

Abstract Submission for

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**Theme**

Cultural and Creative Industries

**Title**

*Harnessing Cultural Capital: How Indian Large-Scale Cultural Festivals Contribute to Economy*

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**Abstract:**

India's Culture and creative industry represent a vast and dynamic sector that contributes significantly to the nation's economic and social fabric. With its rich and diverse cultural heritage, India has the potential to leverage cultural capital as a major driver of economic growth. Cultural tourism and festivals not only boost the country's GDP but sustain the culturally driven society by fostering employment and preserving heritage. However, several new generations of artisans and performers are shifting away from these traditions as they do not see it as fruitful. The increasing focus and recent developments in the cultural sector with the help of Government initiatives has demonstrated substantial economic benefits and showed that a stringer policy – driven approach could yield even greater results.

This research looks at two major case studies – The Rann of Kutch Festival and the Maha Kumbh mela – both of which illustrate the immense economic and cultural potential of India's creative industries. The Rann of Kutch Festival, initiated by the Gujarat Government in 2005, transforms a previously barren desert into a thriving economic hub for 3 months. Annually attracting over 1 lakh tourists, this festival contributes significantly to local employment, artisan engagement and hospitality services. The festival generated an estimated 500 crore rupees in the year 2023-24, with artisans and craftsmen witnessing almost 2 times increase in their income due to the direct sales of handicrafts and textiles. Similarly, the Maha Kumbh and Kumbh Mela are one of the largest congregations of human activity globally with a deep-rooted history going back to centuries. The Maha Kumbh in 2025 is expected to generate a revenue between Rs 2-4 lakh crore. The estimated economic impact in 2019 was over 1.5 lakh crore rupees. The event provides employment to over 6 lakh people from diverse sectors such as transport, accommodation food services and religious tourism, fostering economic upliftment among local communities.

These festivals serve as important instruments for sustainability for the communities, beyond Economic metrics for the country. The transmission of traditional skills, storytelling and indigenous practices is reinforced through participation in cultural events, ensuring their continuity for future generations. Moreover, these industries promote rural development by incorporating local stakeholders into the larger economy, thereby reducing the challenge of urban migration and fostering regional prosperity.

This research explores how cultural and creative industries contribute in economic development, with a particular focus on large-scale Indian festivals. The study uses a mixed-method approach, thereby incorporating both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The Data collection methods include primary sources as well as secondary sources. The study highlights the need for comprehensive policy frameworks that integrate long-term benefits. By highlighting the economic viability of cultural industries in India, it underscores the potential of such soft powers to drive India's future growth and conservation of traditions and Ideas.

**Keywords:**

Cultural Tourism, Kumbh Mela, Rann Utsav, GDP, Government Schemes, GI Tagged Products