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# PANACHE INK

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LAUNCHING 15 AUGUST 2026

THE INDIA  
BEYOND THE  
HEADLINES

THE PRIDE WE HAVE YET  
TO DISCOVER



Chief Editor:  
Dr. Akanksha Shrivastva  
Aadhyapublishing House

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# Preface



*"Panache Ink" is not just a name. It is a basic value of our "Aadhya Publishing House" as we believe talent should never die. Rather it should always stand out like the feathered plume on a helmet to attract the world and that is what Panache means. We, as the Publisher, believe in encouraging new talent in the field of literature. We want each and every poet to get the opportunity to express themselves and get the proper acknowledge that they deserve. They should be known by the world for their views and we hope very soon we shall be able to achieve this.*

*Panache Ink is a monthly international magazine in the English Language, that is released on digital platforms for literature lovers.*

*However, our work does not end here. I, Akanksha Shrivastava, Publisher and Chief Editor of Aadhya Publishing house, am trying to put a smile on the faces of poor children by providing them with food on behalf of our publishing house. By taking this small initiative, it is our wish to fulfill this basic need of food so that we help the children to survive in a better way.*





# Aadhya Publishing House

*Presents*

## PANACHE INK INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

August 2026

**Dr. Akanksha Shrivastava**  
Founder, Publisher and Chief Editor

**Mr. Lalit Kishore Gaur**  
Technical head

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C25 Vardhman City patel nagar raisen road bhopal

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**Dr. Mohit Bansal**

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## How to Get Jobs in Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook, and Apple

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- ✓ Certifications That Matter
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### ABOUT THE ARTICLE

Getting placed in leading global technology companies is a dream for many students and professionals. This article offers valuable guidance on how candidates can prepare for job opportunities in companies such as Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook, and Apple.

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“

The right guidance  
at the right time can  
change your path  
and your future.

– Dr. Mohit Bansal

”

Together, Panache Ink International Magazine and Career Jano are committed to inspiring, guiding, and empowering the youth to build successful careers and a meaningful future.

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Guiding the next generation  
towards excellence



# Editorial

## The India We Carry Within Us

India is more than a country we celebrate on a national day. She is a memory, a melody, a tradition, a sacrifice—and a thousand quiet stories waiting to be remembered.

In this Independence Day Special, Panache Ink looks beyond the familiar India of headlines and monuments to discover the India that lives quietly within forgotten stones, ancient traditions, village wisdom, unsung heroes, artisans, soldiers, innovators, and ordinary people who serve without seeking applause.

We find patriotism not only at the borders, but wherever someone chooses courage over comfort, service over recognition, and responsibility over indifference. We see it in the soldier who protects the nation, the farmer who feeds it, the artisan who preserves its heritage, the teacher who shapes its future, and the young innovator who turns a local problem into a national possibility.

Our heritage, too, speaks to us—not as something frozen in museums, but as a living wisdom carried through languages, festivals, food, crafts, stories and generations. It reminds us that progress does not require forgetting our roots; sometimes, the way forward begins by looking back with respect.

As you turn these pages, we invite you to rediscover India—not merely with your eyes, but with your heart.

Because the India we are proud of is not only the India the world already knows. It is also the India we have yet to discover.

— Dr. Akanksha Shrivastava  
Founder, Publisher & Chief Editor  
Panache Ink International Magazine



## Dr. Ram Manohar Mishra

Some lives are remembered not merely for the positions held, but for the values they uphold and the lives they touch. The journey of Dr. Ram Manohar Mishra, IAS (Retd.) is a beautiful reflection of integrity, sensitivity, and service. From serving as a Deputy Collector to becoming an IAS officer, District Magistrate, and Member of the Revenue Board, his career reflects a deep commitment to public welfare. What makes his journey truly inspiring is the human sensitivity behind his administrative decisions—whether helping a distressed farmer, supporting persons with disabilities, creating opportunities for unemployed youth, or standing with ordinary citizens in difficult times.

His administrative excellence is beautifully complemented by his literary journey. From his early writings in Nandan and Dharmyug to receiving the Mahadevi Verma Award for Pehchaan, his words reveal the heart of a sensitive observer of life and society.

It is a privilege for Panache Ink International Magazine to present the thoughts and journey of a distinguished administrator, poet, and compassionate human being whose life reminds us that true leadership is not about authority, but about the trust we earn and the lives we touch.

— Dr. Akanksha Shrivastava  
Chief Editor  
Panache Ink International Magazine

# INTERVIEW

With – Dr. Ram Manohar Mishra

*More than an IAS officer—  
a voice of humanity,  
literature, and leadership.*



- 1. Your personality reflects the firmness of an administrator on one hand and the gentle, sensitive heart of a litterateur on the other. How did this remarkable balance between these two streams evolve in your life?**

I was selected as a Deputy Collector in the Uttar Pradesh Administrative Service in 1991 after qualifying for the Uttar Pradesh Provincial Civil Services (PCS) Examination conducted by the Public Service Commission. However, my association with literature began much earlier. Since my student days, I have been writing historical stories for children, humorous and satirical pieces, and poems purely for the joy of creative expression. Some of my writings were published in reputed magazines such as Nandan and Dharmyug. My inspiration for poetry came in 1979 from my uncle, who guided me through my very first poem and encouraged me to continue writing.

My administrative career gave me the opportunity to closely observe different facets of society, especially the lives of the poor, the helpless, and the underprivileged. Administration instilled in me the firmness to take decisions, while literature ensured that human sensitivity remained alive behind those decisions. I firmly believe that for an administrator, literature is not merely an interest but the very foundation of a compassionate outlook. If one is truly devoted to creative expression, finding time for literature even amidst the demands of an administrative career is never difficult.

- 2. Throughout your long administrative career, you interacted with countless people. Was there any incident that deeply moved you and gave a new direction to your philosophy of life?**

Many incidents during my administrative career profoundly influenced my personality and outlook on life, but two experiences remain indelibly etched in my memory.

The first occurred during the devastating floods in Siddharthnagar. While distributing relief materials, a man who had not eaten for two days received food and said, "Only the one who has endured hunger truly knows its value." That single moment made me realise the true significance of food, the immense toil of a farmer, and the suffering of the last person standing at the margins of society.



## Where justice meets compassion, true leadership is born.

The second experience was related to a case in my Revenue Court. An attempt had been made to deprive a widow of her land on the basis of a forged will. After carefully examining the facts, circumstantial evidence, and applying sound judicial discretion, I declared the will to be forged and delivered judgment in favour of the widow. What gave me immense satisfaction was that my decision was upheld by the higher courts as well. This experience strengthened my conviction that justice is not merely a legal process; it is equally a matter of compassion, impartiality, and moral responsibility.

Both these experiences inspired me throughout my life to remain more sensitive and accountable towards the helpless, the deprived, and those in distress.

### **3. The incident involving the farmer in Tanda Tehsil continues to be regarded as deeply inspiring. In your opinion, does the real strength of administration lie in authority or in the trust of the people?**

In my opinion, the true strength of administration lies not merely in authority, but in the trust of the people. Authority gives an administrator the power to make decisions, but public trust gives those decisions meaning and effectiveness.

While serving as SDM in Tanda Tehsil, Ambedkar Nagar, a farmer came to me at around 9 p.m. He told me that, due to an error by the Irrigation Department, water had entered his fields and those of nearby farmers, threatening to destroy their crops. He had been seeking help from the department since morning, but without success. Finally, someone from his village told him, “**Only the SDM Sahib can solve your problem.**”

Moved by his faith in the office, I immediately called the concerned officers and worked with them until, at around 1 a.m., the water was stopped, and the crops were saved.

That farmer's faith strengthened my understanding of the dignity and responsibility of public office. It made me realise that an administrator's greatest strength is not authority, but the trust of the people. When administration works with sensitivity, impartiality, and sincerity, that trust becomes its greatest asset.

### **4. In administrative service, there are times when rules and human compassion seem to stand in opposition to each other. How did you maintain the balance while making decisions in such situations?**

In my opinion, the purpose of administration is not only to enforce rules but also to safeguard the larger public interest. Therefore, wherever it is possible to uphold the true spirit of the law while giving due importance to human compassion, a sensitive decision is undoubtedly the best decision.

During my posting in Bareilly, I was required to reach Lucknow to attend an important high-level meeting. On my way, I came across a horrific road accident in which several people were lying seriously injured. Despite knowing that I would be delayed for the meeting and might face adverse reactions from my senior officers, I considered it my foremost duty to ensure that the injured were taken to the hospital before proceeding further.

As expected, I initially faced the displeasure of my seniors for arriving late. However, when I explained the circumstances that had caused the delay, everyone appreciated my decision. This incident became a guiding principle in my administrative life, teaching me how to maintain a balance between administrative rules and human compassion.

### **5. Having served in several districts, you have closely witnessed the many dimensions of society. In your opinion, what is the greatest challenge before the administration in present-day India?**

Based on my experience and understanding, the greatest challenge before the administration in present-day India is to maintain a balance between good governance, transparency, and human values amidst a rapidly changing social and technological landscape.

On one hand, we face unemployment, social inequality, and ever-growing public expectations. On the other hand, the misuse of technology has led to new forms of cybercrime, financial fraud, and organised criminal activities. At the same time, the gradual weakening of Indian culture, family values, and social traditions is affecting the very fabric of our society.

I believe that the success of an administration does not lie merely in maintaining law and order. It lies in earning the trust of the people, ensuring the positive use of technology, creating greater opportunities for the youth, and harmonising Indian cultural values with a compassionate and people-centric administration. Such an integrated approach alone can make the India of the future stronger, safer, and more progressive.



**6. Your literary journey has always continued alongside your administrative career. Is writing merely a hobby for you, or is it a form of spiritual pursuit or a dialogue with your inner self?**

Undoubtedly, writing is much more than a hobby for me; it is a dialogue with my inner self and a source of deep personal fulfilment.

Amidst the demanding responsibilities of administrative service, writing kept me emotionally grounded and sensitive. Through my poems, short stories, and other literary works, I have sought to express my thoughts, experiences, and my perspective on life. My writings have also served as a medium through which I share my ideas, emotions, and experiences with my family, friends, acquaintances, and society at large.

I firmly believe that if even one of my poems or articles brings a smile to someone's face, inspires a person, or helps someone develop a more positive outlook towards life, then that itself is the greatest strength and purpose of my writing. For me, writing is a creative state of mind that brings inner happiness, spiritual peace, and a lasting connection with society.

**7. Your acclaimed poetry collection Pehchaan was honoured with the Mahadevi Verma Award. Through this work, what message did you wish to convey to society?**

My acclaimed poetry collection Pehchaan is not confined to a single theme or idea. It represents the first milestone in my literary journey, bringing together my earliest, comparatively immature compositions as well as poems inspired by the diverse experiences of life and the realities of society.

The collection explores a wide range of subjects, including the affection a common man feels for his beloved, the realities of public grievance meetings during my administrative career, the dreams and struggles of underprivileged children, the resilience of an ordinary individual, the search for one's identity, memorable and inspiring moments shared with friends at a tea stall during my university days, the ideals of Lord Shri Ram, and the changing face of rural life.

Through this book, my intention was never to impose my thoughts upon anyone. Rather, I wished to bring my discerning readers face to face with the realities of life and society. I hope that readers will understand these realities, accept them with wisdom, and wherever change is needed, strive to contribute positively. That, in essence, is the message of Pehchaan.

**8. You have travelled extensively across India as well as to several countries abroad. How have these experiences enriched your perspective and administrative approach?**

Travelling across different states of India as well as several countries abroad greatly broadened my perspective. I was particularly impressed by the public's commitment to cleanliness, the respect accorded to women, and their active participation in governance and various spheres of society.

I also found the systems that ensure workers' safety, uphold the dignity of labour, and guarantee timely payment of wages to be highly commendable. These experiences taught me that the success of any institution depends not only on rules and regulations but also on respect for human dignity and a healthy work culture.

After returning from my foreign visits, I consistently encouraged the officers and staff working under me to embrace cleanliness, discipline, transparency, and, above all, a culture of respecting every individual, regardless of their position.

**Serving the nation with  
integrity,  
inspiring generations  
through words and wisdom.**



**9. You have undertaken several remarkable initiatives for persons with disabilities, unemployed youth, and ordinary citizens. Which moment do you consider to be the greatest reward of your administrative career?**

During my administrative career, I had the privilege of carrying out numerous meaningful initiatives for persons with disabilities, unemployed youth, and ordinary citizens through government schemes as well as personal efforts. Among these, there are a few moments that I consider to be the greatest rewards of my administrative life.

(1) While serving in one district, I facilitated the legal adoption of twin newborn girls born to a mentally unstable woman by a genuinely deserving and financially secure family. This experience gave me immense satisfaction because I was able to contribute towards giving those children—whom I regard as God's precious gift—a secure and promising future.

(2) During my tenure in the same district, through my personal efforts and the positive influence of my office, I helped several deserving students secure admission to engineering and management institutions without paying donations or capitation fees. These students worked hard, completed their studies, and are now serving in reputed companies in responsible positions. The day they informed me about obtaining their first jobs remains one of the happiest and proudest moments of my life.

(3) While serving as the City Magistrate of Faizabad (now Ayodhya), one of my significant responsibilities was to streamline the management of offerings made at the Ram Janmabhoomi Temple. On one occasion, a devoted couple had donated ₹50,000 through a cheque from their personal savings. However, due to an error in the bank account details, the payment could not be processed. At that time, mobile communication facilities were extremely limited. I personally coordinated with the bank branch manager over the telephone and re-established contact with the couple to ensure that the cheque was credited to the correct account. This allowed their offering to be accepted with the respect and devotion it deserved. The couple had made this offering as a prayer for the blessing of a child, making the donation deeply emotional and spiritually significant for them. Being able to help fulfil their heartfelt wish remains a source of profound satisfaction for me.

(4) In a Public Sector Enterprise, I found that a senior officer was disregarding departmental rules and denying compassionate appointments to the eligible dependents of deceased employees. I encouraged the deserving candidates to seek justice through the court. Following the court's directions, several young people received appointments according to their eligibility. Witnessing justice prevail in their favour was one of the most satisfying and inspiring moments of my administrative career.

**10. In the present era, Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital governance, and modern technology are transforming the nature of administration. Do you believe technology can ever replace human compassion?**

Today, Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital governance, and modern technology are rapidly transforming the nature of administration. They will undoubtedly enhance transparency, efficiency, speed, and accountability in administrative functioning. However, in my opinion, technology is only an effective tool; it can never replace human compassion.

The true purpose of administration is not merely to enforce rules but to understand the problems of the people and resolve them with empathy, compassion, and a humane perspective. I believe that an ideal administrative system is one in which modern technology and human sensitivity work hand in hand.

**A distinguished administrator. A compassionate soul.  
A literary voice that continues to inspire generations.**



**A life where authority was guided by compassion,  
and leadership found its true purpose in public  
service.**

**11. Your forthcoming book is based on the inner world and struggles of administrative officers. What inspired you to choose this subject?**

My forthcoming book explores the inner world of administrative officers, their struggles, and the untold truths of their lives. The inspiration for writing this book came from my interactions and discussions with many officers whose lives are often viewed by society only through the lens of their position and authority.

Family members, friends, and acquaintances place countless expectations upon them. They are generally perceived as people who possess everything—power, influence, and freedom from every kind of difficulty. The common belief is that an officer's life is free from deprivation, stress, or emotional pain. The reality, however, is quite different.

Before anything else, an officer is an ordinary human being. While fulfilling official responsibilities, he must also balance family obligations, often within numerous limitations and challenging circumstances. At times, he has to face pressure from senior authorities, demanding administrative situations, mental stress, and deep inner conflicts.

It is with the intention of bringing these unseen and unspoken realities before society, and of introducing readers to the human side and sensitive inner world of administrative officers, that I chose this subject for my book.

**12. If you were to express the essence of your entire administrative career in just one message, what would it be?**

The guiding principle of my administrative life has always been to remain sensitive towards the poor, the underprivileged, and the helpless, and to extend every possible assistance to them.

Throughout every situation, I have believed in working with patience, self-restraint, impartiality, and in strict accordance with the law. These values formed the foundation of my administrative approach.

In my opinion, it is the harmonious balance between an officer's compassion and adherence to the rule of law that makes an administrator truly exceptional.

**13. Today's youth often associate success with position and prestige. In your experience, what is the true definition of success?**

It is true that today's youth often equate success solely with position, power, and prestige. While they aspire to attain recognition and status, they sometimes overlook the fact that every position carries with it its own dignity and honour, which it is their foremost responsibility to uphold.

In my opinion, the younger generation should regard public service as a privilege that comes along with the authority of their position. The true identity of an administrator lies in resolving the problems of the people in a lawful, impartial, and just manner.

An officer should continually evaluate and reflect upon his own working methods so that he remains free from arrogance. It is an eternal truth that human life is a priceless gift bestowed by God, and one must discharge one's responsibilities with humility, sincerity, and a spirit of service.



His journey is not merely a story of  
administration,  
but a legacy of values, vision, and service.

**14. If time gave you the opportunity to meet your younger self on the very first day of your administrative career, what three things would you certainly tell yourself?**

Although I served in the administrative service for nearly twenty-seven years and, by the grace of God, retired with an unblemished record and honour, if I were given the opportunity to begin my journey again, I would make one firm resolve on the very first day of my service—to make the maximum use of modern technology so that every government welfare scheme reaches its genuine and deserving beneficiaries in a transparent and time-bound manner.

For me, administration has never been merely a position of authority; it has always been a medium of public service. Therefore, integrity in public service, impartiality in decision-making, patience and self-restraint in conduct, and complete honesty in every action would continue to remain my highest priorities.

I firmly believe that these are the values that earn an administrator the trust, confidence, and respect of the people.

**15. Finally, what message would you like to share with the readers of Panache Ink International Magazine—especially the youth, civil service aspirants, litterateurs, and research scholars?**

My message to the readers of Panache Ink International Magazine, particularly the youth, civil service aspirants, litterateurs, and research scholars, is that they should always remain honest and committed to their goals and responsibilities.

They should make the fullest use of modern technology and Artificial Intelligence, but never allow these advancements to diminish their human sensitivity and compassion.

They should regard Indian culture, social values, and family traditions as their greatest strengths and make a continuous effort to preserve and uphold them.

I firmly believe that a harmonious balance of knowledge, technology, sensitivity, and values is what ultimately leads not only to true success but also to the trust, respect, and goodwill of society.



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# Column

## The Pride of the Nation –

### A Soldier of the Indian Army



In a village lived a farmer named Ramsevak. He was extremely hardworking and devoted himself wholeheartedly to his family. He took great care of his parents and paid full attention to his farming. He was the only son of his parents. Ramsevak was always thinking about how he could improve his farming and continue to make progress in life.

Ramsevak got married, and happiness filled the household. With his wife's arrival, the family became even happier, and she also began helping him with the farming.

Time continued to move at its own pace. Ramsevak was blessed with his first happiness in the form of a son.

Ever since his marriage, Ramsevak's home had been filled with happiness. At times, he would think to himself, "My wife is truly very fortunate."

A father of two sons and a daughter, Ramsevak always wished to provide all three of his children with a good education.

His elder son became a computer engineer, got married, and moved to Pune.

His daughter earned a degree in fashion design and moved to Bengaluru with her husband.

Ramsevak's younger son had grown up surrounded by immense love and affection. He was a little pampered and somewhat mischievous, but he was extremely intelligent in his studies.

He would often speak to his parents about patriotism. Articles and writings about great patriots such as Subhas Chandra Bose, Sardar Bhagat Singh, and Chandrashekhar Azad could often be found on his study table.

His parents and grandparents often thought, "He will do something for the country one day."

He was hardworking as well. One day, he asked his teacher,

"Sir, I want to join the Army. What should I do?"

The teacher immediately replied, "First, you should ask your parents."

The boy persisted, "Sir, please tell me what I will have to do."

The teacher said, "Son, you will have to clear the NDA or CDS examination."

With great dedication and hard work, he succeeded in his second attempt and was selected for the NDA.

There was happiness everywhere in the family.

Now a grandfather, Ramsevak considered himself extremely fortunate. His respect and honour in the village also increased.

After his son's training was completed, he was posted in Jammu and Kashmir.

One evening, at around 5 p.m., the siren sounded at the Army headquarters. A terrorist attack had taken place in a residential area.

The spirit of patriotism had been instilled in the young soldier since childhood. When he received the order to go with his team, he displayed courage and presence of mind and successfully eliminated all four terrorists.

The entire area echoed with praise for the Army. The entire team was honoured at the Army headquarters.

He was also promoted.

When he returned to his village, the entire village came out to welcome him. Everyone wanted to meet him and have photographs taken with him. Some villagers could even be heard saying,

“I too will send my son to the Army.”

**“The Pride of the Nation — A Soldier of the Indian Army”** 🇮🇳

By:  
*Mr. Piyush Goel*  
Mirror Image Man Of India



The India We Almost Forgot

# Every Forgotten Stone Has a Story

*By: Mr. Shashidhar Kumar, Editor*



India is often introduced to the world through the familiar silhouettes of the Taj Mahal, Jaipur's palaces, the temples of Khajuraho, or the caves of Ajanta and Ellora. These monuments undoubtedly deserve their global admiration. Yet beyond these celebrated landmarks lies another India—quieter, weathered, and astonishingly rich. It is an India hidden in abandoned forts overlooking forgotten valleys, stepwells descending into the earth like inverted cathedrals, and ancient ruins that survive only in the memories of local communities. The story of India's heritage is incomplete without these neglected monuments. They are not merely structures of stone; they are archives of human resilience, engineering brilliance, ecological wisdom, and cultural continuity. Many of them remain absent from tourism brochures, academic discourse, and conservation priorities. Their silence, however, speaks volumes.

The greatest tragedy is not that these monuments are old. The tragedy is that they are slowly disappearing before the world has truly understood their significance. Among India's most remarkable yet overlooked architectural achievements are its stepwells, locally known as baolis, vavs, or kunds. Built primarily between the 7th and 18th centuries, these structures were far more than sources of drinking water. They were masterpieces of climate-responsive engineering. Descending several stories underground, stepwells naturally maintained cooler temperatures, harvested rainwater, replenished groundwater, and served as community gathering spaces. Long before sustainability became an international concern, Indian builders had already mastered water conservation through architecture.

The celebrated "Rani ki Vav" in Gujarat enjoys UNESCO recognition, but countless lesser-known stepwells across Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat remain neglected. Many are filled with debris, hidden behind urban development, or left vulnerable to vandalism. Every abandoned stepwell represents a lost chapter in humanity's understanding of sustainable water management. Equally forgotten are India's innumerable hill forts and regional strongholds. While forts like Mehrangarh, Chittorgarh, and Gwalior attract international visitors, hundreds of smaller forts remain absent from public consciousness.

Across Bundelkhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana, Maharashtra, and the forests of central India stand ruined fortifications whose walls once witnessed the rise and fall of kingdoms, tribal confederacies, regional republics, and local resistance against invading powers. Some belonged to forgotten dynasties; others became shelters for communities during periods of political upheaval. Many of these forts have no visitor centres, no archaeological interpretation, and sometimes not even a signboard indicating their historical significance. Nature has slowly reclaimed them. Trees grow through palace walls, bats inhabit audience halls, and monsoon rains steadily erase inscriptions that have survived for centuries. Yet these ruins possess an authenticity rarely found in restored monuments. They invite imagination rather than spectacle.

India's hidden heritage extends beyond forts and stepwells. Ancient Buddhist monasteries buried beneath village fields, megalithic burial sites preserved only by local traditions, rock paintings hidden in forested hills, forgotten temples overtaken by vegetation, medieval caravanserais along abandoned trade routes, and neglected observatories collectively narrate a civilisation far more diverse than conventional historical narratives suggest. Many of these sites continue to exist because local communities have quietly protected them for generations—not through formal conservation policies but through memory, folklore, seasonal rituals, and collective respect. Oral history has often succeeded where official documentation has failed.

This relationship between people and place deserves greater scholarly attention. The neglect of these monuments is not merely a conservation issue; it is also an issue of historical representation. Heritage recognition often favours grand imperial capitals while overlooking regional histories and local cultures. As a result, smaller communities rarely see themselves reflected in mainstream narratives of India's past. When a forgotten fort disappears, an entire regional history risks vanishing with it. When an abandoned stepwell collapses, centuries of indigenous knowledge about water management are lost. When an undocumented temple or archaeological mound is destroyed, future generations lose evidence that could reshape our understanding of India's cultural evolution.

Climate change has further intensified these threats. Increasingly erratic rainfall, flooding, vegetation growth, erosion, and expanding urbanisation accelerate the deterioration of already fragile structures. In many locations, illegal mining and unregulated construction pose even greater risks than natural decay. Conservation today must therefore move beyond restoring famous monuments. It must embrace landscape-level preservation that includes archaeological sites, traditional water systems, historical routes, surrounding ecosystems, and the communities that continue to live alongside them.

Technology offers new possibilities. Satellite mapping, drone-based documentation, three-dimensional scanning, artificial intelligence-assisted archaeological surveys, and digital heritage archives can preserve valuable information even when physical structures remain vulnerable. Equally important is community participation. Heritage survives longest when local residents become its custodians rather than passive observers. Universities, schools, researchers, and independent historians also have an essential role. Many forgotten monuments have never received systematic academic study. Countless inscriptions remain untranslated. Oral histories await documentation. Local archives remain unexplored. Every such effort enriches not only Indian history but the broader understanding of world civilisation.

International recognition should not depend solely upon monumental scale or architectural extravagance. Some of the world's most meaningful heritage survives precisely because it reflects everyday life rather than imperial grandeur. India's forgotten wells, village forts, abandoned trade routes, and hidden shrines embody the lived experiences of ordinary people across centuries. Perhaps that is why these places evoke such profound emotion.

Standing inside an abandoned fort where only birds interrupt the silence or descending the worn stone steps of an ancient baoli where sunlight gradually fades into cool shadows, one senses history not as a museum exhibit but as a living presence. These spaces remind us that civilisations are built as much by anonymous artisans, water engineers, farmers, traders, pilgrims, and local communities as by kings and emperors. Recognition begins with attention.

The future of India's hidden heritage will not be secured merely through legislation or tourism campaigns. It will depend upon whether society chooses to value these quiet monuments before they disappear forever. For every famous monument that represents India's glorious past, there are hundreds of forgotten ones still waiting to tell their stories. The question is not whether they deserve recognition. The question is whether we will recognise them before silence becomes their final historian.

# HIDDEN DESTINATIONS EVERY TRAVELLER SHOULD EXPERIENCE

*By: Ms. Pragya Tripathi*  
*Editor*



## **“Introduction- Beyond the postcard...”**

Ask any traveller what comes to mind when they picture India, and they will likely describe the sunset gleaming off the white marble of the Taj Mahal, the chaotic romance of Old Delhi’s bazaars, or the pastel pink palaces of Jaipur. These places are legendary for a reason. Yet, if you speak to anyone who has wandered off the beaten path, they will tell you a different story—one whispered in quiet forests, written across ancient stone walls, and held in the welcoming smiles of remote villages.

India’s true heart doesn’t always roar in its bustling cities; often, it hums softly in its hidden corners. Beyond the guidebook highlights lies an incredible, unseen tapestry of living architecture, high-mountain sanctuaries, and coastal time capsules. For the curious global traveller, these lesser-known destinations offer something far more precious than a photo opportunity: a chance to pause, connect, and witness the extraordinary ways human beings live in harmony with the world around them.

## **“The Whispering Forests of Meghalaya: Where Architecture Grows”**

High in the mist-shrouded East Khasi Hills of Northeast India, the air smells of fresh rain, moss, and wet earth. Here, the monsoon rain does not merely fall—it reshapes the world. In most places, torrential weather destroys human construction. But in Meghalaya, the indigenous Khasi people chose not to fight nature, but to grow alongside it.

Centuries ago, Khasi elders looked at the wild *Ficus elastica* (rubber trees) lining roaring river gorges and envisioned a living solution. By guiding the tree's young, pliable aerial roots through hollowed-out betel nut trunks across riverbanks, they slowly wove living footbridges (Jingkieng Jri). It takes anywhere from 15 to 20 years for a root bridge to form, but unlike concrete or steel, which rust and crumble, these bridges grow stronger and more resilient as the decades pass.

Walking across a double-decker living root bridge in the village of Nongriat is a spiritual experience. The humid air hums with the sound of cascading waterfalls, and beneath your feet, living roots hold firm. In nearby villages like Mawlynnong, famed for its community-driven cleanliness, every corner reflects a deep-rooted respect for the environment. It is a profound reminder for our fast-paced modern world that true human genius lies in patience, stewardship, and collaboration with the Earth.

## **“High in Zaskar: A Citadel of Silence and Soul”**

If Meghalaya is a lush green kingdom, Zaskar is a realm carved from raw rock, snow, and sky. Nestled in the high-altitude desert of Ladakh, Zaskar feels like a valley frozen in time. For months each winter, when snow locks the mountain passes, the valley can only be reached by walking along the Chadar—a frozen, shimmering ribbon of ice formed by the Zaskar River.

Clinging precariously to a sheer cliff wall high above the river, you will find Phuktal Monastery. From a distance, it looks like a giant, sun-bleached honeycomb built directly into the mouth of a massive natural cave. Founded over 800 years ago, Phuktal is still home to dozens of Buddhist monks whose daily chants echo softly through the stone canyons.

Life in Zaskar is rugged, yet the people possess a warmth that easily defies the freezing temperatures. Here, isolation has preserved a gentle way of life grounded in communal support, solar-heated mud-brick homes, and quiet contemplation. To sit with a monk at Phuktal, sharing a warm cup of salted butter tea while watching light dance across centuries-old murals, is to realize that true wealth isn't measured in possessions, but in peace of mind.

## “Chettinad’s Silent Mansions: Echoes of a Global Dream”

Heading south to the sun-warmed plains of Tamil Nadu, a completely different narrative unfolds in Chettinad. While world-famous for its aromatic, fiery cuisine, Chettinad hides an extraordinary architectural legacy that tells a fascinating tale of global connection.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Nattukottai Chettiars—a visionary community of international merchants and financiers—sailed across Southeast Asia. As they succeeded abroad, they brought their global experiences back home, building thousands of grand, palatial mansions in their ancestral villages. Stepping inside a Chettinad mansion in Karaikudi feels like entering a living museum of global history. You will walk across cool Italian marble floors, gaze up at carved Burmese teak pillars, admire handmade Athangudi floor tiles, and see Belgian crystal chandeliers glinting in the soft sunlight filtering through open-air courtyards (Thinnai). These empty palaces stand as majestic testaments to an era when global design and traditional Indian hospitality merged into something utterly timeless

## “Champaner-Pavagadh: The Sunken City of Harmony”

In the western state of Gujarat, nestled at the base of Pavagadh Hill, sits a UNESCO World Heritage site that surprisingly few international visitors ever see: Champaner-Pavagadh.

Centuries ago, Champaner was a bustling medieval capital where Hindu, Jain, and Islamic cultures coexisted and flourished. Today, it is a serene archaeological park where nature and historic stone ruins gently intermingle. The crown jewel of this city is the Jami Masjid, an architectural masterpiece featuring soaring minarets, intricate stone lattice windows (jalis), and cool, sunlit arcades.

Wandering through Champaner’s quiet, overgrown archways, you can almost hear the soft footsteps of ancient traders and the quiet prayers of long-ago scholars. It is a peaceful place where history doesn't feel like a lesson in a textbook—it feels like a living, breathing story waiting to be heard.

## “The Art of Travelling Mindfully”

Discovering India’s hidden destinations isn't just about escaping tourist crowds; it is about changing how we see the world. Whether it is learning ecological patience from the Khasi people, finding inner quiet in a Zanskari monastery, tracing history through a Chettinad courtyard, or discovering lost architecture in Gujarat, these journey spots invite us to slow down.

As we open our hearts to these quiet wonders, our responsibility as global travellers becomes clear: to tread lightly, listen deeply, and honor the local communities who keep these incredible stories alive.



# FOLK ARTS, FESTIVALS & HANDLOOM TRADITIONS THAT KEEP INDIA'S SOUL ALIVE

***By: Mr. Rahul Chaurase  
Editor***

India is a land of extraordinary cultural diversity, where each region has its own traditions, languages, art forms, festivals, and craftsmanship. This rich cultural heritage has evolved over thousands of years and continues to shape the nation's identity.

While historical monuments preserve India's architectural legacy, its folk arts, festivals, and handloom traditions embody a living heritage that is practiced, celebrated, and passed down from generation to generation. These traditions are more than mere cultural expressions; they reflect the history, values, beliefs, and creativity of communities across the country. They preserve local identities, strengthen social bonds, provide livelihoods to millions of artisans, and contribute significantly to India's cultural image on the global stage.

## The Significance of Folk Arts in India

Folk arts are traditional forms of artistic expression originating within local communities and passed down through generations. Unlike classical art forms, folk arts are closely connected to everyday life, local customs, and regional traditions. They often depict stories from mythology, nature, agriculture, festivals, and community life. Folk arts play an important role in preserving cultural identity. They help communities maintain their traditions while strengthening social unity. Through music, dance, painting, storytelling, and crafts, people celebrate their shared history and values. India is home to numerous folk art forms, each representing the uniqueness of its region.

Warli Art from Maharashtra is known for its simple geometric figures that beautifully portray village life, farming, and the relationship between humans and nature. Bhangra, the energetic folk dance of Punjab, originated as a harvest celebration and has today become one of India's most recognized cultural performances across the world.

## Festivals: Celebrating India's Living Heritage

Festivals are among the strongest expressions of India's living heritage. Every festival reflects the traditions, beliefs, and values of the communities that celebrate it. They bring people together regardless of age, occupation, or social background and strengthen the spirit of unity. Indian festivals are more than religious celebrations. They showcase local music, dance, folk performances, handicrafts, traditional cuisine, and rituals that have been preserved for generations. For example, Bihu in Assam celebrates the agricultural cycle through music, dance, and community gatherings. Similarly, festivals like Navratri, Onam, Pongal, and Durga Puja highlight India's rich cultural diversity while fostering social harmony and collective participation. Many festivals also provide opportunities for local artisans and performers to showcase their skills, helping traditional crafts survive in a rapidly changing society. Many festivals also provide opportunities for local artisans and performers to display their skills, helping traditional crafts survive in a rapidly changing society.

## Handloom Traditions: Threads of Culture and Identity

India's handloom industry represents one of the country's oldest and most respected traditional crafts. Every handwoven fabric reflects the history, creativity, and skill of the artisans who produce it. Different regions have developed their own distinctive weaving traditions. The luxurious Banarasi Silk from Uttar Pradesh is admired for its intricate designs and fine craftsmanship. Kanchipuram Silk from Tamil Nadu is known for its durability and vibrant colours, making it a preferred choice for traditional ceremonies. Chanderi from Madhya Pradesh combines elegance with lightweight weaving techniques, while Patola from Gujarat and Sambalpuri Ikat from Odisha demonstrate remarkable weaving precision and artistic excellence. For many rural communities, handloom weaving is not only a profession but also a cultural identity. Families often pass weaving techniques from one generation to the next, preserving traditions that have survived for centuries. However, the handloom sector faces increasing competition from machine-made products and changing consumer preferences. Despite these challenges, handloom continues to symbolize India's craftsmanship and cultural richness.

## Folk Arts, Festivals, and Handlooms in Modern India

As India continues to modernize, preserving its traditional heritage has become both a challenge and an opportunity. Globalization, urbanization, and industrial production have changed lifestyles and reduced the demand for many traditional crafts. Younger generations sometimes move away from family occupations in search of better economic opportunities, resulting in the gradual decline of traditional skills. At the same time, various government initiatives, NGOs, cultural institutions, and private organizations are working to revive these traditions. Handloom exhibitions, cultural festivals, artisan fairs, and skill development programs offer artisans opportunities to showcase their work and reach wider audiences. Digital platforms and social media have also transformed the way traditional crafts are promoted. Today, artisans can sell their products directly through online marketplaces, expanding their reach both within India and internationally.

## Case Studies: Living Examples of India's Cultural Heritage

Several traditions across India demonstrate how folk arts, festivals, and handloom practices continue to preserve living heritage. The graceful Ghoomar dance of Rajasthan represents the state's royal and folk traditions. Performed during festivals and special occasions, it symbolizes celebration, community participation, and cultural pride. The Bihu festival of Assam continues to preserve traditional music, dance, and agricultural customs, strengthening social bonds within the community while introducing visitors to Assam's rich cultural identity. The colourful Kutch embroidery of Gujarat reflects generations of artistic excellence. Its detailed patterns, vibrant colours, and handcrafted techniques have gained international recognition while providing livelihoods to thousands of women artisans. These examples demonstrate that living heritage remains relevant because communities continue to practice, celebrate, and adapt these traditions rather than simply preserving them as historical artifacts.

## Challenges and Opportunities

Despite their cultural importance, India's traditional heritage faces several challenges. Urbanization and modernization have reduced interest in many traditional occupations. Many artisans struggle with limited market access, low incomes, and increasing competition from mass-produced goods. In some cases, commercialization has also affected the authenticity of traditional art forms. However, these challenges also create new opportunities. Cultural tourism has increased appreciation for local traditions and crafts. Design collaborations between artisans and contemporary fashion designers have introduced traditional textiles to modern markets. Online platforms have enabled artisans to reach customers worldwide, while export opportunities continue to grow. Government grants, awareness campaigns, cultural festivals, educational initiatives, and digital media have all contributed to preserving and promoting India's rich cultural heritage. Cooperative societies and fair-trade organizations ensure better incomes for artisans, while workshops, exhibitions, and cultural festivals encourage younger generations to learn and appreciate traditional skills.

## Conclusion

Folk arts, festivals, and handloom traditions are far more than symbols of India's past—they are living expressions of its cultural identity. They preserve the stories, creativity, and wisdom of countless communities while strengthening the social and cultural fabric of the nation. As India embraces modernization, it is equally important to preserve the traditions that have shaped its civilization for centuries. Governments, cultural organizations, artisans, educational institutions, and individuals all have a role to play in protecting this priceless heritage. By supporting traditional artists, promoting handloom products, celebrating regional festivals, and encouraging younger generations to value indigenous knowledge, we ensure that India's living heritage continues to thrive. Preserving these traditions is not only about protecting history—it is about carrying forward the spirit, creativity, and identity that make India one of the world's richest cultural civilizations.



# Who Continues to Build a Better India

*By: Mr. Kartik Srivastava, Editor*

When we think of India's heroes, names of freedom fighters, scientists, sportspersons, and political leaders often come to mind, but are we able to give due credit to each one of them? We do know about Rani Laxmi Bai as one of the earliest women freedom fighters, but have we actually celebrated Jhalkari Bai, Uda Devi, Avanti Bai, or Velu Nachiyar? We know stories of Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad and many more, but there are many like Khudiram Bose, Sachindra Nath Sanyal who remain unsung. Likewise, beyond the spotlight are millions of ordinary people who quietly dedicate their lives to improving society. They rarely seek fame or recognition, yet their actions leave a lasting impact on communities and the nation. These individuals are India's unsung heroes- teachers, healthcare workers, innovators, environmentalists, farmers, sanitation workers, and social reformers who continue to build a better India through selfless service

One of the finest examples from recent scenarios is Sonam Wangchuk, an engineer, education reformer, and climate innovator from Ladakh. Rather than leaving his remote homeland in search of better opportunities, Wangchuk chose to solve the problems faced by the people of the Himalayas. He co-founded the Students' Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL), an institution that transformed education by promoting practical learning instead of rote memorisation.

He also developed the revolutionary Ice Stupa, an artificial glacier that stores winter water and releases it during spring, helping farmers overcome water shortages in the cold desert of Ladakh. His passive solar-heated buildings and the Himalayan Institute of Alternatives, Ladakh (HIAL) further demonstrate how innovation can improve lives while protecting the environment. His work has inspired thousands of young Indians to use science for the welfare of humankind rather than personal gain.

Another inspiring personality is Dashrath Manjhi, popularly known as the "Mountain Man of India." After losing his wife because medical help could not reach his village in time, he decided to carve out a road through a mountain using only a hammer and chisel. Working alone for 22 years, he created a 110-metre-long passage that reduced the distance between his village and the nearest town from nearly 55 kilometres to about 15 kilometres. His extraordinary determination improved access to healthcare, education and employment for thousands of villagers.

Environmental conservation also has its silent champions. Jadav Payeng spent over four decades planting trees on a barren sandbar of the Brahmaputra River in Assam. What began as an individual's effort gradually transformed into a dense forest covering hundreds of hectares, now home to elephants, deer, birds and many other species. His remarkable work demonstrates how one person's dedication can restore an entire ecosystem.

Similarly, Arunachalam Muruganantham challenged social taboos surrounding menstrual hygiene. He developed affordable sanitary-pad manufacturing machines that enabled rural women to produce low-cost sanitary napkins locally. His innovation improved women's health, created employment opportunities, and encouraged open discussions about menstrual hygiene across India.

Apart from these well-known examples, thousands of anonymous heroes continue to serve society every day. Teachers in remote villages cross rivers and mountains to educate children. ASHA workers travel from house to house, ensuring vaccination, maternal healthcare and nutrition. Farmers adopt sustainable farming methods despite uncertain weather, ensuring food security for millions. Sanitation workers maintain cleanliness in cities and villages, protecting public health through their often-overlooked efforts.

During natural disasters such as floods, cyclones and earthquakes, volunteers, police personnel, firefighters and members of disaster response teams risk their own lives to rescue strangers. Blood donors, organ donors and community volunteers regularly organise relief camps, food distribution drives and educational programmes without expecting recognition.

These stories remind us that nation-building is not achieved only through government policies or large industries. It also depends upon countless ordinary citizens performing extraordinary acts of kindness, courage and perseverance. Every teacher who educates a child, every doctor who serves in a clinic, every environmentalist who plants a tree, and every volunteer who helps the needy contributes to India's progress.

Young people have an important role to play in carrying forward this legacy. They can volunteer in community service, support local initiatives, promote environmental conservation, develop innovative solutions for local problems, and use technology responsibly to improve society. True patriotism lies not merely in celebrating national achievements but also in contributing positively to one's community.

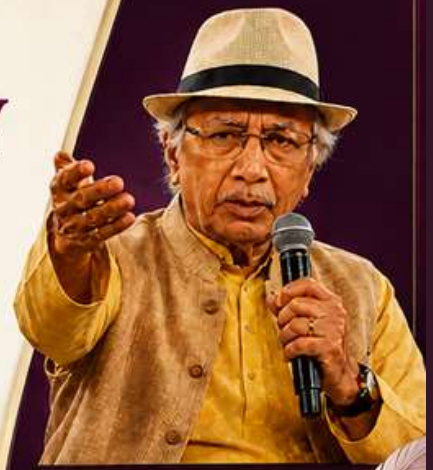
In a whole, India's real strength lies in its unsung heroes. Whether it is Sonam Wangchuk conserving water in Ladakh, Dashrath Manjhi carving a road through a mountain, Jadav Payeng creating a forest, or Arunachalam Muruganantham improving women's health, each of them proves that one determined individual can transform countless lives. Their stories inspire us to believe that greatness is measured not by fame or wealth but by the positive difference we create in the lives of others. By recognising and emulating these heroes, every citizen can participate in building a stronger, greener, healthier and more compassionate India.

A Luminary of Telugu Literature

# RAJA VASIREDDY MALLISWARI

Author | Ghazal Poetess | Researcher | Teacher | Critic | Lyricist | Children's Writer

*"A devoted custodian of Telugu language and literature, inspiring every heart that cherishes the richness of the mother tongue."*



English Translation by

**Mantri Pragada Markandeyulu**

+91 9951038802  
Hyderabad, India



## VARNIKA "The Letter That Never Reached You"



My Beloved Friend,

- ◆ If only you stood before me—how many melodies would spring to life! Within the cool serenity of your friendship, how many celestial fragrances would unfold! Like a tender vine of cherished emotions swaying beneath the warmth of your gaze, I would forever entwine myself around you. I would remain in your home as the perennial jasmine that blossoms in your courtyard, filling your abode with its fragrance.
- ◆ My friend, I would become an endless melody, a thrill coursing through every atom of your being. Like a lotus that opens its eyes only at rare moments, I would wait for you ceaselessly, with unwavering devotion.
- ◆ Like the radiant ponna blossom, our friendship shines with lyrical beauty. Like the graceful pogada flower, it unfolds with elegance, charm, and delight.
- ◆ As a dew-kissed drop adorning the eyes, as a perfect blossom that evokes affection, I would remain forever as the emblem of friendship's gentle greeting, ever beside your radiant smile.

- ◆ For years, I have flowed like a river in search of you—so deeply and so abundantly that the world itself might cast an envious glance upon us. And yet, after rejoicing in such boundless happiness, who can tell whether some unseen thorn of jealousy lurks beside our path? For the world, alas, harbours more envy than forbearance.
- ◆ And even if that hidden thorn should prove to be death itself, let me endure as love—flowing with love, like an immortal stream of nectar.
- ◆ With you... within you...
- ◆ May I become the sacred basil that flourishes in the courtyard of your home.

*May all auspiciousness be yours.*

*With love,*

*Your affectionate one,  
Priyatanamu*

### A DISTINGUISHED LITERARY JOURNEY

- ◆ Among the distinguished luminaries of contemporary Telugu literature, Raja Vasireddy Malliswari occupies a unique and eminent place as a multifaceted literary personality. She has earned widespread recognition as a creative writer, linguistic researcher, Telugu Ghazal poet, lyricist, literary critic, reviewer, eloquent speaker, and an accomplished author of children's literature. Her remarkable personality extends far beyond the conventional boundaries of authorship. She has emerged as a devoted custodian of Telugu language and literature, inspiring every heart that cherishes the richness of the mother tongue.
- ◆ Through her outstanding contributions to literature, language, music, Ghazals, children's literature, and linguistic research, Malliswari has consistently demonstrated exceptional versatility. Her tireless literary endeavours have not only enriched Telugu literature but have also showcased the grandeur, elegance, and cultural heritage of the Telugu language on both national and international platforms.
- ◆ Born in Mainenivaripalem, a picturesque village in Repalle Taluk of Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, Malliswari is the daughter of Smt. Satyavathi Devi and Sri Pundarikaksha Rao. From her early childhood, she nurtured an abiding passion for literature, language, and creative expression.
- ◆ She completed her education in Guntur, pursued M.A. in Telugu Literature at D.N.R. College, Bhimavaram, and later obtained B.Ed. in Guntur.
- ◆ She served as a Telugu teacher at Hyderabad Public School, Begumpet, inspiring thousands of students. To her, teaching was never merely a profession, but a noble mission devoted to preserving and perpetuating Telugu language and culture.
- ◆ Even amidst her demanding teaching responsibilities, she built an illustrious literary career, making her a rare example of dedication, discipline and passion.

### A LIFE DEDICATED TO LITERATURE

- |                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| ◆ Ghazal Poetess | ◆ Children's Writer          |
| ◆ Lyricist       | ◆ Literary Critic & Reviewer |
| ◆ Researcher     | ◆ Empowering Speaker         |

### AWARDS & HONOURS

She has received numerous awards and recognitions from prestigious literary, cultural and educational organizations for her valuable contributions.

### HER CREATIVE WORLD



Her writings reflect sensitivity, depth, simplicity and beauty. She continues to inspire generations through her words.

Profile & Write-up by  
**Mantri Pragada Markandeyulu**  
Author, Story, Script, Screenplay, Dialogue, Songwriter.  
+91 9951038802, Hyderabad, India

**Raja Vasireddy Malliswari**  
Author, Writer & Poetess  
+91 98665 83907  
Hyderabad (India)



# BLOOM IN GRACE

A PAINTING BY  
**KSHAMA URMILA**

“Bloom with all your heart,  
like a tiny flower  
swaying in the forest breeze,  
never worrying about  
who notices—  
for true beauty lies  
simply in blooming.”



A flower does not bloom for applause. It blooms because blooming is its nature. In this striking work, Kshama Urmila transforms a delicate flower into a meditation on authenticity, resilience and quiet beauty. Against the deep teal background, the layered pink petals seem to open beyond the canvas, suggesting that true expression does not depend upon recognition—it emerges naturally when one allows oneself to bloom.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kshama Urmila is a contemporary Indian artist whose work reflects a deep spiritual connect with nature, emotion and feminine grace. Working across acrylics, mixed media, sculpture and digital art, she brings colour, rhythm and soul to every creation. A painter, animator, sculptor and poet, she believes in using art as a medium of healing, joy and awakening.

With numerous exhibitions and recognitions to her credit, she continues to inspire art lovers across the globe with her heartfelt creations that celebrate life in its truest form.



ARTIST | PAINTER  
SCULPTOR | POET

📍 Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

☎ +91 93475 84892

✉ kshamaurmila.art@gmail.com

📱 @kshama\_urmila\_art



Scan to view  
more of her  
beautiful  
artworks

## ACHIEVEMENTS & RECOGNITIONS



Multiple  
National  
& International  
Exhibitions



Featured in leading  
art magazines  
and platforms



Collector's choice for  
private and institutional  
collections



Created 1,248  
Ganpati Paintings –  
Limca Book of  
Records Recognised



Recipient of  
National Creativity  
Award and other  
accolades

Her art is a gentle reminder that when we bloom authentically,  
we bring beauty, fragrance and joy to the world around us.

# Living Heritage: Preserving the Wisdom of the Past for the Future

*By: Mr. Rahul Chaurase*  
**Editor**



Heritage is often associated with ancient monuments, historical buildings, and museums. While these tangible remnants are important, true heritage is much more than what we can see. It resides in the living traditions, customs, languages, knowledge, and values passed down from generation to generation. This dynamic form of heritage, known as living heritage, continues to evolve while preserving the essence of the past. Living heritage reminds us that culture is not frozen in time. It evolves with people, adapts to changing circumstances, and continually shapes the identity of communities. In today's fast-paced world—where globalization and modernization influence nearly every aspect of life—preserving this living tradition is more vital than ever. It not only helps us understand our roots but also guides us toward building a more sustainable and inclusive future.

## **Indigenous Communities: The Guardians of Living Heritage**

Across India, indigenous communities have played a remarkable role in preserving living heritage. These communities have protected traditions and knowledge systems for centuries, not through written records but through everyday life. Their customs, stories, rituals, songs, crafts, and practices are actively passed down from elders to younger generations, ensuring that these traditions remain vibrant and alive."

For indigenous communities, heritage is not something displayed in a museum. It is part of their daily lives. It can be seen in how they celebrate festivals, cultivate crops, treat illnesses, build homes, and respect nature. Their way of life reflects a deep understanding of culture, community, and the environment.

## **India's Cultural Diversity and Traditional Knowledge Systems**

India's incredible cultural diversity—encompassing a multitude of languages, art forms, music, cuisines, festivals, and traditions—is one of the nation's greatest strengths. This rich tapestry of cultures contributes to a vast reservoir of traditional knowledge and practices that have been cultivated over centuries. Traditional knowledge systems developed over centuries through observation, experience, and close interaction with nature. They include agricultural methods, water conservation techniques, craftsmanship, architecture, food preservation, and healthcare practices. These systems may not always be documented in books, yet they contain valuable knowledge that continues to benefit society. In today's world, where sustainable development has become a global priority, many of these traditional practices offer practical solutions that modern societies can learn from.

## **Living Heritage and National Identity**

A nation's identity is built not only by its political or economic achievements but also by its cultural heritage. Living heritage connects people with their roots and creates a sense of belonging. It teaches values such as respect, cooperation, resilience, and harmony with nature. India's rich traditions have also contributed significantly to global cultural heritage. From yoga and classical music to traditional crafts and indigenous knowledge, many aspects of Indian culture are appreciated around the world. Protecting living heritage ensures that these valuable traditions continue to inspire future generations both nationally and internationally.

## **Preserving Knowledge Through Generations**

One of the greatest strengths of indigenous communities is their ability to preserve knowledge without relying solely on written documents. Oral traditions have been the foundation of this preservation for centuries. Storytelling—through tales, folklore, songs, myths, and historical narratives—serves as a vital means for passing down culture and values, ensuring that these traditions are preserved and understood by younger generations. Indigenous communities also preserve medicinal knowledge by using locally available herbs and natural resources. Rituals, ceremonies, and native languages continue to strengthen cultural identity while keeping ancient traditions alive.

## A Unique Relationship with Nature

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of indigenous communities is their relationship with nature. They view forests, rivers, mountains, and wildlife not merely as resources but as living parts of their cultural and spiritual life. Their agricultural methods often protect biodiversity rather than exploit it. Many communities practice sustainable farming, responsible harvesting, and water conservation, which maintains ecological balance. Their lifestyle demonstrates that development and environmental conservation can exist together when guided by respect for nature. In an era of climate change and environmental degradation, these practices provide valuable lessons for creating a more sustainable future.

## Examples of Preserved Wisdom and Practices

Several indigenous communities in India continue to preserve valuable ecological knowledge. The Bhil community has long been known for its understanding of forests, local biodiversity, and water conservation. Their traditional knowledge helps maintain ecological balance while supporting sustainable livelihoods. Similarly, the Gond community possesses extensive knowledge of forests, medicinal plants, and wildlife. Their traditions reflect a deep connection between humans and nature, while their distinctive art also tells stories of their environment and cultural beliefs. Traditional systems of medicine such as Ayurveda, Siddha, and various folk healing practices have also been preserved through generations. These systems emphasize preventive healthcare, natural remedies, and holistic well-being. Even today, many modern researchers continue to study these ancient medical traditions for their scientific and therapeutic value. Indigenous communities have also safeguarded India's rich artistic heritage. Traditional crafts such as handloom weaving, bamboo work, pottery, tribal paintings, and wood carving continue to thrive because skilled artisans pass their knowledge from one generation to the next. Festivals celebrated by these communities strengthen social bonds while preserving cultural identity, music, dance, and rituals.

## Stories That Keep Living Heritage Alive

### The Bishnoi Community: When Trees Became More Precious Than Life

Imagine standing in the scorching desert of Rajasthan in the year 1730. The silence of the village is suddenly broken by the sound of axes striking Khejri trunks. Soldiers sent by the king have arrived to cut them down for timber.

A woman named Amrita Devi Bishnoi walks toward the trees. She does not carry a weapon. She does not shout in anger. Instead, she quietly embraces the trunk of a Khejri tree. Her words, simple yet profound, echoed through history

"A chopped head is cheaper than a felled tree."

One by one, other villagers follow her. Men, women, and even children wrap their arms around the trees, refusing to move.

By the end of the day, 363 Bishnoi villagers had sacrificed their lives to protect the forest. This was not merely an act of protest. It was the result of a way of life built on the belief that nature and humanity are inseparable. Even today, the Bishnoi continue to protect wildlife, preserve forests, and live in harmony with their surroundings. Their story reminds us that environmental conservation is most effective when it is embedded in a community's values and way of life, rather than enforced solely through laws.

### **The Kurichiya Tribe: Learning from the Forest Instead of Controlling It**

Deep within the forests of Kerala, the Kurichiya tribe begins another day. The forest is more than a source of food or timber—it is a living companion. Generations have taught them that the earth should never be exhausted for short-term gain. Their agricultural methods are designed to protect and enhance biodiversity, rather than exploit natural resources, demonstrating a sustainable approach rooted in respect for nature." To an outsider, these practices may seem ancient. To the Kurichiya, they are simply the right way to live. Today, when sustainable farming and biodiversity conservation have become global concerns, the wisdom preserved by the Kurichiya demonstrates that many of the solutions we seek have existed within indigenous communities for centuries.

### **The Garo Community: Forests Protected by Faith**

In the hills of Meghalaya, there are forests where no one dares to cut a tree or disturb the land. These are the Sacred Groves of the Garo community. For generations, people have believed that these forests are home to ancestral spirits. Because of this belief, they have remained untouched by human exploitation. As a result, these sacred groves have become safe havens for countless species of birds, rare orchids, medicinal plants, and various wildlife. What began as a spiritual tradition has become one of nature's greatest protections. Sometimes, faith succeeds where rules cannot.

### **Conclusion**

Living heritage is more than a collection of traditions preserved from the past; it is a living source of wisdom that continues to guide communities even today. The knowledge, customs, languages, arts, and sustainable practices of indigenous communities remind us that true progress is not achieved by leaving our roots behind but by learning from them. Their way of life teaches us that culture and nature can coexist in harmony, offering valuable lessons for a world facing environmental and social challenges. As India moves forward in an age of rapid modernization and globalization, preserving living heritage becomes more important than ever. It is not only about protecting cultural identity but also about respecting the people who have safeguarded these traditions for generations. By recognizing and supporting indigenous knowledge systems, we preserve a priceless legacy for future generations while enriching the cultural heritage of humanity. Ultimately, a nation's true strength is measured not only by technological advancement but also by its ability to honour and preserve the timeless wisdom that has shaped its civilization for centuries.

# INDIA'S CULINARY HERITAGE, WELLNESS TRADITIONS & STORIES THAT UNITE US

*By: Ms. Pragya Tripathi*  
**Editor**



## Introduction: The Invisible Thread

Imagine sitting at a wooden table in a bustling coastal home in Kerala, where the air smells of freshly toasted coconut and crushed black pepper. Now, travel thousands of miles north to a sunlit courtyard in Punjab, where a grandmother is slow-stirring a pot of mustard greens over an open clay hearth. On the surface, these two scenes look, sound, and taste entirely different. The languages spoken are distinct; the landscapes could not be more varied.

Yet, despite these differences, both households are bound by the exact same unspoken philosophy: that food is love, wellness is balance, and guests are a blessing. India is vast and endlessly diverse, but beneath its surface runs a warm, human thread that connects every region, kitchen, and heart. This unity isn't built on rigid rules; it is nourished every single day through rich culinary traditions, ancient health wisdom, and the timeless art of sharing a meal.

## The Spice Box: India's Everyday Laboratory

To understand the heart of an Indian home, one must start in the kitchen (Rasoi) and look inside the circular stainless-steel spice box known as the Masala Dabba. To an outsider, it holds colorful powders and fragrant seeds. To an Indian cook, it holds a tradition of wellness passed down through generations.

In the Indian mindset, food (Anna) has never been treated merely as calories or fuel; it is revered as a source of vital life energy. Long before modern nutritional science mapped out antioxidants and digestive enzymes, Indian cooks understood the magic of their ingredients:

**Turmeric (Haldi):** Golden and earthy, added to daily dishes not just for its rich color, but for its innate power to heal inflammation and protect the body.

**Cumin (Jeera) & Carom Seeds (Ajwain):** Warmed gently in hot oil to unlock subtle flavors while soothing the digestive system.

**Asafoetida (Hing) & Ginger (Adrak):** Used intuitively to balance heavy lentils and keep the gut light and energized.

## Ayurveda: Living in Harmony with Nature's Rhythm

Parallel to this culinary wisdom lies Ayurveda—which translates beautifully to "The Science of Life." Developed thousands of years ago, Ayurveda is not a restrictive medical system; it is a gentle guide for living well.

At its core, Ayurveda reminds us that human beings are an inseparable part of nature. Just as the earth experiences seasons, tides, and changing weather, our bodies experience internal shifts. Wellness is simply the art of keeping ourselves in balance with these natural cycles.

This philosophy shapes daily life in ways big and small. It is the reason why summer meals feature refreshing cooling ingredients like raw mango, mint, and fresh buttermilk, while winter brings nutrient-dense sweets crafted from sesame seeds, jaggery, and golden ghee. It is why morning routines often include warm water, gentle stretches, and quiet breathing exercises (Pranayama).

Along with its sister discipline, Yoga, Ayurveda invites us to slow down, listen to our bodies, and treat ourselves with daily care and kindness.

## The Kitchen as a Sanctuary of Healing

Because food and well-being are so closely linked, the Indian kitchen functions naturally as the family's first wellness refuge.

When a child catches a seasonal cold, a mother doesn't immediately reach for a medicine bottle; she brews a warm, golden mug of turmeric-infused milk sweetened with honey. When someone feels tired or under the weather, a steaming bowl of Khichdi—a gentle, comforting dish of yellow lentils and rice simmered with ghee and cumin—is lovingly prepared.

These simple, time-tested remedies remind us that health doesn't have to be complicated or clinical. It can be warm, nourishing, and made with love right at home.

## "A Seat at the Table": Hospitality as a Sacred Tradition

Ultimately, what makes India's food and wellness culture so deeply moving is how naturally it extends outward to include others. At the core of Indian culture is the beloved phrase Atithi Devo Bhava, which means "The guest is equivalent to God."

Food in India is rarely cooked just for oneself; it is made to be shared. You see this human connection most vividly in institutions like the Langar at the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Here, in one of the world's largest community kitchens, volunteers prepare free hot meals for up to 100,000 people every single day. Visitors from every walk of life—regardless of background, social status, or belief—sit side-by-side on simple floor mats, breaking bread together in absolute equality and mutual respect.

You see it, too, in small rural villages, where a passing traveller is routinely invited indoors for a cup of steaming chai and freshly cooked flatbreads, served with a smile that needs no translation.

## Lessons for a Busy World

In our modern, fast-paced world—where meals are often eaten in a hurry in front of screens and wellness is often marketed as a luxury—India's living heritage offers a refreshing, soulful alternative. It reminds us to slow down, cook with intention, listen to our bodies, and open our doors to neighbors and strangers alike. For in the end, the stories that unite us aren't written in history books—they are shared across the dinner table, one warm meal at a time.

# REDISCOVERING UNESCO SITES & ARCHAEOLOGICAL LANDSCAPES

*By : Mr. Shashidhar Kumar*



When people imagine India's heritage, familiar images immediately come to mind—the ivory-white Taj Mahal, the intricate sculptures of Khajuraho, the majestic forts of Rajasthan, or the timeless caves of Ajanta and Ellora. These monuments have become symbols of India's civilizational grandeur, admired by millions across the world. Yet beyond these celebrated icons exists another India—one that rarely appears in travel brochures or international documentaries. It survives quietly in forgotten archaeological mounds, ancient Buddhist monasteries reclaimed by forests, prehistoric rock shelters, abandoned temple complexes, stepwells hidden beneath expanding cities, and UNESCO-recognized landscapes that receive only a fraction of the attention they deserve.

This is the India where history is not performed for tourists; it simply continues to breathe. India today possesses one of the world's richest archaeological landscapes. According to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the country contains more than 3,600 centrally protected monuments, while thousands of additional sites remain protected by state governments or await systematic excavation. Together they represent over five thousand years of continuous human history—from the urban planning of the Indus Valley Civilization to medieval kingdoms and living cultural traditions.

Yet global recognition often remains concentrated around only a handful of destinations. Even among UNESCO World Heritage Sites, several remarkable places continue to exist outside mainstream international tourism. Champaner–Pavagadh Archaeological Park in Gujarat presents an extraordinary blend of prehistoric settlements, Hindu and Jain temples, Islamic architecture, water systems, and an almost perfectly preserved medieval capital. Unlike many historic cities that evolved through continuous reconstruction, Champaner offers scholars a rare opportunity to understand an entire urban landscape frozen in time.

Far away in eastern India, the Mahabodhi Temple Complex in Bodh Gaya is universally revered as the place where Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment. Yet the surrounding archaeological landscape—including ancient monasteries, pilgrimage routes, inscriptions, and excavated remains—reveals centuries of intellectual exchange linking India with Sri Lanka, China, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia. It reminds us that India's heritage has always been deeply interconnected with global civilization.

In central India, the Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka preserve one of humanity's longest artistic traditions. More than 700 rock shelters contain prehistoric paintings created over thousands of years. Animals, hunting scenes, dances, rituals, and everyday life appear on sandstone walls with astonishing vitality. These paintings demonstrate that artistic expression long predates written language, offering a rare visual archive of early human imagination. Unlike museum collections enclosed behind glass, Bhimbetka remains part of its original landscape. Walking through its shelters feels less like visiting an archaeological site and more like entering humanity's earliest gallery.

Equally remarkable, though far less discussed internationally, are India's archaeological treasures beyond the UNESCO list. Across Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and western Uttar Pradesh, excavations at sites such as Rakhigarhi, Dholavira, Sinauli, and numerous lesser-known settlements continue to reshape our understanding of South Asia's ancient civilizations. Advanced drainage systems, standardized urban planning, sophisticated metallurgy, long-distance trade networks, and carefully designed water management reveal societies of remarkable scientific and organizational ability.

Each excavation reminds historians that many chapters of India's past remain unwritten. Perhaps the greatest lesson emerging from recent archaeology is that civilization rarely develops around isolated monuments. Instead, it grows through landscapes—through rivers, forests, agricultural fields, trade routes, reservoirs, sacred hills, and ordinary settlements where generations quietly shaped their communities. This broader understanding also explains why India's heritage cannot be reduced to magnificent palaces or imperial capitals alone.

A modest stepwell in Gujarat, a neglected Buddhist mound in Bihar, an abandoned caravanserai in Rajasthan, a forgotten fort in Bundelkhand, or a megalithic burial site in the hills of southern India may each preserve evidence capable of transforming historical scholarship. Many such places survive today because local communities became their unintended guardians. In village after village, oral traditions continue to protect ancient ruins whose formal histories remain undocumented. Sacred groves shelter forgotten temples. Seasonal festivals preserve memories of archaeological landscapes. Local elders recount legends attached to ruined forts, dried reservoirs, and abandoned monasteries, often preserving fragments of historical truth overlooked by written records.

Modern archaeology increasingly recognizes that community memory is itself an important historical source. The challenge facing India's hidden heritage today is not merely neglect but invisibility. Rapid urban expansion, illegal encroachments, uncontrolled tourism, mining, pollution, climate change, and inadequate conservation funding place enormous pressure upon lesser-known monuments. Many archaeological sites remain unprotected simply because they have not yet been fully documented. Others disappear beneath highways, housing projects, or expanding agriculture before systematic research can even begin.

Technology, however, offers new hope. Remote sensing, satellite imagery, LiDAR mapping, drone photography, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), three-dimensional laser scanning, and digital archives are revolutionizing archaeological research across India. These tools allow researchers to identify buried settlements, document fragile monuments with remarkable precision, and preserve digital records for future generations. Yet technology alone cannot preserve heritage.

Conservation succeeds only when local communities become equal partners. Heritage must create opportunities—for education, sustainable tourism, traditional craftsmanship, and cultural pride—rather than existing solely as an academic subject or government responsibility.

International recognition also requires a broader conversation about what constitutes world heritage. Too often, visibility depends upon monumental architecture or royal patronage.

Yet many of India's most significant archaeological landscapes tell the stories of ordinary people: farmers who engineered reservoirs, artisans who carved stepwells, monks who established learning centres, traders who connected continents, and communities that protected sacred places across centuries. Their contributions deserve equal recognition.

For researchers, India's hidden archaeological sites represent unanswered questions.

For travellers, they offer authentic encounters beyond crowded destinations.

For local communities, they embody identity and collective memory.

For humanity, they preserve evidence of one of the world's oldest continuous civilizations.

The future of India's hidden heritage will not be determined solely by UNESCO inscriptions or conservation budgets. It will depend upon whether we learn to value quiet places before they disappear, to document forgotten stories before memory fades, and to recognize that history often survives far from the spotlight. The world's greatest archaeological discoveries are not always those that stand tallest.

Sometimes they lie patiently beneath the earth, waiting for curiosity to uncover them—or they stand silently in forgotten corners of India, reminding us that the richest heritage is often the one we have yet to see.

**“History often survives far from...  
the spotlight.”**

**— Shashi Dhar Kumar**



# **Young Innovators, Rural Entrepreneurs & Grassroots Changemakers**

*By: Mr. Kartik Srivastava  
Editor*

India's future is being shaped not only in metropolitan cities and research laboratories but also in villages, small towns, and remote communities. Across the country, young innovators, rural entrepreneurs, and grassroots changemakers are finding practical solutions to local problems. They are using science, technology, traditional knowledge, and social entrepreneurship to improve agriculture, healthcare, education, environmental conservation, and livelihoods. Their stories prove that innovation is not about expensive and sophisticated technology alone; it is about solving real problems and creating lasting social impact.

A shining example of grassroots entrepreneurship is Mansukhbhai Prajapati from Gujarat. After the devastating Gujarat earthquake in 2001, he developed the Mitticool Refrigerator, a refrigerator made entirely of clay that works without electricity. Affordable, eco-friendly, and ideal for villages with unreliable electricity, the Mitticool refrigerator has received international appreciation. Prajapati's journey from a traditional potter to an internationally recognised innovator highlights the power of indigenous knowledge and perseverance.

India has also witnessed inspiring achievements in rural dairy entrepreneurship through Harichand Megha Dalaya, whose technological innovations contributed to the success of the cooperative dairy movement led by Verghese Kurien. Today, millions of rural families earn sustainable livelihoods through dairy cooperatives, making India one of the world's largest milk producers.

Innovation in agriculture has also transformed rural lives. Subhash Palekar, an agricultural scientist from Maharashtra, developed Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF), encouraging farmers to reduce dependence on expensive chemical fertilisers and pesticides. His methods promote soil health, lower cultivation costs, and improve environmental sustainability. Thousands of farmers across India have adopted these practices.

A remarkable example of women's entrepreneurship is Chetna Gala Sinha, founder of the Mann Deshi Foundation and the Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank. She recognised that rural women lacked access to banking services and financial literacy. Through microfinance, entrepreneurship training, and skill development, she has empowered thousands of women to establish businesses ranging from dairy farming and tailoring to food processing and handicrafts.

Grassroots innovation is also transforming healthcare. Dr. Venkataswamy, founder of Aravind Eye Care System, created an affordable, high-quality eye-care model that has restored vision to millions of people, especially those from economically weaker sections. By combining efficiency with compassion, Aravind has become a global model for accessible healthcare.

Education continues to benefit from dedicated changemakers and nation builders. Anand Kumar, founder of the Super 30 in Bihar, provides free coaching, accommodation, and mentorship to talented students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Hundreds of his students have secured admission to the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), proving that quality education can break the cycle of poverty.

Environmental sustainability is another area where grassroots-level leaders have excelled. Jadav Payeng, popularly known as the "Forest Man of India," spent decades planting trees on a barren sandbar of the Brahmaputra River. His efforts transformed the area into a thriving forest supporting diverse wildlife. His work reminds us that environmental restoration often begins with a single determined individual.

Young entrepreneurs are also using digital technology to improve rural livelihoods. Start-ups are helping farmers access weather forecasts, soil testing, crop advisory services, digital payments, and online marketplaces. These innovations reduce dependence on middlemen and increase farmers' incomes. Many young graduates are returning to their villages to establish agri-tech ventures, food-processing units, organic farms, and renewable energy enterprises, creating employment opportunities for local youth.

Government initiatives such as Startup India, Digital India, Skill India, Atal Innovation Mission, and the National Innovation Foundation have further encouraged entrepreneurship and grassroots innovation by providing financial support, incubation, mentoring, and skill development opportunities. However, the true driving force remains the determination and creativity of India's youth.

Despite their achievements, rural innovators continue to face challenges such as limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, lack of market access, and technological barriers. Strengthening rural infrastructure, promoting entrepreneurship education, expanding digital connectivity, and improving access to affordable finance can help these changemakers scale their innovations.

Educational institutions also have an important role to play. Schools and colleges should encourage creativity, critical thinking, scientific temper, and community engagement. Innovation clubs, hackathons, incubation centres, and village immersion programmes can inspire students to develop practical solutions for local challenges.

In a whole, young innovators, rural entrepreneurs, and grassroots changemakers represent the true spirit of a self-reliant and inclusive India. Whether it is Mansukhbhai Prajapati creating an electricity-free refrigerator, Chetna Gala Sinha empowering rural women, Anand Kumar transforming lives through education, or Jadav Payeng restoring forests, each story represents that meaningful change begins with one person's vision and determination. By encouraging innovation, supporting local entrepreneurship, and nurturing social responsibility, India can build a future that is prosperous, sustainable, and equitable for all.

# My Tribute to a Memory

*By: Dr. Suparna Banerjee*



There it stood, sedate, upright, propitious- a worthy sentinel of a family that had nurtured it. Our 'Neem' tree proudly extending its arms to softly caress those who had given it the status of 'benefactor'.

It stood steadfast right next to our main gate, cordoning off the Red Brick main building from curious eyes. The drive, halfway to the house, was canopied by our Neem, presenting an imposing picture.

Beneath its shade resided love, comfort, and gentility. It celebrated the journey of four generations, witnessing births, marriages, and deaths- forever comforting and instilling the emotion of hope in the inmates.

The kids played beneath its loving shade; the elders concluded rich discussions under its inviting shelter. It refused not to provide relief to all those who cared to halt awhile beneath its comforting canopy. It tolerated the annual pruning without any audible sigh, while its branches were shortened to prevent damage to the sheds below.

The monsoon witnessed the installation of the swing on its strong branch. It held the swing securely in place, smiling in delight to see the children swing to and fro merrily.

The fresh new leaves of our Neem were fed to adults and children alike by our grandmother and mother to immunize them against seasonal diseases and also as a blood-purifying agent.

Its mature leaves were used as antibacterial agents while storing winter clothing and blankets.

It stood firmly as a home physician, having a remedy for several ills. As a protective guardian, it welcomed its family and their friends with equal fervour. It smiled and sparkled through its leaves, singing a swishy song to the tune of the wind.

It served as a nesting ground for birds and squirrels. It was a delightful sight to see the squirrels scampering up and down the tree all day. The cuckoo sang illustriously from among the leafy greens. Our Neem consoled the derelict mind and kept many a secret of its family buried deep within its soul divine.

But, whenever the malevolence of Man is pitted against the benevolence of Nature, the result spells destruction.

Alas! The brutal human heart failed to reward our Neem with the care and protection it deserved in return for its munificence. The evil-hearted inmates, to spew venom upon those whom they despised and those who loved the Neem, axed down our Neem- whose cries went unheard, tears ignored- the living guardian lay slain and dismembered.

BUT it still could not curse the home and its inmates, who had flourished under its loving care.

Then the DIVINE took up its cause. The wrath of NATURE rang out loud and clear; the hand that had axed the Neem soon lay soulless in the dust. The RED BRICK house, having lost its companion, stood accursed and forlorn. Sans its mighty guardian, the house was soon ravished by alien hands, its precious glory flickering out like the flame of a little candle in the face of a powerful storm.

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## Growing up in India An Ode To The Unsterilised, Unapologetic Generation



**Mr. Ashok  
Manikoth**  
UAE  
Dubai

The cook wielded one knife like a sword— Tomatoes,  
dhaniya, butter brigade.  
No separate boards, no sterile rites,  
Yet we lived—no bloating, no ambulance lights.

Our sandwiches wore recycled couture—  
Wax paper from bread, tea foil demure.  
E. coli, fatty... No never,  
We ate, we ran, we laughed, with a healthy liver.

We cycled through germs like warriors of lore, Played on roads, lawns, gravel galore.  
Made mud utensils, sculpted divine,  
No Dettol wipes, yet we felt fine.

P.T. shoes—canvas, flat as fate,  
No air-cushion soles to elevate.  
We ran, we fell, we bruised, we healed,  
No orthopedic drama was ever revealed.

The cane, the duster, the slap of truth— Discipline wasn't abuse, it was youth.  
We bowed to elders, not trauma charts,  
Respect was earned, not torn apart.

Forty kids in one chalk-dusted den,  
We learned to spell, to count, to pen.  
No apps, no AI, no grammar bots—  
Just teachers, books, and ink blots.

We prayed in chorus, sang the anthem loud, No one sued, no one disavowed.  
Religion was rhythm, not a fight—  
Unity wasn't a copyright.

Detention meant shame, not therapy's gate, We didn't "process," we just stayed late.  
Pride was earned, not self-declared,  
Trophies came when we truly dared.

No PlayStation, no cable maze,  
Yet boredom never set ablaze.  
We climbed trees, not leaderboards,  
Our dopamine came from dusty chords.

Bee stings? Gravel wounds? Divine rites!  
Iodine dabbed, then parental smites.  
No ER drama, no legal fuss—  
Just a scolding and a healing crust.

No one had labels, no DSM tags,  
No ADHD, no dyslexia flags.  
We were just kids—some slow, some fast,  
No diagnosis to make it last.

No Prozac parades, no therapy squads,  
We vented through cricket, not mental facades.  
We were duped, they say, by simpler times— Yet we survived without pills or  
rhymes.

So here's to us—the unfiltered crew,  
Who drank tap water and still grew.

LOVE to all who shared this age,  
And to those who missed it—sorry, sage

We were, And Are, The Best Generation

**By Ashok Manikoth**

## The Girl Who Chooses Herself

She walks with her grace, a spirit free,  
Best friend of herself, she'll ever be.  
She waits for no one to support her whole,  
As her faith resides herself as a complete soul.

With her dreams to live and prove to shine,  
She writes her own story, working line by line.  
She trusts her heart, she knows her own way,  
Working more to grow, a little extra every day.

She finds happiness that let her mind ignite,  
A golden dawn, a shiny moon or a starry night.  
She find herself lucky, the God's favourite child,  
Who blessed her with love and make her smile.

She is grateful for everyone who comes in her life,  
Who improves her ability, make her soul divine.  
She keeps believing in good things in her way,  
She beautifully chooses self, progressing day by day.



**Ms. Ayushi  
Khawade  
Student  
Bhopal  
Madhya Pradesh**

## Like the first time...

My heart  
Close to your heart  
They wisper  
They talk like they know each other for years  
Your heart tonight  
Make love to my soul  
A love full of passion  
With care  
Respect  
Your heart tonight  
Show to me  
The magic moment  
Exist  
Your heart  
Touch my heart  
Like a child  
Your heart  
Has his own  
Prophetical knowledge  
You are a diamond  
But i had to climb  
The highest volcano  
So i can find you...



**Ms. EVA  
Petropoulou Lianou  
Greece**

## Environmental Conservation through our traditional Indian knowledge and Sustainable lifestyle

India has always viewed nature not just as a resource but also as a sacred companion, as mother nature, and as God. Since ancient times, Indian civilization has emphasized harmony between humans and the environment through religious beliefs, cultural traditions, festivals, folklore, and community practices. The concepts of Prithvi (Earth as Mother), Jal (Water), Vayu (Air), Agni (Fire), and Akash (Space) as the Panchamahabhutas (five great elements) reflect the deep ecological wisdom embedded in Indian culture. Long before modern environmental movements, Indian communities practiced sustainable living by protecting forests, conserving water, respecting wildlife, and celebrating biodiversity through festivals and rituals. These traditions have continued to offer valuable lessons for addressing today's environmental challenges.

One of the finest examples of India's environmental ethics is the tradition of sacred groves, locally known by different names such as Devrai in Maharashtra, Devarakadu in Karnataka, Kavu in Kerala, Oran in Rajasthan, and Law Kyntang in Meghalaya. These are patches of forests dedicated to local deities or ancestral spirits where cutting trees, hunting animals, or disturbing nature is strictly prohibited. Because of these religious beliefs, sacred groves have survived for centuries and have become reservoirs of biodiversity. Many rare medicinal plants, birds, reptiles, insects, and endangered species continue to thrive in these protected forests. They not only conserve biodiversity but also prevent soil from erosion, recharge groundwater, and regulate the local climate, demonstrating how cultural beliefs can effectively support environmental conservation.

Tree worship is another important aspect of Indian tradition. Different trees are associated with religious and medicinal significance. The Peepal (*Ficus religiosa*) tree is revered in Hinduism and Buddhism for its spiritual importance and exceptional oxygen production. The Banyan (*Ficus benghalensis*), India's national



**Mr. Kartik  
Srivastava**  
**Temp. Assistant  
professor**  
**Department of  
Environmental  
Studies,**  
**The Maharaja  
Sayajirao  
University of  
Baroda  
Gujarat  
Vadodara**

tree, symbolizes longevity and shelter. During the festival of Vat Savitri, married women worship the banyan tree and pray for the well-being and long life of their husbands. Scientifically, the banyan provides habitat for numerous birds, insects, and mammals while preventing soil erosion. The Tulsi (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*) plant is considered sacred in millions of Indian households. Besides its religious importance, Tulsi possesses antimicrobial and medicinal properties, purifies the surrounding air, and supports pollinators through its flowers.

Many Indian festivals are closely linked with nature and agriculture. Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Lohri, and Magh Bihu are celebrated after the harvest season and express gratitude to the Sun, soil, water, cattle, and farmers. During Pongal in Tamil Nadu, cattle are decorated and honoured for their indispensable contribution to agriculture. Govardhan Puja, celebrated after Deepavali, symbolizes the protection of nature and cattle. According to tradition, Lord Krishna encouraged people to worship Govardhan Hill, forests, and grazing lands instead of relying solely on rituals. This message highlights the importance of conserving natural ecosystems.

The festival of Vriksha Bandhan, inspired by the Raksha Bandhan tradition, has emerged in several regions where people tie sacred threads around trees as a pledge to protect them. Similarly, Van Mahotsav, celebrated every July, encourages mass tree plantation across India. Although introduced in the twentieth century, it resonates strongly with India's age-old tradition of tree worship and environmental stewardship.

Water conservation is also central in Indian culture. Rivers such as the Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Narmada, Kaveri, and Brahmaputra are worshipped as mother goddesses. While modern pollution threatens these rivers, traditional reverence promoted careful use of water resources and discouraged contamination. Ancient India developed remarkable water-harvesting systems, including stepwells (baolis), tanks, ponds, johads, ahars, pynes, and temple tanks, which collected rainwater and recharged groundwater. These systems demonstrate that environmental sustainability was integrated into community life long before the advent of modern engineering.

India's tribal communities provide some of the finest examples of sustainable resource management. The Bishnoi community of Rajasthan, founded by Guru Jambheshwar in the fifteenth century, follows twenty-nine principles emphasizing the protection of trees and wildlife. Bishnois are renowned for safeguarding

blackbucks, chinkaras, and Khejri trees even at great personal risk. In 1730, Amrita Devi Bishnoi and 363 Bishnoi men, women, and children sacrificed their lives while hugging Khejri trees to prevent them from being cut by royal soldiers. Their sacrifice inspired the modern Chipko Movement, where villagers, especially women led by Gaura Devi, embraced trees in the Himalayan region to prevent commercial logging.

Several tribal festivals also celebrate forests and biodiversity. The Sarhul festival of the Oraon, Munda, and Ho tribes of Jharkhand marks the arrival of spring and involves worship of the Sal tree, symbolizing the intimate relationship between forests and tribal life. The Karam Festival, celebrated by tribal communities in Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and West Bengal, revolves around the worship of the Karam tree, representing prosperity, fertility, and ecological balance. In the Khasi and Garo hills of Meghalaya, sacred forests are protected through traditional customs that forbid tree cutting or hunting. Several tribes consider different plant and animal species as totems. Totems are plants, animals or natural objects that are spiritually linked to deities and are not harmed or killed, for eg. Santhal tribe considers Forest wild cow and lizard fish as their totems and their killing or eating is completely forbidden.

Wildlife conservation is deeply embedded in Indian mythology. Many animals serve as the vehicles (vahanas) of Hindu deities: the peacock of Kartikeya, the lion of Goddess Durga, the mouse of Lord Ganesha, the owl of Goddess Lakshmi, the bull Nandi of Lord Shiva, and Garuda, the eagle associated with Lord Vishnu. Snakes are worshipped during Nag Panchami, promoting respect for reptiles that naturally control rodent populations. Monkeys are also revered because of Lord Hanuman, while elephants are honoured through Lord Ganesha. Such beliefs have historically reduced unnecessary killing of wildlife and promoted human and wildlife coexistence.

Traditional Indian agriculture also reflects environmental wisdom. Practices such as mixed cropping, crop rotation, agroforestry, conservation of indigenous seed varieties, organic manuring, and the use of cow dung and compost maintain soil fertility while reducing dependence on chemical inputs. Indigenous farming systems conserve biodiversity and improve resilience against climate variability. Many communities traditionally preserved sacred ponds, village forests, and grazing lands under collective management, ensuring sustainable use for future

generations.

The teachings of Indian religions have continuously advocated for the environmental ethics. Hinduism encourages non-violence (Ahimsa) and reverence for all forms of life. Jainism places extraordinary emphasis on protecting even the smallest living organisms. Buddhism teaches compassion toward every sentient being and promotes moderation in resource use. Sikhism emphasizes living in harmony with nature and earning one's livelihood through honest and sustainable means. These spiritual values reinforce ecological responsibility as a moral duty.

Despite rapid urbanization, climate change, pollution, and deforestation, India's traditional environmental practices remain highly relevant. Today, sacred groves contribute to biodiversity conservation, traditional water systems are being revived to address water scarcity, and community-based forest management is gaining renewed importance. Festivals are increasingly being celebrated with eco-friendly idols, natural colours, plastic-free decorations, and tree plantation drives, demonstrating that cultural traditions can evolve while preserving their environmental essence.

In a whole, India's traditional knowledge provides a remarkable example of sustainable living rooted in respect for nature. Sacred groves, tree worship, harvest festivals, tribal customs, wildlife reverence, water conservation, and ecological teachings illustrate that environmental conservation has always been an integral part of Indian civilization. The sacrifices of the Bishnoi community, the Chipko Movement, and the continued protection of sacred landscapes remind us that culture can become one of the most powerful instruments for conserving biodiversity. By integrating this rich traditional wisdom with modern scientific approaches, India can become able to build a future that is environmentally sustainable, culturally vibrant, and ecologically resilient.

**By Kartik Srivastava**

## Echoes of Silence

Imprisoned in a cage, I pleaded for release,  
Chasing distant horizons, bargaining for peace.  
Lost among echoes where fading hopes had ceased.

I searched the world for answers,  
But only silence increased.  
At last, I turned inward,  
Where the keys had quietly always been.



**Ms. Prashita**  
**Writer/Poet**  
**Shivpuri**  
**Madhya Pradesh**

## At the End of the Waiting

Ananya and Rahul grew up in the quiet, narrow lanes of North Kolkata. They were childhood sweethearts who did everything together. Every evening after college, they would meet at a small tea stall near College Street, sipping hot tea from clay cups and talking about their big dreams.



**Ms. Priyanka Sinha**  
**Author**  
**Kolkata**  
**West Bengal**

When Rahul received a scholarship to study and work in London, his happiness was mixed with sadness. Leaving Kolkata was difficult, but leaving Ananya was even harder. On his last evening in the city, they sat by the Hooghly River. Rahul took Ananya's hands, looked into her eyes, and said, "Please wait for me, Ananya. I will come back in three years, and I will marry you."

Ananya nodded through her tears and promised to wait.

Three long years passed. Life in Kolkata continued at its usual pace. Red trams glided along the tracks, and yellow taxis honked through the busy streets. But for Ananya, time seemed to move painfully slowly.

During Durga Puja, while the entire city sparkled with colorful lights and happy couples walked hand in hand, Ananya often felt lonely. As she turned twenty-six, her parents began encouraging her to consider arranged marriage proposals. Relatives introduced her to one eligible groom after another, but Ananya politely declined every proposal. Her heart belonged only to Rahul. They stayed connected through late-night phone calls, counting down the days until he returned home.

Finally, the long wait came to an end. On a rainy afternoon in October, Ananya received a text message from Rahul: "Meet me where we said goodbye."

Her heart raced. She wore a simple red sari and took a taxi to Princep Ghat. Raindrops fell gently over the river. When she reached the white

arches of the monument, she saw Rahul. He looked a little tired from the long flight from London, but his face lit up the moment he saw her.

Rahul walked toward her, took off his wet jacket, and knelt on one knee in the Kolkata rain. He held out a small red velvet box with a sparkling ring inside.

"I kept my promise," he said with a smile. "Will you marry me?"

Tears of joy mingled with the rain on Ananya's cheeks as she nodded and said, "Yes."

The long years of waiting were finally over, and the dream they had cherished together was about to come true.

**By Priyanka Sinha**

## Echoes of History and Heart: My Soulful Journey through Mattancherry, Cochin

(A Travel Memoir)

As the sky was cast with an unpredictable arrival of monsoon showers, one afternoon, while the world was slipping into a siesta, my family and I decided to spend some memorable moments at Marine Drive, Fort Kochi, and Mattancherry in Kerala.

Fort Kochi is known for its European colonial charm, tree-lined streets, the famous Chinese fishing nets, and historical sites like St. Francis Church. Mattancherry is renowned as a bustling trading and commercial hub, famous for its spice markets, antique shops, the Mattancherry Dutch Palace, Jew Town, and the Paradesi Synagogue.

As our cab neared its destination, we could see Marine Drive—the famous promenade along the backwaters—beckoning us with its shimmering waters, cool sea breeze, and the elegance of its stately presence amidst the hustle and bustle of people hanging around. I felt an unspoken invitation to step into a world where time had woven its silent, enduring stories.

Taking a stroll along the Marine Drive promenade, lounging there for a few hours as the day prepared to give way to the serenity of the golden hours, was a divine experience. Watching the younger generation's quirky poses for reels was amusing. I saw an elderly couple sitting on a cement bench, talking over silly nothings and relishing cardamom-laced tea. Their faces were calm and relaxed. Were they reminiscing about their younger days or pondering over the days ahead? The street vendors busily juggled between haggling and genuine buyers, eager to earn their day's livelihood.

From there, we headed to Mattancherry. The narrow streets, lined with vibrant colonial buildings, the irresistible aroma of freshly ground spices, and the sight of ancient Chinese fishing nets stretching into the sky—all beckoned me into a



**Mrs. Usha Krishnan**  
**Life Coach,**  
**NLP Coach &**  
**Educationist**  
**New Delhi**

world where time seemed to stand still. This was a place where cultures conspired and converged, stories embedded like pages in Kerala's history, and every corner reflected a piece of the past, waiting to be rediscovered. With my camera busy capturing snapshots, I embarked on a journey through the soul of Mattancherry, eager to uncover its secrets and be enlivened by the cool sea breeze carrying the waft of spices from the market and the fragrant aroma of antique shops in Jew Town.

We then stepped into Jew Town, a charming, narrow streetscape filled with antique shops, spice warehouses, and colonial-era architecture connecting to the Mattancherry Palace area. The entrance to Jew Town, with its signboard, was a welcoming sight, exhilarating me to merge into the throng of tourists and visitors. Every stone and pavement seemed to tell a story, murmuring over historical events.

Our next stop was the Paradesi Synagogue. The clock tower of the synagogue reminded me of the glorious times marked by the changing seasons. Built in 1568 in Jew Town, Mattancherry, the Paradesi Synagogue is one of the oldest in the Commonwealth of Nations. Its interior is a treasure trove of history—the hand-painted blue-and-white Chinese porcelain floor tiles, giant Belgian glass chandeliers, and ancient scrolls narrate stories of a thriving Jewish community that once played a vital role in Kochi's trade and culture.

One of the most mesmerizing sights in Fort Kochi was the Chinese fishing net. These enormous cantilevered nets, believed to have been introduced by Chinese traders in the 14th century, create hypnotic shadows over the water as fishermen skilfully operate them at dawn and dusk. They serve as a reminder of Kochi's historical role as a vital trading hub, connecting traders from across Asia, Africa, and Europe. The vibrant fish markets around them burst with colour, aroma, and lively chatter.

A visit to the IRS Perfume Factory in Jew Town was worth it. There, we saw the world's largest perfume bottle and the world's biggest natural handmade incense stick. The fragrance specialists demonstrated the process of making natural incense sticks and flower oils, offering a glimpse into the art of perfume making.

(The world's biggest perfume bottle contains jasmine perfume, free from alcohol. Its capacity is 3,600 litres, and it stands 10 feet tall. The big incense stick is made of sandalwood powder, sandalwood essential oil, natural resins, and kekar wood. Weighing 412 kilograms and measuring 69 feet long, it burns for over a month. It was created by 12 workers over two months.)

Throughout my journey, I encountered warm-hearted locals who welcomed me into their world. An elderly artisan in Jew Town shared his craft of weaving coir into decorative pieces, patiently explaining the process and offering me a small handmade souvenir. These moments of connection added depth and authenticity to my experience, transforming it from mere sightseeing into a heartfelt immersion.

#### The City's Silent Promise

On our way, the cab driver's words lingered in my mind like a gentle melody: "This city will say no to no one, but for those who listen, it teaches you to let go." His voice carried the wisdom of someone who had seen many seasons pass, warning that a few hours spent wandering on Marine Drive Beach could be enough—a simple yet profound truth. To lounge by the shore, watch the waves kiss the sands, and breathe in the salty air was to recharge the spirit for the days ahead. In that quiet moment, I understood the power of stillness amid chaos—the magic of surrendering to nature's rhythm.

#### A Smile That Warmed My Heart

On the bustling streets, I met an old lady—a gentle soul with a cherishable smile that radiated warmth and kindness. She was selling souvenirs—humble tokens of a city rich with stories. Her smile, simple yet profound, felt like a silent greeting from an old friend. When I paused to look at her handcrafted offerings, she looked up and offered a smile that felt like a tender embrace. In that exchange, I found a mirror of the city's true essence—a place where genuine connection resides in small gestures and shared moments that transcend language and time.

#### The Flavours of Authenticity

My senses came alive as I tasted traditional appam—a soft, fluffy pancake made from fermented rice batter—paired with flavourful vegetable stew, banana fritters, and ginger-cardamom tea from a modest local restaurant. It was a true

immersion into authenticity.

As darkness fell, we reluctantly decided to call it a day.

This journey reminded me that travel is not just about seeing new places but about exploring the stories that shape them. Mattancherry's charismatic charm lies in its ability to bridge the past with the present, inviting every visitor to become part of its ongoing story.

This trip was more than a journey through landscapes; it was a voyage toward my inner self. It refreshed and rejuvenated my spirit. The moments of stillness by Marine Drive, the heartfelt smile of the old lady, and the richness of heritage and culture embedded everywhere—all became my treasures. I experienced mindfulness in each moment, realizing that, despite my worries and fumes, I could find peace. So, I joined my family to return home.

The famous line, "Not all those who wander are lost, from J.R.R. Tolkien's poem, resonated within me on my way back home.

**By Usha Krishnan**

## Nothing In This World Can Be Unsuccessful

Nothing In This World Can Be Unsuccessful,

Nothing In This World Can Be Unsuccessful.

If a person gets scared of laughing openly, Then Good  
Harmones can not be grown in his/ her mind.

If a person becomes shy while smiling openly, Then  
Stress-Reducing Harmones can not be reduced.

If a person misses laughing loudly, he/ she can not  
experience energy.

If the new one Fresher is afraid of the Waves, he/she can  
not cross the river.

There can be no cheering in Society without some good  
service.

Those who try again and again, never fail to win.

If Courage and Determination are Strong, Then Poverty, Age and Circumstances  
are not a barrier.

The Sin of Lying, Stealing, Showing Fake Certificates and getting a position and  
post, can not be stopped from Downfall.

A Beautiful Lie , No Matter How Impressive and Attractive, can not become the  
real Truth.

Truth may be troubled or tortured but it can not be defeated or died.

If the Path, Knowledge, Association and Resources should be correct, Then  
Nothing In This World Can Be Unsuccessful,

Nothing In This World Can Be Unsuccessful.



**Mr. Vinod Kumar  
Jha  
Poet  
Darbhanga  
Bihar**



## Until We Discover India Again

As we come to the end of this special journey, perhaps one thought remains with us:

How much of India is still waiting to be discovered?

We began this edition looking for the India beyond the familiar—and found that she was everywhere.

She was in ancient landscapes quietly holding the memories of civilizations. She was in kitchens where generations turned food into nourishment and love. She was in traditions carried from one generation to another, in artisans keeping forgotten crafts alive, and in young minds creating solutions from the simplest of needs. She was in the courage of those who serve, the wisdom of those who preserve, and the dreams of those who continue to build.

The stories in these pages remind us that a nation is not made only by its monuments, its history or its achievements.

A nation is made by its people.

And perhaps patriotism is not always a grand gesture. Sometimes, it is simply caring for what has been entrusted to us—our language, our heritage, our environment, our communities, our values and the stories of those who came before us.

India has given the world countless stories. Many have already been told. Many more are still waiting.

So, when this edition closes, let our curiosity remain open.

Look beyond the famous road.

Listen to the unheard voice.

Visit the forgotten place.

Ask about the tradition that your grandparents remember.

Celebrate the person who serves without recognition.

For somewhere, in an ordinary village, an ancient ruin, a quiet kitchen, a forgotten craft or an unknown young mind, another extraordinary India is waiting to be discovered.

And perhaps that is the most beautiful way to celebrate our freedom:

not merely by remembering the India we inherited,

but by discovering, preserving and creating the India we will leave behind.

Jai Hind. 🇮🇳

— Panache Ink Editorial Team

Independence Day Special | Hidden India

## **Until We Meet Again...**

Every page you have turned is more than ink on paper—it is a collection of ideas, voices, and dreams that have the power to inspire change.

Thank you for being a part of the Panache Ink family and for celebrating literature, creativity, and meaningful conversations with us. Every reader, writer, and contributor adds a new chapter to our journey of connecting minds across the world.

As you close this edition, we hope you carry forward not just the stories you have read, but the inspiration to create your own.

Keep reading. Keep writing. Keep questioning. Keep creating.

Because every great change begins with a single thought—and every thought deserves a voice.

We look forward to meeting you again in our next edition.

Until then, stay inspired.

– Team Panache Ink

