for agricultural productivity, export-oriented floriculture projects are flourishing, including rose farms that cater to international markets for events like Valentine's Day. These efforts show that modern agricultural techniques can generate high revenue if implemented correctly.

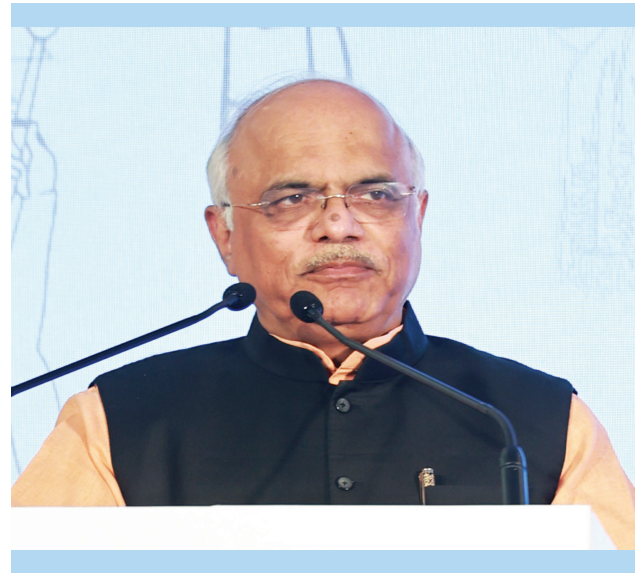
Economic growth must be accompanied by cultural preservation. Our traditions, values, and heritage define our identity. It is crucial to protect and uphold our culture while ensuring economic progress. Culture is not just about history; it is about humanity. Our cultural heritage should guide our development efforts. Agriculture, economy, and culture must be interconnected to create a sustainable and inclusive society.

When we visit different regions, we must respect their cultural identity. True progress happens when we embrace diversity and unity, beyond caste, religion, and sectarian differences.

I deeply appreciate the discussions we have had today. It is a privilege to engage with such knowledgeable individuals on critical topics related to agriculture, economy, and cultural preservation.

We must work towards a future where farmers are financially secure, economic policies support sustainable development, culture and tradition remain deeply rooted in society. Agriculture is the backbone of India, and ensuring farmer prosperity is the only way forward for a strong and self-sufficient nation.

With this, I conclude my speech. Thank you for your time and valuable discussions.



### Address by Shri Vinay Sahasrabudhe

Ex-Member of Parliament - Guest of Honour

Since this morning, the ongoing Cultural Economy Summit, which can be described as a pinnacle conference on cultural economics, has brought together esteemed individuals among us, including Shri Mitra Parna Ji and Shri Gopal Agarwal Ji, along with all other dignitaries whose speeches have been delivered here so far, as well as all representatives, brothers, and sisters present.

Under the vision and guidance of Maitreya Dadashreeji, this organization has been conducting a process of intellectual deliberation on this concept for the past few days and months.

The influence of economic culture is so profound that we often fail to recall the significance of cultural economy in today's times. The reality, however, is that the root cause of many of the world's issues lies within cultural beliefs and values.

Currently, there are two major conflicts ongoing in the world: one between Israel and Palestine, along with the Arab nations, and the other between Ukraine and Russia. The root cause of these conflicts is tied to the question of superiority: "Who is superior?" While connections are drawn to economic interests or territorial expansion, the fundamental issue at the core of these disputes remains the assertion of superiority — "Are you superior, or are we superior?"

Our Indian culture, guided by the principle of "Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti" (Truth is one but the wise call it by different names), adopts a universal

perspective in addressing such questions. From this worldview, it becomes evident that the true resolution to such conflicts lies within the values and teachings embedded in our culture.

When we talk about cultural economics today, three key points prominently come to the forefront: The cultural economics we are discussing is deeply rooted in Indian culture. How does the world perceive India? What is the image of Bharat in the global context? How do people perceive India? What is India's worldview, its philosophy, and its unique perspective on life? What defines India's approach to life and the world?

If we aim to effectively communicate these ideas to people and, through them, guide the world's cultural economy towards a specific direction of growth, what steps must we collectively take? These questions demand attention, and addressing them is essential to ensure that cultural economics becomes a driving force for global progress in the right direction.

Many people present India in a particular way, and we often observe that even Indians themselves contribute to such portrayals. It is important to note that no one claims that everything old is golden. The definition of our culture inherently spans from the past, through the present, to the future. This highlights that our culture represents a continuous journey—a seamless transition from the past, through the present, and towards the future. Thus, the foundational principles of our culture are both timelessly ancient (*chirpuratan*) and perpetually modern (*nitya nutan*). Our culture embraces evolution and relevance while staying rooted in its core values.

India should be seen as it truly is. Often, we observe that the global narrative about India tends to focus on its vibrant and colorful cultural patterns. This creates a fascination in many parts of the world with aspects such as Indian festivals, Indian weddings, and the natural beauty of India. However, the fascination stemming from such attractions does not necessarily lead to a proper understanding of India or the idea of India. Without achieving this proper understanding, it is difficult to make significant progress in the discourse on cultural economics.

Our philosophy of “*Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti*” not only provides a foundation for spiritual democracy in our country but also strengthens it. It is because of this spiritual democracy that our political democracy has been successful.

A significant point to consider, people are becoming increasingly isolated, and this sense of loneliness is weakening the essence of collectivism. The culture of togetherness and community, which is a cornerstone of human interaction, seems to be fading. In many countries around the world, there is a pervasive shadow of excessive or ultra-individualism, which has caused significant disruption. However, India has found a way to address this issue through its unique family system. In our system, while the individual is cared for, the family acts as a protective umbrella of collectivism, ensuring a balance between personal attention and communal harmony.

Despite having such a rich heritage, unless we proactively address these matters, we will not achieve the prominence we deserve in cultural economy. If we are discussing the cultural economy





of Maharashtra, it is impossible to move forward without speaking about Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. This year marks the 350th anniversary of Maharaj's coronation, making it even more significant to reflect on his legacy. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj established the institution of governance with unmatched prestige. He is often referred to as a "consummate ruler without personal indulgence," symbolizing selfless leadership and visionary governance. By drawing inspiration from Maharaj's values and administrative ideals, we can create a cultural and economic narrative that not only honors our heritage but also propels us forward on the global stage.

This is such a noble and elevated concept, and it is crucial that its significance takes root deeply within our society and is truly understood. By reflecting on the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and examining the forts, monuments, and memorials associated with him, we should approach them with a perspective that honors their historical and cultural importance. These memorials should not merely be seen as the responsibility of the state government or the Archaeological Survey of India. Instead, they must be regarded as living symbols of our society's vitality and cultural essence.

Today, in many places, people are actively participating in preserving the forts, the legacy of Shiv Chhatrapati, and the historical landmarks of Maharashtra, which are significant symbols of our heritage. It is imperative that we collectively take responsibility for safeguarding these cultural treasures. Whether it is the temples like Mahalaxmi, Tuljabhavani, or modern structures of knowledge

like the libraries and institutions we have built, they all hold immense cultural significance. This should prompt us to question our approach to preserving and cherishing such treasures. Are we truly valuing what has been handed down to us, or are we letting it slip away carelessly? This reflection is critical to ensure that we protect and nurture our cultural heritage for future generations.

Several places in Maharashtra, such as Panchavati, are connected to the epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata. We must consider these aspects deeply, as these epics are not merely great literary works; they are reflections of our living history and cultural essence.

Therefore, on one hand, we need to collectively honor and preserve all the historical landmarks associated with these epics. On the other hand, we must thoughtfully explore our rich cultural heritage and use it to drive our cultural economy forward. This approach, rooted in respecting our historical legacy and leveraging it for cultural and economic growth, is a direction we will need to embrace for the future. By doing so, we can ensure that our heritage becomes a source of inspiration and strength for generations to come.

The same can be said about the current scenario. Not long ago, the Marathi language was granted the status of a classical language (Abhijat Bhasha). However, if we grow indifferent to speaking it and feel the need to include two or three English or Hindi words in every couple of sentences because speaking English or Hindi is seen as prestigious, while speaking Marathi is perceived as rustic,

then we are failing our own language. Unless we overcome this mindset, no matter how many accolades are bestowed upon Marathi as a classical language, we will not be able to grant it the rightful place of honor it deserves.

Our culture and our soil are deeply interconnected. Speaking of agriculture, as Balasaheb mentioned, we have had great experts in water management and farming, such as Vilasrao Salunkhe. Once, in a personal conversation, he shared an insightful thought with me: “An apple a day keeps the doctor away” is meaningful in regions where apples are grown. However, “If you eat an apple a day in Mumbai, the doctor might visit you every day.” This anecdote emphasizes the importance of aligning our lives with our local environment, natural resources, and production systems. By staying rooted in the traditions and wisdom of our land, and understanding the context of our surroundings, we can shape a sustainable and meaningful way of living that is true to who we are.

If we want our solutions to be sustainable in the long term, we must preserve the Indianness of India. The wave of Americanization is spreading across the globe. If we are to counter this influence, our inspiration must come from our culture—a culture that is so vibrant and deeply rooted that, based on its strength, we can not only preserve our identity but also develop it further. This makes it imperative to think about cultural economy in today’s context. India’s identity and Bharatpan are under significant cultural attack. These attacks come in the form of cultural invasions and pressures rooted in the pursuit of prestige. To face these challenges, we

must first prepare ourselves with determination. The government, along with other societal elements, will need to take coordinated efforts to counter these influences. By drawing strength from our cultural heritage, we can ensure that India retains its unique identity and flourishes in harmony with its roots.

Shri Krishna says, “self-praise is also a form of symbolic self-destruction. So, instead of harming yourself, offer yourself a bit of self-praise. It will fulfill your vow and allow us to continue with our discussion.” The point here is that we often become so consumed by our limited perspectives, personal pride, and narrow interpretations of our individual identities that we fail to see the larger picture. We get trapped in the confines of our small circles, losing sight of the immense cultural wealth and civilizational treasures that we are fortunate to have inherited. If we could expand our vision and recognize the broader implications of our heritage, we would realize that the cultural economy has the potential to thrive without the need for extraordinary external efforts. Simply by appreciating and utilizing this vast cultural reservoir, we can set a strong foundation for growth. Krishna’s wisdom teaches us to rise above individual ego and align with the greater good. By adopting this expansive outlook, we can channel our civilizational assets into meaningful progress for cultural and economic enrichment.

You invited me here and listened to my thoughts and words with attention. I am truly grateful to you for this opportunity.

Thank You.





### Address by Shri Arvind Sawant

Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha - Guest of Honour

I offer my respects to Param Pujya Dadashreeji and feel truly fortunate to speak today in Mumbai before the devoted and intellectually grounded followers of his teachings.

Life itself offers experiences, and as the saying goes, ‘Anubhava vin dnyaan kothe’ (Knowledge comes only through experience). It is from these daily life experiences that wisdom emerges, and I continue to share whatever I gain from them. It all begins with the foundation laid by one’s family, then expands to society. From there, the richness of culture develops based on the field in which one operates.

This is where the essence of true culture lies. When we talk about the culture of Maharashtra or the nation, we must recognize the layers within it: the culture of different states, the unique cultures of various linguistic groups within those states, and even the diverse cultures within the same linguistic community, as it encompasses many social classes. Even if the language is the same, the culture within different social strata varies significantly. Understanding and embracing this diversity is what defines the depth of a civilization’s culture.

The word “sanskriti” is so profound and layered. What does it represent? Is it about religion? Thoughts? Practices? Duties? When we reflect on this deeply, we need to ask ourselves: where are we taking it? Whether it’s politics or any other field, where are we placing culture? It’s us who are placing it somewhere, and then we question,

“Where has it gone?” Isn’t it us who have put it there?

Even when we discuss culture, especially religious culture, as a nation, we still say, “Char charat ahe toh, tari devlat shodhto...” (If he is everywhere, why do you still search for him in temples?). It was saints like Gadge Maharaj who taught us to seek God within humanity, within ourselves, and within the actions that truly reflect divinity. Standing outside the temple, they asked, “Did you see Pandurang? What is Pandurang like? You couldn’t answer that, could you? We can describe colors, but we can’t describe Pandurang. We need to understand Pandurang, truly grasp his essence. And that’s why such thoughts keep arising in the mind: How did someone even conceive such profound ideas? It’s remarkable to think about. But today, much of it feels lost.

The certainty and rootedness of culture—the one that effortlessly manifests from birth—finds expression in our daily lives, in the way we conduct ourselves. It is this natural alignment of culture with our actions that we must strive to preserve and nurture. That conduct is different, isn’t it? We say “Prabhu Ram Chandra ki Jay!” and “Jai Shree Ram!” But do we truly live like Shree Ram? He was selfless—a Nirmohi Rajputra. I often use the term Nirmohi to describe him—a prince who was detached and obedient. Are we obedient? Do we



show the same respect to our parents that he did? He won the war in Lanka but did not demand to be crowned king. He fought the battle at Kishkindha but did not ask for Kishkindha's throne, either. Instead, he declared Sugreev as the king. Where is that Prabhu Ram Chandra in today's world? And where are we in comparison to him? This gap between the ideals of Shree Ram and our present actions calls for deep reflection. We must all think about our culture and ask ourselves—are we living up to the values and principles that define it?

Do we even realize how rich our culture is, particularly in the realm of theatre? Have we ever explored the depths of our heritage? You shouldn't have to wait for political timing to preserve your culture. The question is, how do we safeguard our culture? Shouldn't we aim to live as true humans, embracing the mantra of "Live and let live"? If it's only about "live" and not "let live," how will harmony prevail? This distinction needs to be understood.

What we see now is the reverse—the focus is moving from samashti to vyashti. The institution of family is weakening, and individualism is on the rise. Families are becoming fragmented and disconnected, and we are unsure what legacy we are leaving for the next generation. We must acknowledge our heritage, traditions, and pride in our religion. It's time to think beyond ourselves, nurture the collective spirit, and uphold the principles that bind us together as a society.

Sanatan has room for reform—this is something that brings me great joy. Other religions may or may not embrace reform, but our faith does. We were the ones who abolished practices like shaving a widow's head, sati, and caste-based oppression. These reforms weren't divinely ordained; they happened because of the efforts of visionaries like Prabodhankar Thackeray and others who took to the streets, demanding change.

Even today, I wonder if casteism has truly left us. I am a proud Shiv Sainik, and I take immense pride in it. But Shiv Sena's ethos, as envisioned by our leader, never revolved around caste. He taught us to rise above caste and embrace humanity. Still, I feel that casteism remains deeply ingrained within us, not externally visible but internally present.

Reflecting on history, especially after citing ancient texts or Puranas, we must acknowledge that the Mughal Empire ruled for 600 years. Yet, amidst



those times, our culture not only endured but evolved. This resilience shows that while challenges and invasions test us, the essence of Sanatan is its adaptability and the capacity for progress. It is up to us to embrace these values, rise above divisions, and work toward a unified, inclusive society.

Then came British rule, and the country was divided—fragmented by partition. The pain of that partition was borne by the people of that time, something we cannot fully comprehend today. Even after they left, the legacy of those times, the wounds of partition, and remnants of their era—memories, architecture, and stories—still remain with us. The essence of progress lies in harmony, not hatred. If you believe in harmony, you build bridges; if you don't, you nurture divisions.

Yes, divinity exists. No one denies that. But what is this economy, and what does it mean? It is the interplay between spiritual and material well-being. While spiritual happiness is rooted in detachment and contentment, material happiness often ties people to possessions and prosperity. But when we observe those who claim to live with spiritual detachment, we sometimes notice they possess immense wealth. It surprises us—how does a so-called ascetic accumulate crores? They appear naked and simple on the outside, yet they are millionaires. Meanwhile, those who wear clothes and look well-off often have nothing.

This paradox highlights a reality we must confront: appearances can be deceiving, and true prosperity is not just about material possessions. Real samruddhi must balance the spiritual and material aspects of life, ensuring that progress benefits everyone, both outwardly and inwardly.

So, where is samashti (collective welfare)? If your organization is working with a broad vision, whether it's about culture or agriculture, the focus must go deeper. Take, for instance, organic farming—we talk about it but are we truly prepared to commit to it daily? The unique aspect of organic farming is its perishability. It doesn't last long, unlike chemically treated produce. Yet, instead of preserving this sustainable practice, we return to chemical-based farming. This chemical dependency has seeped not only into our fields but also into our minds.

In all this chaos, what does samruddhi (prosperity) truly mean? That's why I said samashti to vyashti—because only a few individuals in the country are becoming prosperous. It is not samashti but vyashti prosperity we are witnessing. The collective is struggling while a handful thrive. Take the example of the cow. We call her our mata (mother), but when she eats plastic, garbage, or paper, it doesn't bother us. If we don't feel pain for her suffering, how can we ever claim to treat her as rajyamata (queen mother)?

Prosperity isn't about creating illusions through fancy words or superficial displays. True prosperity lies in collective welfare, where everyone, including nature and animals, thrives. Until we care for samashti, all our talk of samruddhi is hollow—mere bubbles of words designed to deceive.

I issue a challenge to everyone: come with me, I'll take you to the villages, the tribal regions. Walk with me to the places where suffering is palpable. Have you felt the pain of two tribal parents carrying their deceased children on their shoulders because they didn't receive timely medical care? Is this your samashti? Is this your samruddhi?



This is happening around us, yet we remain blind to it. We, the so-called civilized, educated in co-educational institutions, fail to empathize. Back in our time, co-education taught us mutual respect. I had sisters at home, and we naturally respected women. What has changed today? When we hear about crimes against little girls, how can we remain unaffected? The incident in Manipur, for instance—if you've seen even a glimpse of the videos, your hands would tremble, and your conscience would shatter. How can we allow such atrocities in our society?

Our samashti cannot thrive if we ignore such suffering and injustice. True progress lies in ensuring dignity, safety, and respect for all, especially the vulnerable. Without this, all talk of prosperity is meaningless.

A handful of people in the world are becoming wealthier, and while that might bring them satisfaction, in the same nations, people are dying of hunger, women endure abuse, farmers are committing suicides, and the unemployed are wandering without hope. While luxurious five-star hotels host discussions, action remains absent, and that is deeply frustrating.

If this action begins, it has the power to bring about a political and social transformation. Our country has always progressed because of individuals who took a stand—not necessarily a large number, but determined individuals with a strong vision and character.

I am grateful for the opportunity to express my thoughts here.

Jai Hind, Jai Maharashtra, Vande Mataram!

## EVENT FLOW

### Inaugural Session

- Introduction: Mitra Parn Ji (Global Transformational Speaker)
- Theme Presentation: Shri Gopal Krishna Agarwal (Patron MCES - National Spokesperson of BJP for Economic Affairs)
- Chief Guest: Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal (Minister of Law & Justice & Former Cultural Minister (2021-2024))
- Ashirvachan: Maitreya Dadashreeji (Global Humanitarian, Transformation Pioneer, Founder - MaitriBodh Parivaar, Visionary - MCES).

### Session One: Festival and Temple Economics (Moderator: Shri Gopal Kumar)

- Unlocking Temple Economics: Case Studies and Insights - Shri K. Nagarajan (Strategic Business Consultant)
- Festival Economics with Reference to Case Studies - Sushree Rashmi Samant (Author & Entrepreneur)
- Cultural Connect: Performing Arts - Dr. Ramesh C. Gaur (Dean -Administration, IGNC)
- Economic and Social Linkages: Temples, Festivals, and Performing Arts - Shrimati Nalini Padmanabhan (Director-Canara Bank).

### Session Two: Social intelligence (Mutually Sustainable Ecosystem - Linking People, Planet, and Prosperity (Moderator: Shri Sambhrant Krishna)

- Environment and Society - Shri Gajanan Dange (President - Yojak research center)/ Shri Debarshi Mukherjee (Business Management Prof.)
- Rural Growth and Prosperity - Shri Shrish Kalyani (Associate Director-TIRF)
- Cultural Economic Governance - Dr. Vinod Narayan Indurkar (Chairman - CCRT, India)
- Cultural Economic Model - Shri Sriram Balasubramanian (Author).

### Session Three: Creating Economic Linkages for Cultural Activities - (Moderator: Shri Anil Sharma)

- Performance & Potential Indicators - Dr. Shamika Ravi (Member, EAC-PM)
- Monetization and Financing of Cultural Activities - Shri Suman Billa (Senior Civil Servant)
- Health and Wellness - Dr. Jaideep Arya (National Secretary General of Yogasana Bharat)
- Skilling and Capacity Building - Shri Surender Kumar (Senior Prof.-DSE)

### Concluding Session

- Special Address: Shri Nitin Gadkari (Union Minister-Road Transport & Highways)
- Report Presentation: Shri Gopal Krishna Agarwal (BJP National Spokesperson)
- Guest of Honour: Shri Alok Kumar (International President -VHP)/ Shri Ram bahadur Rai (Senior Hindi Journalist)
- Concluding Address: Maitreya Dadashreeji (Global Humanitarian & Social Reformer)

## DELHI SUMMIT SPEAKER'S PROFILE



**Maitreya Dadashreeji** is a Global Humanitarian, Transformation Pioneer and Social Reformer. Dadashreeji has guided many individuals to uplift human consciousness, remove boundaries, bond humanity and unite nations together.



**Shri Gopal Krishna Agarwal** is the National Spokesperson for Economic Affairs of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He has a background in business, finance, and economics, and is considered a knowledgeable expert on ideological and economic matters.



**Shri Nitin Gadkari** is the Minister of Road Transport & Highways in the Government of India since 2014. He is often referred to as the "Expressway Man of India" because of his contributions to the development of road infrastructure.



**Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal** is the Minister of Law and Justice and Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs. He is also a member of Lok Sabha since 2009 representing the Bikaner constituency, Rajasthan.



**Dr. Alok Kumar** is the International Working President of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). He was the Sanghchalak of the RSS unit in New Delhi. He has also served as the Deputy Speaker of the Delhi Assembly.



**Shri Anil Sharma** is a Fellow Chartered Accountant. He has served as an independent director at UCO Bank and Keshav Sahakari Bank Ltd. He was also a member of the National Financial Reporting Authority (NAFRA).



**Shri Debarshi Mukherjee** is a Professor of Business Management at Jamia Millia Islamia. Mukherjee is an author, his notable books are: "Future of Education: Bridging the Digital Divide", "Exploring Social Intelligence: New Education Policy 2020."



**Dr. Gajanan Dange** is the President of the Yojak Centre for Research. He is recognized for his contributions to public policy and rural development initiatives, particularly on agricultural issues and farmer welfare.



**Shri Gopal Kumar** is a practicing actuary with more than 27 years of professional experience across various fields. He has also served as Board Member at the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority.



**Dr. Jaideep Arya** is a prominent figure in the field of yoga and ayurveda. He serves as the Chairman of the Haryana Yog Aayog and is the National Secretary General of Yogasana Bharat. He is an Honorary Member of Yoga Expert at the Government of India.



**Shri Mitra Parn** is the Managing Trustee at MaitriBodh Parivaar. He is renowned as a global transformational speaker, spiritual guide, youth mentor, and writer.



**Shri K. Nagarajan** is actively engaged with the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha, addressing legal issues related to Hindu temples nationally. He is a key member of a core team tasked with evaluating state-level and temple-specific Hindu religious endowment laws.



**Shrimati Nalini Padmanabhan** serves as a Director at Canara Bank and holds multiple directorial roles. She is working for revival of temple activities in Tamil Nadu.



**Shri Ram Bahadur Rai** is a senior Hindi journalist. He is the former news editor of the Hindi daily Jansatta. He has published, authored, and edited several books. He is Chairman of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.



**Professor (Dr.) Ramesh C. Gaur** is the Director and Head of the Kalanidhi Division at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and Director of the National School of Drama (NSD) and the Indian Institute of Heritage (IH) under the Ministry of Culture.



**Sushree Rashmi Samant** is a prominent scholar from Oxford University. She is an author of "A Hindu in Oxford", and "Ram Janmabhoomi: The Inspiration for Hindu Resurgence".



**Shri Sambhrant Krishna** is an Advocate-on-Record at the Supreme Court of India. His areas of professional interest also include public policy consultancy, economic research, financial risk management, and macroeconomics.



**Shri Shailesh Puranik (Mitra Shubham)**, a visionary architect and Managing Director of Puranik Builders, is a devoted disciple of Maitreya Dadashreeji. Actively involved in the transformative initiatives of the MaitriBodh Parivaar, he dedicates himself to selfless service, social upliftment, and spiritual growth, embodying the essence of compassion and positive change in every aspect of his life.



**Dr. Shamika Ravi** is an economist and a member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India (EAC-PM). She has an extensive background in research focused on growth and development, health, poverty, and welfare.



**Shri Shrish Kalyani** is currently serving as an Associate Director at the Transforming Rural India Foundation (TRIF). He has also worked with the Chief Minister's Good Governance Fellowship (CMGGF), Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellows (PMRDF), and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS).



**Shri Sriram Balasubramanian** is an esteemed economist and author, known for his significant contributions to international economic thought and policy. He has authored the book "Kautilyanomics: For Modern Times".



**Shri Suman Billa** is a senior civil servant and leading expert in tourism development. He has served as Director of Technical Cooperation and Silk Road Development at the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and as Joint Secretary in India's Ministry of Tourism.



**Shri Surender Kumar** is a Senior Professor at the Delhi School of Economics. His academic interests include energy, environment, and climate change, as well as applied econometrics. He has published 96 works.



**Dr. Vinod Narayan Indurkar** is the Chairman of the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training in India. He is a renowned actor and theatre guru, holding the unique distinction of being the only person in the world to receive a Doctor of Literature (D. Litt.) in acting.

## EVENT FLOW

### Theme Presentation

- Shri. Gopal Krishna Agarwal (Patron of MCES, National Spokesperson for BJP)

### 1st Technical Session: Temple and Festival Economics

- Mr. Giresh Kulkarni (Founder, Temple Connect)
- Mr. Sandeep Singh (Author, Lecturer)

### 2nd Technical Session: Art, Theatre & Film Economics

#### Speakers:

- Mr. Makarand Deshpande ( Actor, writer)
- Mr. Bharat Dabholkar (Actor, Director, Writer)
- Dr. Anusha Srinivasan Iyer (Filmmaker)

### 3rd Technical Session: Agricultural Economics

#### Speaker:

- Dr. Gajanan Dange (President, Yojak)

### Concluding Sessions

#### Special Address

- Shri. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe (Former Member of Parliament)
- Shri. Balasaheb Thorat (Member of Maharashtra Assembly)
- Shri. Gopal Krishna Agarwal (Conclusion Report)

### Keynote Address

- Maitreya Dadashreeji, (Global Humanitarian and Transformation Pioneer)
  - Event Press Conference
-

## MUMBAI SUMMIT SPEAKER'S PROFILE



**Maitreya Dadashreeji** is a Global Humanitarian, Transformation Pioneer and Social Reformer. Dadashreeji has guided many individuals to uplift human consciousness, remove boundaries, bond humanity and unite nations together.



**Shri Gopal Krishna Agarwal** is the National Spokesperson for Economic Affairs of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He has a background in business, finance, and economics, and is considered a knowledgeable expert on ideological and economic matters.



**Dr. Anusha Srinivasan Iyer** is a filmmaker, social activist, and communication expert. Her innovative storytelling and image strategies inspire audiences and foster deep connections, making her a leader in transformative social projects.



**Shri Arvind Sawant** is an Indian politician from the Shiv Sena (UBT) party who has served as Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.



**Shri Balasaheb Thorat** is an Indian politician who served as the revenue minister in Maharashtra state. He has also served as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly.



**Shri Bharat Dabholkar** is a renowned Indian actor, director, and filmmaker, known for pioneering English-language theatre in India. Famous for his witty plays and contributions to advertising, he is celebrated for his versatility across theatre, film, and media.



**Dr. Gajanan Dange** is a leading expert in rural development and agricultural policy in India. He has contributed to key national and state initiatives, including the Kelkar Committee and the "Tribal Policy Vision 2020." As the founder of Yojak, he works to nurture leadership among tribal youth across 11 states.



**Shri Giresh Kulkarni**, Founder of Temple Connect, is revolutionizing temple management by merging ancient spiritual practices with cutting-edge technology. Through initiatives like the Smart Temples Mission and the International Temples Convention & Expo.



**Shri Makarand Deshpande** is a renowned Indian actor, writer, and director, known for his work in Hindi and Marathi theatre and films. With over three decades in the industry, he is a key figure in experimental theatre, creating plays that push creative boundaries.



**Mohan Jaykar** is a prominent Advocate at the Supreme Court of India, known for his expertise in constitutional and civil law. He is also a Trustee of MaitriBodh Parivaar.



**Rahul Narwekar** is the Speaker of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly since July 2022. A BJP leader, he is known for his strong leadership and role in maintaining order in the assembly.



**Shri Rajendra Patankar** is working as a broadcaster at All India Radio, Mumbai for the past 32 years. He has an extensive experience in anchoring and comparing numerous radio programmes.



**Shri Sandeep Singh** is an author and lecturer. He has authored 12 books on topics including management, advertising, and women and child development. His recent works include Temple Economics Vol I and A Decade for Mandirs Vol II.



**Shri Vinay Sahasrabudhe** is an Indian politician who represented the state of Maharashtra in the Rajya Sabha from 2016-22. He is regarded as one of the foremost intellectuals from the BJP, and the RSS.

## Concluding remarks from the Desk of the Editor



The two MCES summits at Delhi and Mumbai last year were a labour of love. It is gratifying to note that they have served their intended purpose of generating a conversation around the topic of cultural economy. Just concluded Mahakumbh at Prayagraj has also helped our efforts. The challenge going forward would be to keep the momentum going so that the subject does not recede to the background.

In our engagements with cultural segment, we found that most of the cultural activities lack proper social and financial linkages. Artists, performers, and cultural practitioners often struggle to secure funding. Many government schemes exist, but awareness and accessibility remain limited. Cultural practitioners remain disconnected from these opportunities. We have made a small beginning and a lot of ground needs to be covered. We are working to create an ecosystem to bridge this gap by connecting artists, cultural entrepreneurs, and institutions with government support. This will enhance funding, accessibility, and implementation.

India is a living culture; it's not something to be kept and preserved in a museum. It is to be integrated into the daily life and activities of our people; in every region of the country. India stands for freedom of thought, we have always vouched for complete freedom of thought, but we also have restrictions on conduct—our actions are bound by cultural norms and ethical values. This is a fundamental principle of Indian culture. In many foreign countries, its other way round, individuals have unrestricted freedom in their actions, regardless of its impact on the society. However, Indian traditions uphold discipline and ethical responsibility in our life, ensuring a balanced society.

The true economic potential of India's cultural wealth has not been realised. There have not been any systematic attempts to study and harness this endowment. To provide this missing link and to bring the cultural economy to the forefront of India's development model, we conceived the idea of teaming up with likeminded people and organisations to take this idea forward. Public participation and passion are key to making cultural activities part of our day to day life, the engagement of people at the grassroots level is what will truly drive change.

Economy and culture are nothing like one will precede the other, both have to be synchronized and taken forward simultaneous and then only our nation will develop economically and be a rich culture. Therefore, synchronisation of cultural & economic activities is important and at the same time realising full potential of different states and geographies would ensure that all regions of our country contribute towards these engines of growth and get benefited.

For cultural-economic policies to be truly effective, they must be integrated into our governance frameworks. Moving forward, our primary focus is: Data Collection and identifying performance and potential indicators for cultural activities and their monetisation, integrating them into Policy Formulation. We are establishing Social and Economic linkages for various activities. Government has an important role for creating physical and institutional infrastructure, our roadmap is to incorporate cultural economics into this governance ecosystem. We are working for sustainable development models, where culture fuels economic growth and vice-a-versa, and establish think tanks dedicated to cultural economy. This will ensure that cultural economic policies move beyond discussions and become a permanent part of governance ecosystem.

MCES is possibly the only organisation in the world that seeks to work on the cultural economy at national scale. MCES will make deliberations on cultural economy a regular feature, focusing on different states to propel their cultural potential and ensure that it starts to pervade policy discussions at all levels of governance. The synchronization of the cultural and economic potential of the states would ensure that all regions of our country contribute to these engines of growth and benefit. We, at MCES, aim to promote cultural centres of excellence. Our vision is to establish Cultural Economic Governance model with Performance and Potential Indicators, establish Social and Economic linkages and Monetization and Valuation of Cultural Activities.

Whenever we take a concept, it is crucial to create an ecosystem to turn the concept into reality. For example, if we look at the performance of start-ups in India, they are doing well because the government has created an entire ecosystem by relevant amendments in various laws, exemptions and tax benefits. The citizens as well as the government have a major role in creating an ecosystem for the cultural economy. A report highlights that only 20% of the global organizations working in the cultural field consider themselves economically sustainable. The data reveals the need to create an economic link in cultural activities.

To get to the depth of the subject, we extensively deliberated on the potential of cultural activities in driving our economy, what are its performance and potential indicators, identifying variables and their interrelationship for evidence-based decision-making and resource allocations. Analysis also focused on how monetization can lead to unlocking valuations of cultural activities and its financial requisites to be fulfilled by innovative financial instruments. The summits were divided into different themes namely; Temple and festival economics, Social intelligence (mutual sustainable ecosystem, linking people, planet, and prosperity), Creating economic linkages for cultural activities and agriculture. These, broad theme covered different sub-topics, each deliberated upon by respective domain experts. There was an open house Q&A segment in each session. In the inaugural and concluding sessions, I presented the overall theme of the summit and concluding summary of deliberations. We were also fortunate to receive wisdom from our visionary Maitreya Dadashreeji.

More than forty domain experts deliberated in these interactive sessions, discussing all aspects of cultural economy, such as performance and potential indicators for cultural activities, their valuation and monetisation, and capacity building for cultural governance. One of the key objectives of the summit was to establish a foundation for Cultural Economic Governance ecosystem. This ecosystem will not only serve as a catalyst for our nation's economic growth by the year 2047, but also be a case study for the global economies to emulate and propel their own social, cultural, and economic growth.

**Our future roadmap for expanding Cultural Economic Initiatives involves:**

- 1) Preparing and publishing comprehensive reports of our summits and activities; we have compiled a detailed takeaway report

on both the Delhi & Maharashtra summits, to be submitted to the government for implementation. We plan to publish reports based on the insights and outcomes of these discussions.

- 2) Expanding the Initiative, we plan to organise a two-day summit with in-depth discussions on specific segments of cultural economy.
- 3) We will introduce awards, fellowships, and conferences to recognize and support contributors to this field. Those who excel in promoting cultural economy will be acknowledged as cultural ambassadors.
- 4) Financial Support & Policy Influence: Connecting cultural practitioners with financial schemes and government programs. Supporting artists, performers, and heritage preservationists through policy-backed initiatives.
- 5) Establishing a cultural economic think tank. Creating a structured platform for policy innovation and research in cultural economics.

At the heart of all our efforts lies one fundamental goal—a strong and developed India. Our journey is not just about economic prosperity, but about ensuring cultural preservation, social integration, and sustainable development. The ultimate objective is to take these discussions to a logical conclusion and develop a comprehensive economic model for India, where cultural activities contribute to national economic growth. In a democratic setup, mass awareness, public policy, and public demand play a crucial role in influencing the path of the nation. Therefore MCES will be a regular feature going forward.

Based on the discussions with experts and stakeholders at the Delhi and Mumbai summit, I am happy to bring to you, the Takeaway report and policy recommendations. We have compiled these set of action points and policy recommendations for the all the stakeholders, particularly for the government. Our recommendations, if implemented in their true spirit, would go a long way in promoting economic security of our artists, musicians and craftsmen and lead to a revival of our traditional products and practices. We are fortunate that the current government is supportive of India's cultural economy.

**Gopal Krishna Agarwal**

Patron MCES

## Policy Recommendations and Takeaways

India is a land of timeless traditions and vibrant diversity. It is home to one of the world's richest cultural heritage. With history that spans over millennia, the country's diversity is unparalleled, reflected in its 22 official languages and hundreds of dialects and more than 2,000 distinct ethnic groups. We are a country where art and craft, music and dance, culinary and cuisine, cinema and theatre hold great significance in people's life.

For capitalising on this heritage, we must create an ecosystem taking strategic initiatives, creating market linkages, protect intellectual property rights amongst these products, tradition and processes. This ecosystem can boost economic growth, empower marginalised communities, and enhance its global power. Based on the deliberations at the MCES events in Delhi and Mumbai and interactions with experts, we make the following Policy Recommendations for all stakeholders including government.

### 1. Decentralized Governance Model

Given the size and diversity of India, there is huge regional variation in terms of cultural practices and preferences. The economic potential of these cultural endowments is not fully utilised due to a lack of region specific policies. Making uniform policies that do not take into account regional variation lead to non-fulfillment of the people's demands and inefficient utilization of resources. The problem lies in the inadequate representation of local stakeholders, lack of finances at the grassroots level, and non-consideration of regional disparity.

#### Recommendations:

- Devolution of power and funds to the second and third tiers of governance is a must to carry on the activities and help preserve the regional cultural heritage.
- Task forces should be formed by including government functionaries, representatives from cultural organizations, local businesses and artisans to organize and promote regional cultural events and other initiatives.

- Every state has its tourism website but there needs to be more awareness among people. The websites need to be revamped and states should be encouraged to include the list of regional temples and other cultural attractions that hold importance in those regions but are quite unexplored by others. It would help improve the regional tourism of states, which would further support the region's infrastructure development.
- Capacity and skill development programs should be initiated at the district level to train local artisans and cultural entrepreneurs in sustainable production methods, digital marketing, social media management. It would help the local artisans learn new skills while preserving the traditional knowledge and allow them to access a wider market.
- The decentralized cultural policies will reduce regional economic disparities and promote inclusive growth. The local people would foster a strong sense of pride in their regional cultural traditions.

### 2. Protection and Promotion of Indian Artisans

Indian artisans are mostly engaged in handicrafts, metal and clay work, herbal products and textile and embroidery. Due to limitations of capital,



promotional avenues and access to a wider market, they do not get the true worth of their effort and the richness of their product. Meaningful intervention by the government can address these constraints and allow Indian artisans to reach wider domestic and international markets.

#### Recommendations:

- During policymaking, Indian artisans and local handicraft experts should be included to provide input and feedback. They have more expertise about the ground-level reality, their needs, and cultural ideas. Strong backward and forward linkages and strong market demand would convert artistic pursuits from hobby to career options.
- Special skilling centres should be set up to build upon the traditional knowledge and expertise of Indian artisans and craftsmen. Central and state governments should consider widening the ambit of Vishwakarma Yojna to include practitioners of cultural activities.
- Market linkages are extremely important for our traditional arts and crafts to be remunerative. More markets on the lines of Dilli/Noida Haat and Surajkund craft mela etc. should be opened and promoted. Their primary objective should be to provide a place for artists to showcase their product, not revenue generation for the authority owning the land.
- Promotion of artisans' cooperatives similar to FPOs (Farmers Producer Organisations) can give them better market access and leverage.
- Dedicated financial institutions on the lines of SIDBI and NABARD should be created by the government to facilitate financial flows to various segments of the cultural economy. Sectoral lending targets can also be assigned to existing financial institutions. These institutions shall provide loans, grants and subsidies for production costs, technology upgradation, and marketing initiatives.
- The steps would protect our handicrafts from getting commercially exploited by middlemen and give fair returns to the local artisans. The digital supply chains will connect artists

with a larger market, increasing their income and reducing the role of the intermediaries. Better marketing of Indian handicrafts will help India become a leader in the global cultural economy, preserving its culture and traditions.

### 3. Enhancing Intellectual Property Rights Ecosystem: Focusing on traditional handicraft and other products and processes

There have been multiple cases where the Indian cultural traditions and ideas got patented by foreign entities due to lack of initiative on the part of Indian practitioners and the government. Steps should be taken to pre-empt such moves. Using the law on Geographical Indicators can impart authenticity and credibility to Indian products and boost the income of Indian artisans and craftsmen.



#### Recommendations:

- Government institutions should work for the creation and protection of the intellectual property rights (IPR) of Indian handicraft at a broad level.
- Training should be provided to the artisans on how they can register their work under IPR laws, such as Patents, Geographical Indicators (GI) etc. Government should provide incentive structure and create tangible benefits for IPR registration in the form of free and subsidized delivery and online boarding, awareness and branding programs for IPR products.
- Creating awareness camps and handholding by authorising consultants and service providers at specific centres has already been done in Varanasi, Jaipur, and Hampi.

- Government e-commerce platforms like GEM (government e market) and ONDC (open network for digital commerce) should have separate segments for buying and selling original handicrafts having GI registration. Local Indian artists can put their products on sale on these platforms and be digitally present in the market and it should be accessible to every part of the world. The government can also collaborate with logistics service providers like the network of Post Offices throughout India, to provide artists with subsidized delivery, shipping and warehousing facilities.

#### 4. Rural and Agricultural Rejuvenation

The rural economic base is observing a downfall due to unequal resource allocation, crop monoculture, regional disparities, and declining rural income. This not only impacts the economy of the region but also the local traditions. There is large scale migration of labor, which is not good for Indian economy. Migration should be an option and not a necessity.



#### Recommendations:

- The government should focus on comprehensive revival plans. By providing incentives to the agriculturalists, it can help to restore the traditional organic agricultural patterns. This holds cultural significance which can then be utilized to promote local food tourism.
- The state governments should focus on creating cultural tourism circuits. These circuits can include farm visits, traditional food, regional theatres, and cultural heritage sites. This would promote the region's traditions along with helping farmers earn an

extra income. It would help people travel and learn in-depth about particular states and districts.

- The central and the state government already spend a substantial amount in the rural areas under schemes like MGNREGA, PM Kisan Samman Yojna etc. Money from such schemes should be used to create infrastructure and employment opportunities at village and town level so that people are not forced to migrate to big cities for better services and employment opportunities.
- The steps focusing on agriculture and traditions would help to address the agricultural imbalances, promote agricultural practices, create new income opportunities for people, boost regional knowledge among domestic and international visitors, and encourage regional infrastructure development.

#### 5. Temple revival; Enhanced Role of Local Communities

Many local temples and cultural heritage sites are managed by the central government due to which there is a lack of local involvement in the management and decisions around those temples.



This also leads to inefficient utilization of resources.

#### Recommendations:

- Revival of temples: There are a large number of temples that are in a defunct state or are not well maintained and regular worship does not happen. There has to be policy initiatives, from the government and social and religious institutions to revive and restore such temples with the help of local communities. These restorations will lead to creation of economic opportunities at the local level.
- The government should transfer the management of temples, their functions, and their funds to the local communities. The communities should have fair representation in the group. The group can be NGO, association of persons or charitable societies. Financial aid to manage the temple, organize cultural festivals, and maintain the traditions of the temples can come in the form of CSR and other local donations.
- Training programs must be initiated for these committees for heritage management, financial planning, and worship activities. This would help improve the role of local communities, effective utilization of resources, and tourism development.
- These steps would provide economic opportunities to a wide range of people and preserve the local cultural practices and traditions.

#### 6. Revival of Folk Dance and Music and Regional Theatres

India has a rich tradition of folk dance and music and local theatre. We, however, see that people are losing interest in these forms of entertainment and there is a certain homogenisation of culture. Such a trajectory can lead to a gradual death of a lot of our local folk and music traditions. A lot of traditional music is not available on digital platforms that people use to listen earlier. Same is the case for regional dance forms. Local theatres lack funds to produce high-quality performances and the venues are poorly maintained leading to lesser engagement of people. The rise of digital media made people lose interest in theatre acts.



#### Recommendations:

- A nationwide project must be launched to digitise folk music and performances and make them available on popular digital platforms. A national digital repository must be created.
- The infrastructure of the theatres has to be upgraded to be comfortable for people who come to watch the performance. With improvised seating, lighting, acoustics, and backstage facilities, there will be greater engagement of artists and the audience. States can develop state regional theatres for global engagement. To increase audience numbers, wider advertisements should be considered.
- Theatres can collaborate with the schools and universities to organize theatre acts. The workshops and training sessions should be organized for local communities to engage them in theatre production and scriptwriting.
- The provision of funds for the regional theatres would enable the production of high-quality performances. The integration of tourism, education, and media would provide a wide range of economic opportunities to people while preserving the diverse cultural traditions of India. We recommend setting up a separate fund for Rs 500 crores for the financial support and development of theatre, films, and folk dances as has been done for AI.

## 7. Engaging Visitor Experience

India is rich in history, culture and civilisation; however there is a lack of maintenance at the tourism sites which creates a negative image of India among the tourists.



### Recommendations:

- Tourists expect hygiene during their travels. The management of tourist sites should be handed over to local authorities and a part of the ticket proceeds must be shared for local development. Till the time the local population is made a stakeholder and a direct beneficiary of tourism, they might remain indifferent to the upkeep of the tourist attraction. Public-private partnership must be made robust.
- There should be development of eco-friendly washrooms and other facilities at cultural sites. This would take care of the hygiene of the tourists. Renewable energy sources like solar-generated water heaters and lighting can be installed on the sites including the washroom areas to provide backup to conventional energy sources. The experience of China, which overcame the problem of dirty public toilets, can be a useful lesson for India.
- India generally has a poor image abroad when it comes to hygiene and safety. No doubt there is an element of truth in it but there is a lot of unnecessary alarm around it. A concerted effort needs to be made by the Government to dispel this image of India.
- Today, people expect something that gives them a real-time experience. The government can partner with technological firms to create Augmented Reality (AR)/ Virtual Reality (VR) content on cultural sites that are most visited by tourists. The sites should employ tourist guides who have in-depth knowledge of the place and don't miscommunicate the information for entertainment purposes. Customer feedback must be collected for the guide to rate them accordingly.
- Setting of a national website with details on all tourist sites with different segments like religious place, health tourism, heritage monuments, museums, archeological and historical sites etc. Create national accreditation of national heritage and tourist sites with respect to their significance, infrastructure and facilities should be done by the Government.
- The government initiative to improve facilities at the tourist sites will help to engage more tourists, spread awareness about India's culture, raise tourism revenue, enhance skills, and create job opportunities for people in the region and across India.
- We are a living civilization; our inheritance is not only to be preserved in museums and galleries but also has immense potential for economic and social development. If India can package and market its cultural wealth properly and link all such activities to tourism, employment and economic activities, it will prove to be an exceptional driver of economic growth and development.



**S**hri **Gopal Krishna Agarwal** is a prominent Indian politician, economist, and the National Spokesperson for Economic Affairs of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He is known for his expertise in policy matters and his articulations on economic issues.

**Background:** Shri Agarwal is a post graduate in economics and holds a bachelor degree in commerce. He is a qualified Chartered Accountant.

**Political Career:** He has been actively involved in BJP holding several key positions for over two decades, and contributing significantly to the formulation and advocacy of the party's economic policies. He has been credited for effectively communicating the BJP's economic vision to the public.

**Economic Expertise:** With a background in business, finance, and economics, he is considered a knowledgeable expert on economic matters. He has written extensively for newspapers and financial journals, and has addressed several seminars and conferences at national and international forums. He is a Patron for Democratic Outreach for Social Transformation (DOST) & Maitri Cultural Economic Summit.

**Public Welfare Initiatives:** Shri Agarwal has initiated various public welfare projects, including Jaladhikar Foundation, Shree Jee Gausadan, Milk Cooperative Movement, Gopal Namu Seva Kendra and Surya Sansthan. These initiatives demonstrate his commitment to social causes and his desire to make a positive impact on the society.

### Governance Experiences:

He is an Independent Director on the Board of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and is Chairman of ICSI's Institute of Insolvency Professionals. He has been former Independent Director on the Boards of Bank of Baroda (BOB), North Eastern Electric Power Company (NEEPCO) and Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA). He was National President of Association of NSE members of India (ANMI), Commodity Participants Association and Depository Participant Association of India and Member of SEBI Committees on Secondary Markets. He was also Government nominee on the Governing Council of The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) and Task Force on Financial Architecture of MSME of Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

Shri Agarwal is championing the cause of India's cultural economy, advocating that when India was economically prosperous, our art, culture, music, dance, food, festival and architecture, all flourished and were at its peak. And now, when we perceive our country to assume global leadership in near future, our cultural wealth will catalyse all round prosperity, making India an economic superpower.

In summary, Shri Gopal Krishna Agarwal is a respected figure in Indian politics, known for his expertise in economic policy and understanding of business & finance and his dedication to public service. His contributions to the BJP and advocacy for economic development have made him a significant influence in the Indian political landscape.



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