



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## Rajasthani Diaspora: Navigating The Global Web Of Culture And Commerce

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### Abstract

The Rajasthani Diaspora (India) represents a vibrant and culturally rich community spread across the globe. This article aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of the Rajasthani Diaspora shedding light on their cultural heritage, notable achievements, and the intricate network of connections that bind them together.

The research utilizes a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Quantitative data is obtained from surveys, magazines & journals, while qualitative data is gathered through in-depth interviews, focus groups and ethnographic observations. These methods allow for a holistic understanding of the Rajasthani Diaspora and its multifaceted dynamics.

The article explores the cultural aspects of the Rajasthani Diaspora including traditions, customs, language, arts and festivals. It highlights the residences and adaptability of Rajasthani cultural practices as they are preserved and transformed in diverse host societies. The research underscores the cultural exchange that occurs, resulting in the development of unique hybrid identities and enriching both the Diaspora and the local cultures they interact with. The article examines the achievements of Rajasthani Diaspora in various fields and explores the factors that have contributed to their success, such as entrepreneurial skills and strong community networks. The study also evaluates the impact of their contributions on the host societies and Rajasthan itself, fostering economic development, cultural enrichment and knowledge exchange. The interconnectedness of the Rajasthani Diaspora is a significant focus of this research. It explores the social networks and community organizations that facilitate communication, collaboration and support among

Diaspora members. Overall, this research contributes to the understanding of Diaspora communities and their cultural preservation, achievements and social cohesion.

**Key words-** Diaspora, Rajasthan, cultural, trade, entrepreneurship, community, development

## **Introduction**

Diaspora emerges out of migrations of collectives. They are long-term, if not permanent, community formations. Migration has been a common phenomenon for a long time and the term refers to a historically-specific matrix of economic, political and cultural relationships that helps constitute transnational communities, imagined and encountered. Basically it is movement of people across borders and thus, movement of ideas, new skills and technical know-how result in the benefits not only for the receiving countries but also for the sending countries.

Diaspora is a symbol of state's pride and represents it internationally. They are the people who have migrated from territories of state due to different reasons. They play a significant role in remittances, technological development and entrepreneurship, cultural extension and are agents of change. It can help a country onto an altogether different path of growth and development by increasing international trade, investment, by their knowledge, innovation, professionalism and management techniques.

The Rajasthani Diaspora, the result of different waves of migration, is a vibrant community scattered across the globe. They represent communities and individuals who trace their roots back to Rajasthan, a culturally diverse and historically rich state in India. They have not only increased in numbers but have also been gaining universal recognition for the unique contributions to its host countries as well as home state. From entrepreneurs and professionals to artists, Rajasthani diaspora have made significant contributions in various fields while keeping their heritage and traditions alive. This article delves into the Rajasthani Diaspora, highlighting its global presence, cultural preservation efforts, and the ways in which it strengthens connections between Rajasthan and the world. We can gain valuable insights into the Rajasthani Diaspora.

## **Background of the Rajasthani Diaspora**

The Rajasthani Diaspora traces its origins to historical periods of migration, influenced by factors such as trade, colonialism and economic opportunities that connected Rajasthan with different parts of the world. For centuries, Rajasthan served as a hub of commerce, attracting traders, merchants and artisans from distant lands. These individuals ventured beyond the borders of Rajasthan, embarking on journeys to regions such as Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Caribbean and beyond. Their interactions with local communities laid the foundation for the Diaspora we witness today.

## Purpose of article

The purpose of this article is twofold. Firstly, it aims to shed light on the rich cultural heritage of the Rajasthani Diaspora and explore how it has been preserved and disseminated across the globe. Rajasthani culture is characterized by its vibrant festivals, melodious music, mesmerizing dance forms, and delectable cuisine. By examining the ways in which the Diaspora has spread and nurtured these cultural traditions, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the role they play in fostering a sense of identity and pride among Rajasthani communities worldwide.

Secondly, this article seeks to highlight the remarkable achievements of the Rajasthani Diaspora in various domains. From successful entrepreneurs and business leaders to renowned academics and professionals, members of the Diaspora have made significant contributions to their adopted countries. By showcasing their accomplishments, we can recognize the impact of their talent, skills, and work ethic, and appreciate their role as cultural ambassadors for Rajasthan.

Furthermore, by understanding the enduring connections the Diaspora maintains with Rajasthan, we can explore how these ties contribute to mutual understanding and collaboration. Many individuals and organizations within the Diaspora actively engage in philanthropic endeavors and social initiatives, supporting education, healthcare, and community development in their homeland. This article aims to delve into these connections and shed light on the ways in which the Rajasthani Diaspora continues to make a positive impact on Rajasthan and its people.

## Historical background

The Rajasthani Diaspora refers to the communities of people of Rajasthani origin who have settled outside of the Indian state of Rajasthan. The Rajasthani overseas communities are the result of different waves of migration who over the centuries, due to historical factors, migrated to different parts of India and the world. Acknowledging that the state's migration history and current conditions of migrant influence these perceptions, this paper begins with little discussion on Diaspora in general and later on by describing Rajasthani migration from Mughal period to early colonial period to the present day and presents the current geography of Diaspora by exposing the main concentration areas. Not only does the diversity reflect the variability in the stages and patterns of migration as well as the diversity of Rajasthani society, but also results from regional variances in the receiving nation. The Rajasthani Diaspora, however, derives a commonality from their Rajasthani heritage; therefore their identity is a play between the divergence and the defining Rajasthani mark.

### A. Early Migrations and Trade routes:

The Rajasthani Diaspora has its roots in the historical migrations and trade routes that connected Rajasthan with different parts of the world. Rajasthan, known for its strategic geographical location, served as a hub of trade and commerce throughout history. The region's prosperous cities, such as Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Udaipur and Shekhawati region, attracted merchant's traders, and artisans from distant lands. These individuals embarked on journeys to various regions, establishing

commercial networks and cultural ties. These early interactions laid the foundation for the Diaspora we see today. Here are some key historical factors that have influenced Rajasthani migration-

- a) **The Silk Route:** Rajasthan was a significant stop along the ancient Silk Route, a network of trade routes connecting the East and the West. Traders from Central Asia, China and the Middle East would traverse the arid landscapes of Rajasthan bringing with them valuable goods, knowledge and cultural influences.
- b) **Maritime Trade:** Rajasthan's proximity to the Arabian Sea enabled maritime trade with countries in the Middle East Africa and Southeast Asia. Rajasthani merchants would navigate the oceanic routes and travelled extensively, establishing robust trade connections and fostering cultural exchanges with coastal regions.
- c) **Mughal Empire:** Rajasthan came under the influence of the Mughal Empire during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Mughals encouraged trade and commerce, leading to increased migration of Rajasthani merchants to different parts of India and neighbouring regions.
- d) **Colonial Era:** During the British colonial period, Rajasthan, like the rest of India, experienced significant political and economic changes. Apart from business, many Rajasthani people migrated to other parts of British India in search of employment, particularly as soldiers, labourers and workers in the railway and construction sites.
- e) **Partition of India:** The partition of India resulted in the migration of millions of people across religious lines. Many Rajasthani Hindu who were living in present-day Pakistan migrated to India, while Muslims from Rajasthan moved to Pakistan and Bangladesh. The massive migration reshaped the demographic of the region and led to the establishment of Rajasthani communities in different parts of India.
- f) **Global Migration:** In recent times, Rajasthani Diaspora communities have also emerged in various countries due to economic opportunities, education and other factors. Rajasthani professionals, entrepreneurs and skilled workers have settled in countries like the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and the Gulf countries, among others.

## **B. Influence of Historical Interactions on the Diaspora:**

The historical interactions facilitated by migrations and trade routes played a pivotal role in shaping the Rajasthani Diaspora and influencing its cultural identity.

- a) **Cultural Fusion:** As Rajasthani traders and merchants ventured into new territories, they encountered diverse cultures, traditions and languages. This cultural fusion resulted in the assimilation of external influences into the Rajasthani cultural; creating a unique blend of traditions that is evident in the Diaspora's practices today.

- b) **Artistic Exchanges:** The interactions between Rajasthani artisans and their counterparts in foreign lands resulted in the exchange of artistic techniques, designs and craftsmanship. These artistic influences can be observed in the intricate Rajasthani artwork, including paintings, textiles, jewellery and architecture.
- c) **Language and Literature:** While retaining their Rajasthani origins, Rajasthani migrants acquired local languages and dialects. The language variety of the Diaspora reflects historical contacts and linguistic adaptation that happened during their voyages.
- d) **Religious Practices:** the Diaspora's historical interactions also influenced religious practices. Rajasthani migrants encountered different faiths and belief systems, leading to syncretism and the adoption of new religious practices while maintaining their core Rajasthani religious traditions.

Overall, the historical background of the Rajasthani Diaspora is shaped by centuries of migration resulting from trade, colonialism, political changes and economic opportunities. The Diaspora's cultural identity is deeply rooted in these historical interactions, reflecting a rich amalgamation of influences from diverse regions and through the preservation of traditional art forms, festivals and cuisine. Rajasthani folk music, dance forms like Ghoomar, Kalbelia and Rajput architecture have also gained popularity globally due to the efforts of the Diaspora in promoting and preserving their heritage. Understanding the historical background allows us to appreciate the Diaspora's diverse cultural heritage and explores the enduring connections they maintain with Rajasthan. These migrations have contributed to the dispersion of Rajasthani culture and traditions around the world creating a vibrant and diverse Diaspora community.

In the subsequent sections of this article, we will further explore the cultural influence, achievements and connections of the Rajasthani Diaspora, highlighting their contributions to various fields and their ongoing ties with their ancestral land. By examining these aspects, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of the global impact and significance of the Rajasthani overseas community.

## Cultural Influence

The Rajasthani Diaspora dispersed across the world, preserving traditions and fostering connections with their ancestral land represents a vibrant community that has made significant contributions in various fields and has highlighted their role in spreading Rajasthani culture. By examining their contributions to festivals, music, dance, cuisine and the pivotal role of cultural organizations and community events, we gain insight into the enduring legacy of Rajasthani culture worldwide.

## A. Spread of Rajasthani culture across the globe

The Rajasthani Diaspora has played a crucial role in disseminating Rajasthani culture to diverse corners of the world. Through the migration, they have carried with them the essence of Rajasthan's rich heritage, traditions and artistic practices, infusing their new surroundings with a touch of Rajasthani vibrancy.

i. **Arts & Crafts:** The state is known for its vibrant folk traditions and majestic architecture. Rajasthani artisans, both past and present have showcased their exceptional skills in traditional art forms such as miniature paintings, block printing, pottery and textiles. These exquisite artworks find their way into galleries, museums and homes worldwide, contributing to the global appreciation of Rajasthani craftsmanship. These crafts have influenced global fashion, interior design and art movements.

ii. **Architecture:** The architectural grandeur of Rajasthan, characterized by intricate palaces, havelis (mansions) and forts has left an indelible impression on Rajasthani communities staying outside Rajasthan. Elements of Rajasthan architecture can be found in temples, residential buildings, intricately carved jharokhas (balconies), ornamental frescoes and public structures, serving as enduring symbols of Rajasthan's rich architectural heritage that have influenced architectural styles in different parts of India and beyond.

## B. Festivals, music, dance and cuisine:

The Rajasthani Diaspora has preserved and celebrated the spirit of Rajasthan through vibrant festivals, captivating music, energetic dance forms and delectable cuisine. These cultural elements have become vehicles for showcasing Rajasthani traditions and fostering a sense of unity and pride among the Diaspora and the wider community.

a) **Festivals:** Festivals of Rajasthan, such as Diwali, Holi, Teej and Gangaur, are celebrated with great enthusiasm and traditional fervor by the Diaspora. These celebrations provide an opportunity to showcase rituals, colourful attire and folk performances, allowing the wider community to experience the richness of Rajasthan culture.

b) **Music and Dance:** Rajasthani music, characterized by soulful melodies and rhythmic beats, has found international acclaim. The Diaspora actively promotes Rajasthani music through performances, concerts and cultural exchanges, ensuring that this traditional art form thrives globally. Famous for its lively folk music and dance forms like Ghoomar, Kalbelia and Kathputli, these art forms have gained popularity and captivated audiences worldwide showcasing the grace and cultural heritage of Rajasthan.

c) **Cuisine:** Rajasthani cuisine, with its unique blend of flavors and royal culinary traditions, has found place on global culinary maps. Unique dishes and local delights of the region like Dal Bati Churma, Gatte ki Sabzi and Laal Maas have been introduced by the Diaspora. The Diaspora has



established restaurants, organized food festivals and shared traditional recipes, introducing people to the rich gastronomic delights of Rajasthan.

### C. Role of cultural organizations and community events:

Cultural organizations and community events play a vital role in preserving and promoting Rajasthani traditions among the Diaspora and the wider community. These platforms provide spaces for cultural exchange, learning and fostering connections with Rajasthan.

a) **Cultural Organizations:** Rajasthani Diaspora communities have established cultural organizations that actively promote and preserve Rajasthani cultural heritage through arts, crafts, music and dance. These organizations organize workshops, exhibitions and performances, keeping the cultural flame alive and passing it on to future generations.

b) **Community Events:** Various community events, such as Rajasthani cultural festivals, melas (fairs) and cultural showcases, bring together people of Rajasthani heritage, providing a platform for cultural expression and strengthening community bonds. These events and festivals often feature Rajasthani music, dance, food and handicrafts, serving as opportunities for the wider community to immerse them in the richness of the State's culture. Such events provide a platform to celebrate their traditions and promote cultural exchange with the local population.

c) **Philanthropy and Social Causes:** Rajasthani Diaspora, individuals and organizations actively participate in philanthropic activities and support social causes in both their host countries and Rajasthan. They contribute to education, healthcare and other development initiatives.

The Rajasthani Diaspora is spread across various countries and has contributed to the cultural diversity of their adopted countries in several ways. Overall, it has played a significant role in promoting Rajasthani culture and traditions globally, fostering cross-cultural understanding and maintaining strong connections with their homeland. Through their engagement in cultural organizations and participation in community events, the Rajasthani Diaspora has nurtured a sense of unity and pride in their cultural heritage. These platforms foster connections among Diaspora members create opportunities for cultural preservation and act as bridges between the Diaspora and Rajasthan.

### Economic Contributions

The Rajasthani Diaspora, spanning across the globe, is not only a vibrant cultural community but also a significant contributor to the global economy who has made substantial economic contributions both to their host countries and to Rajasthan too. By examining their impact on local and global economies and economic contributions, as well as highlighting their entrepreneurial spirit, trade successes and excellence in various industries we gain a deeper understanding of the Diaspora's economic prowess and its enduring connections to Rajasthan. Here are some ways in which they have positively impacted the economies:

## A. Entrepreneurship and trade success

The Rajasthani Diaspora has a long history of entrepreneurship and trade with many members establishing successful businesses and ventures in their adopted countries. Their entrepreneurial spirit and business acumen have propelled them to new heights of success. They have established business in various sectors such as textiles, jewellery, handicrafts, hospitality and trading. These ventures create employment opportunities, generate revenue and contribute to economic growth.

a) **Global Trade Networks:** The Diaspora's business connections and networks, nurtured over generations, have facilitated the establishment of trade links between Rajasthan and countries around the world. Their knowledge of local markets, cultural sensitivity and language skills has enabled them to navigate the complexities of international trade, creating economic opportunities for both Rajasthan and their host countries.

b) **Export-Import:** Rajasthani overseas communities have played a crucial role in promoting export and import activities, facilitating trade in diverse sectors. They have served as intermediaries, connecting Rajasthan-based manufacturers and artisans with international markets, thus contributing to the growth of local industries and creating employment opportunities.

## B. Industries and sectors where Diaspora excels

The Diaspora's entrepreneurial ventures and professional expertise span across various industries contributing significantly to local and global economies. They excel in sectors where their skills, cultural knowledge and entrepreneurial spirit find fruitful expression.

a) **Textile & Garments:** many Rajasthani Diaspora members have established textile and garment business, leveraging Rajasthan's rich textile traditions and craftsmanship. They manufacture and export a wide range of traditional and contemporary apparel, contributing to the growth of the fashion industry and promoting the 'Made in Rajasthan' brand globally.

b) **Gemstones & Jewelry:** the Diaspora expertise in the gems and jewellery industry is notable with many individuals involved in manufacturing, designing and trading precious stones and jewellery. Their knowledge of Rajasthan's rich gemstones reserves and craftsmanship adds value to the global gems and jewellery market, boosting the local economy and providing livelihoods for artisans and craftsmen.

c) **Hospitality & Tourism:** Rajasthani Diaspora members have successfully ventured into the hospitality and tourism industry, capitalizing on their understanding of Rajasthan's unique cultural heritage and historical sites. They establish hotels, resorts and travel agencies, providing employment opportunities and attracting tourists who wish to experience Rajasthan's rich culture firsthand. The Diaspora's strong connection to Rajasthan often leads to increased tourism from their host countries. They encourage friends, relatives and acquaintances to visit Rajasthan, which benefits the tourism industry, including hotels, restaurants, travel, agencies and local artisans.



## C. Impact on local & global economies

The economic contributions of the Rajasthani Diaspora have a profound impact on both local communities in Rajasthan and the global economy. Their entrepreneurial endeavors and expertise in various industries generate substantial economic growth and development.

- a) **Job Creation & Skill Transfer:** Through business ventures and investments, the Diaspora creates employment opportunities, both directly and indirectly, benefiting local communities. This job creation alleviates unemployment and contributes to the socio-economic well-being of individuals and families in Rajasthan. They bring skills, knowledge and experiences gained from their host countries back to Rajasthan. This transfer of expertise contributes to the development of local industries, professional services and human capital in the state.
- b) **Economic Exchange:** the Diaspora's involvement in international trade and business activities strengthens economic ties between Rajasthan and their adopted countries. It promotes investment flows, facilitates technology transfer and fosters knowledge exchange, enhancing economic cooperation and bilateral relations.
- c) **Philanthropic Endeavors:** The economic success of the Rajasthani Diaspora has enabled them to engage in philanthropic endeavors that have a positive impact on Rajasthan's local economy. They support community development initiatives, fund education and healthcare projects and contribute to infrastructure development thereby improving the quality of life for people in their ancestral land.
- d) **Remittances & Investment:** Members of Rajasthani Diaspora send their remittances back to their families and communities in Rajasthan and these financial transfers provide a significant source of income, contributing to the local economy and improving the standard of living for many families. They play a crucial role in attracting investment to Rajasthan. Many individuals invest in industries such as real estate, tourism, infrastructure and agriculture, thereby stimulating economic development in the state.

The economic contributions of the NRRs go beyond individual achievements. They have become catalysts for economic growth, playing a significant role in local and global economies.

## Challenges and opportunities

The Rajasthani overseas community dispersed across the globe faces various challenges and opportunities as they strive to preserve their rich cultural heritage while navigating a globalized world. This article explores two key aspects: the challenges of cultural preservation in a globalized world and the delicate balance between maintaining cultural identity and assimilation. By examining these factors, we gain insight into the complexities faced by the Rajasthani Diaspora and the opportunities that arise from embracing their unique cultural identity.

## A. Cultural preservation in a globalized world

The Diaspora encounters challenges in preserving their cultural heritage in a world increasingly influenced by globalization. However, they also find opportunities to leverage globalization as a means to preserve and promote their cultural traditions.

a) **Language & Traditions:** Language plays a vital role in preserving cultural identity. They face the challenge of maintaining proficiency in Rajasthani languages amidst the dominant languages of their adopted countries. Opportunities arise through language preservation initiatives, such as language classes, cultural exchange programs and online resources, enabling Diaspora members to pass on their linguistic heritage to future generations.

b) **Cultural Practices:** In a globalized world, traditional cultural practices face the risk of erosion. The Diaspora must actively preserve and promote their cultural practices through community events, cultural organizations and educational initiatives. These opportunities create spaces for Diaspora members to showcase and share their cultural traditions, fostering a sense of belonging and pride.

## B. Balancing cultural identity and assimilation

Maintaining a balance between preserving cultural identity and assimilating into the local culture is a challenge faced by the Diaspora. Striking this balance allows them to embrace their cultural roots while adapting to their new environment.

a) **Cultural Adaptation:** the NRRs often find themselves blending their Rajasthani traditions with local customs, creating a unique fusion of cultures. This adaption provides opportunities for cultural exchange, fostering understanding and appreciation among diverse communities.

b) **Identity Preservation:** Diaspora members face the challenge of retaining their cultural identity while embracing aspects of their adopted cultures. Opportunities arise through active engagement with the Rajasthani community, participation in cultural events and maintaining connections with home state, ensuring that cultural identity remains strong.

c) **Intergenerational Transmission:** Transmitting cultural heritage to the younger generation presents a challenge as they grow up in diverse cultural environments. Opportunities lie in initiatives that promote intergenerational dialogue, storytelling and the passing down of traditional knowledge, ensuring that cultural identity is sustained across generations.

## Opportunities for collaboration & cultural exchange

NRRs serve as a bridge between Rajasthan and the other wider world, creating opportunities for collaboration and cultural exchange that benefit both the Diaspora and their ancestral land.

- a) **Cultural Exchange Programs:** cultural exchange programs offer opportunities for NRRs to engage in reciprocal cultural experiences. These programs foster understanding, appreciation and mutual respect for diverse traditions and perspectives. They provide a platform for sharing Rajasthani culture with the world while facilitating exposure to global cultures for Diaspora members.
- b) **Artistic Collaborations:** The Diaspora's rich cultural heritage provides opportunities for artistic collaborations that transcend borders. Artists, musicians, dancers and writers from Rajasthan and the Diaspora can collaborate on projects that blend traditional Rajasthani elements with contemporary art forms, resulting in innovative creations that showcase the diversity and beauty of Rajasthani culture.
- c) **Business & Economic Partnerships:** The Diaspora's entrepreneurial spirit and global networks present opportunities for business partnerships that benefit both Rajasthan and the Diaspora. Collaborative ventures in sectors such as tourism, trade and sustainable development can lead to economic growth, job creation and promotion of Rajasthani products and services in international markets.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the Rajasthani Diaspora, through their cultural influence, has ensured the global visibility and appreciation of Rajasthan's rich heritage. The Rajasthani Diaspora's impact is multi-faceted and far-reaching. From art and architecture to festivals, music, dance and cuisine, the Diaspora actively contributes to preserving and promoting Rajasthani culture. Their entrepreneurial spirit, trade success and excellence in various industries have made them key players in local and global economies. By recognizing and celebrating their economic achievements, we acknowledge the multidimensional impact of the NRRs, both in terms of cultural preservation and economic development.

With emphasizing how NRRs play a significant role in preserving and promoting Rajasthani culture, making substantial achievements and fostering connections between Rajasthan and their adopted countries, this article has explored the Diaspora's impact, focuses on the importance of cultural heritage preservation and discussed future prospects for continued connections. By reflecting on these aspects, we gain a comprehensive understanding of the Diaspora's significance and the path forward for their cultural legacy. The successes of Rajasthani Diaspora can be attributed to traditional ethos, cultural values and heritage, educational aptitude and qualifications and Diaspora's capacity to harmonize and adapt. Through their unwavering commitment to their cultural roots, the NRRs continue to celebrate and share the beauty and traditions of Rajasthan with the world, ensuring a lasting legacy for future generations.

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