



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

ROLE OF CULTURE, SOCIAL COHESION, AND LEGAL RIGHTS IN ADVANCING WELL-BEING UNDER THE VISION OF VIKSIT BHARAT 2047

Grace Elmin Betu, Research Scholar, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, Punjab, India

Dr Sukhwinder Kaur, Associate Professor, Central University of Punjab, Punjab, India

Parvez Ahmad, Research scholar Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, Punjab, India

Deepika Dhemia, Research scholar Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, Punjab, India

Dr. H. Nakibapher Jones Shangpliang Assistant Professor Central University of Punjab, Punjab, India

ABSTRACT

The cultural richness and strong social cohesion found in India's Northeastern states demonstrate that well-being is deeply rooted in community life, identity and collective resilience. These social and cultural strengths provide a vital blueprint for achieving the broader goals of Viksit Bharat 2047, where development is not measured by economic growth alone but by the holistic well-being, inclusiveness, and sustainability of society. Cultures play a foundational role in shaping social cohesion and collective well-being within increasingly diverse societies. As communities experience rapid social change driven by globalisation, migration, and modernisation, understanding the relationship between cultural practices and social connectedness has become essential. This study uses the concept of social cohesion, cultural and community well-being to understand how culture helps bring people together. This paper has three main objectives. First, it aims to study how cultural practices in the Northeastern states of India promote social cohesion and contribute to community well-being. Second, it seeks to identify the challenges and barriers that affect the relationship between cultural diversity and social cohesion in contemporary society. Third, the paper attempts to understand how strengthening cultural inclusion and social cohesion can support the goals of Viksit Bharat 2047, particularly in promoting inclusive development and social harmony. The study also highlights that while cultures can serve as a powerful unifying force, it can also become a source of divisions when cultural identities are ignored, misunderstood or marginalised. The impact of cultures on social cohesion largely depends on how cultural differences are perceived, the level of mutual respect within society and the nature of state policies toward cultural diversity. The findings highlight the need for inclusive cultural policies and a platform for intercultural dialogue to strengthen social cohesion and promote collective well-being.

Keywords: Social cohesion, Community, Well-being, challenges, Cultural diversity, legal Framework Viksit Bharat 2047

INTRODUCTION

India's Vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 acknowledge culture as a powerful tool for strengthening the nations development and progress not just as a component of legacy but also acts as a catalyst for social cohesion, economic expansion and international recognitions. By putting the cultural sector at the forefront of India's development Agenda, The Ministry of culture is significantly contributing to this change. Its strategy focuses on five main pillars; Protecting India's ancient culture, enabling all citizen to participate in cultural sector and placing India's as a Global cultural leader. In addition to making sure that culture is inclusive and available to a variety of people effort are being taken to preserve ancient sites and traditions, while also ensuring that culture is inclusive and accessible to diverse communities. Technology is being used to enhance public interaction and cultural sites and digitally conserve history. The artistic endeavours handicraft and traditional culinary techniques are example of cultural industries that are being promoted as source of employment and economic growth at the same time particularly through cultural tourism. These initiatives enhance India's influence globally in addition to strengthening the country's economy.

Fundamentals: Culture as the Foundation of Community well-being

Sometime we can't even express why we feel at home and at ease in a certain location. it feels secure, comfortable and familiar. We feel supported by those around us see familiar faces and share spaces. This feeling develops from the community's culture and doesn't happen by accident. Culture is the shared way of life of a group of people. it includes their values, traditions, habits, belief. and the unwritten rules that guide how they behave with one another Cultures shapes how people connect, help each other, and live together peacefully. when we talk about the well-being of a community, we are really talking about how strong and positive this shared culture is.¹ we can more clearly understand this connection with the help of an easy example. Consider a farmer's market in your area. it might initially appear to be only a location where people make purchase of bread, fruits and vegetables. However, it is much more than just a bazaar. the market frequently transforms into a social gatherings spot and weekly routine. The neighbours spend time together, greet one another, interact and exchange information's. it represents the community's ideal which embrace choosing healthier and natural way of life, trusting known people and supporting local farmers. As a result, a farmers' market is more than a mere physical space; it is an integral aspect of local culture. it helps people-built relationship, feel that they belong and support one another. These interactions make people feel emotionally safe, connected and stronger as a group all of which are important for community well-being. In this way. culture forms the base of a healthy community; it created platforms and chances for people to interact and forms bond. it also contributes common significance to everyday life. In addition to structures and services, a community develops and become more cohesive through regular cultural events that unite them people and give a purpose to life.²

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Jane M. Cramm & Anna P. Nieboer (2015)** – The author point out that a strong sense of connections within neighbourhood and a feeling of belonging are important long term factor linked to both social and physical well-being among older adults living in the community.

¹ [lifestyle.sustainability-directory.com, What Role Does Culture Play in Community Well-Being?](https://lifestyle.sustainability-directory.com/question/what-role-does-culture-play-in-community-well-being/), <https://lifestyle.sustainability-directory.com/question/what-role-does-culture-play-in-community-well-being/> (last visited on 31 January 2026).

² Ibid

Their findings show that supportive and closely connected neighbourhood environments plays a key role in maintaining quality of life and slowing the decline in well-being as people age.³

- **Jainish Roy and Lalit Sachdeva (2025)**- In this paper, the author explains that local government have an important role in building social cohesion. They can do this by encouraging inclusive policies, supporting community participant and creating multicultural platforms that help bridge social, economic, and cultural gaps. At the same time, the Paper point out that institutional limits.⁴
- **Bujar Aruqaj (2016)**- The paper explains that social cohesion, built on general trust among people, a shared sense of civic identity, and feelings of fairness, is an important social condition that help expand people's opportunities and improve their wellbeing. It suggests that cohesion acts both as a supportive environment and as a shared community resource, shaping human development in ways that go beyond income alone.⁵
- **Sally Fowler Davis and Megan Davies (2025)**- The author highlight that social cohesion expressed through trust, neighbourly relations, shared belonging and inclusive community participations significantly improves social wellbeing and protects mental health, even in deprived areas. The Review highlight how public spaces, local services and opportunities for inclusive involvement can help build stronger community ties.⁶
- **Nima Orazani et al (2023)**- Social Cohesion is described as an important base for shared well-being and prosperity, with the author noting that trust, a sense of belonging, and positive relationship between groups help make communities stronger. They draw on ideas from social psychology, particularly social identity and contact theory, to show practical's, research - based effort can build resilience, reduce divisions, and encourage inclusive and cooperative communities, especially during times of crisis.⁷
- **Paul Walton (2016)** – The author highlight that social cohesion is an important factor in both individual and community well-being. it grows from trust, inclusion a sense of shared identity, and supportive social relationship. He suggests that strengthening these social connections through inclusive policies and active community involvement can help reduce inequalities, build resilience, and encourage healthier, more stable and cooperative societies.⁸
- **Debjani Goswami (2023)**- Discusses how globalizations has brought both positive changes and cultural pressure to tribal communities in Northeastern India, especially the Hmar community , she notes that better excess to educations , healthcare, and exposure to the outside world has improved living conditions and reduced certain traditional beliefs that once limited social Progress, At the same time ,she point out that these changes have contributed to the fading of Indigenous music, dance , clothing styles and customary practice , particularly among younger people who are influenced by global popular culture . Goswami emphasizes the need to protect and promote tribal heritage through supportive policies and cultural initiatives so that communities can maintain their identity while adjusting to a changing world.⁹
- **Sivanath Chutia (2018)**- The author points out that globalisation has brought serious challenges for tribal communities in Northeast India by gradually weakening their traditional identity, cultural practices and local economic system. Expanding markets and consumer lifestyles are replacing long-held values, which can lead to cultural erosion and a sense of social uncertainty.As a result some communities feel overlooked or left behind and this can contribute to ethnic tensions.The study also notes that women's traditional skill and local

³ Jane M. Cramm and Anna P. Nieboer, "Social cohesion and belonging predict the well-being of community-dwelling older people," *BMC Geriatrics* 15, no. 30 (2015).

⁴ Jainish Roy and Lalit Sachdeva, "Social Cohesion and the Role of Local Governments in Fostering Inclusive Communities and Bridging Social Gaps," *Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government* 23, no. S1 (2025).

⁵ Bujar Aruqaj, "Social Cohesion and Well-being: Implications for the Human Development and Capabilities Approach," HDCA Conference Paper, 2016.

⁶ Sally Fowler Davis and Megan Davies, "Understanding the Effects of Social Cohesion on Social Wellbeing: A Scoping Review," *International Journal of Public Health* 70 (2025).

⁷ Nima Orazani et al., "Editorial: 'Divided or united': strengthening social cohesion for well-being and prosperity," *Frontiers in Psychology* 14 (2023).

⁸ Paul Walton, *Strengthening Social Cohesion to Improve Community Well-Being: A Literature Review* (Sydney: Mental Health Commission of New South Wales, 2016).

⁹ Debjani Goswami, "Impact of Globalization on the Society and Culture of the Northeast India" 2(12) *Sprin Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* 52 (2023).

knowledge are slowly declining. To address this concern, the author recommends safeguarding cultural roots while encouraging forms of development that are sustainable and shaped by the communities themselves, so that tribal identity and dignity are respected and preserved.¹⁰

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a doctrinal research method based on careful study of existing written sources rather than fieldwork. The research mainly uses Secondary materials such as books, research articles, journals, websites related to cultural diversity, social cohesion and inclusive development. The study examines relevant legal provisions that deals with cultural right and social harmony in India. It also looks at national govt reports connected with viksit Bharat 2047 to understand how cultural inclusion is linked with the broader goals of nation-building and development.

Legal framework

culture and social cohesion are increasingly recognized in international laws as essential foundation of human dignity, identity and overall well-being. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948 recognizes participation in cultural life as basic human rights and connect it with dignity and personal growth. Article 27 affirms that everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community.¹¹ This establishes culture as a contributor to mental, social and emotional well-being. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) builds on this idea. Article 15 recognizes the right of every person to take part in cultural life, share in scientific progress, and benefits from cultural development.¹² The UN committee on economic social and cultural rights has explained that cultural rights also cover the protection of identity, language and traditions. The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) declares cultural diversity as the “Common Heritage of Humanity” and connect it with human development, creativity, and peaceful coexistence.¹³ It recognizes that respect for diverse cultures strengthens social solidarity and mutual trust. Similarly, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) obliges state to protect cultural expression and ensure communities can create and shared cultural goods.¹⁴ This helps sustain livelihoods, protect cultural identity, encourage inclusive forms of development. Indigenous cultural survival is central to well-being under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). It affirms “indigenous peoples” rights to maintain cultural traditions, languages and institutions.¹⁵ Cultural continuity is recognized as vital for collective dignity, health, and social stability. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) also connects culture with well-being. Article 31 recognizes a child’s right to take part in cultural and artistic activities, which play an important role in emotional and social development.¹⁶

NATIONAL

The Preamble and Social Cohesion:

In India, the idea of well-being and social unity is rooted in the transformative values set out in the preamble of the Constitution. one of its keys guiding principles is fraternity, which seeks to foster a spirit of brotherhood and a shared sense of belonging among all citizens.¹⁷ The Preamble connects the idea of fraternity with the goals of protecting individual dignity and preserving the unity and integrity of the nation. This shows that national progress is not just measured by economic growth but also by fostering respectful and harmonious relationships within society.

¹⁰ Sivanath Chutia, *Globalization and Tribal Identity Crisis in North East India: A Challenge*, 3 International Journal of Advanced Educational Research 14 (2018).

¹¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Art. 27.

¹² International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, Art. 15.

¹³ UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001, Art. 1 & 3.

¹⁴ Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 2005, Art. 2 & 6.

¹⁵ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007, Arts. 8, 11 & 13.

¹⁶ Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, Art. 31.

¹⁷ The Constitution of India, Preamble.

Fundamental Rights: Safeguarding Cultural Diversity

To make sure social cohesion does not come at the cost of cultural diversity, the constitutions provide strong protections for cultural identity under part III. Article 29 (1) gives any group of citizens in India with a distinct language, script or culture the right to preserve it. Article 30 complements this by allowing minority communities to establish and manage educational institution to safeguard their heritage.¹⁸ These rights help protect indigenous practice from being sidelined amidst rapid globalizations and modernizations, ensuring that the collective well-being of communities is recognized as a fundamental right.

Directive Principles: Culture as a Pathway to Well-Being

The directive principles of state policy (DPSPs) guide the government in integrating culture into its development plans. Article 38 direct state to create a social order that promotes the welfare of all people and work to reduce inequalities in status and opportunities among different group.¹⁹ Article 43 requires the state to ensure that all worker have access to leisure, as well as social and cultural opportunities, recognizing cultures as an important part of a decent standard of living.²⁰ For the Northeastern region, Article 46 is particularly significant as the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the scheduled castes, scheduled Tribes and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations.²¹

Regional Autonomy and Special Provisions

The Indian legal system recognises the unique cultural identity of the northeast through a concept called “Asymmetric Federalism.” Under the sixth schedule Autonomous District Council are set up to allow tribals communities to manage their own affairs. These councils give local communities the power to govern using their customary laws on matters such as land, marriages, and social practices.²² This is further supported by the “Special Provisions” under Article 371A to 371H, which ensure that certain laws passed by parliaments do not automatically apply to states like Nagaland and Mizoram in areas such as religion or social practices, unless their respective states Assemblies give approval.²³

Fundamental Duties: The Vision of Viksit Bharat 2047

The vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 emphasizes Jan Bhagidari (Peoples Participation), acknowledging the national development is not only the responsibility of the government but also of its citizens. This idea is reflected in the fundamental duties listed in Part IVA of the constitutions. In particular Article 51 A (f) ask every citizen to “value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture”.²⁴ This Provisions acknowledge that India’s Strength lies in its cultural diversity, which includes different language, traditions, religions, and social practices.

Role of Cultural Heritage in Achieving Viksit Bharat 2024

By Strategically utilizing India’s rich cultural legacy as a driving force behind the creation of viksit Bharat 2047, the Ministry of culture is establishing the cultural sector as an important catalyst of economic growth and India’s worldwide influence in addition to serving as a source of social cohesion.

Five major pillars form the foundation of the strategy:

1. Conserving India’s more than 10,000 – year old legacy
2. Democratizing cultural engagement to guarantee that people from all regions and background can interact with India’s rich cultural Heritage.
3. Using technology in the arts and culture, such as the interactive platforms and digital archives.

¹⁸ The Constitution of India, art. 30.

¹⁹ The Constitution of India, art. 38.

²⁰ The Constitution of India, art. 43.

²¹ The Constitution of India, art. 46.

²² The Constitution of India, sch. VI.

²³ The Constitution of India, arts. 371A, 371H.

²⁴ The Constitution of India, art. 51A(f).

4. Boosting the cultural and creative economy by encouraging growth in performing arts, traditional crafts, and regional culinary practices, while supporting the communities that sustain these traditions.
5. Positioning India as a leading cultural presence on the global stage by showcasing its rich heritage and diverse creative industries through international collaborations and cultural exchange.²⁵

The Ministry's initiatives are centred on protecting cultural heritage ensuring wider public access, encouraging the use of modern technology, and strengthening cultural industries. These efforts not only enhance India's cultural presence at the international level but also create employment, promote cultural tourism, and contribute meaningfully to the national economy. To ensure effective implementations, the ministry has developed a structured roadmap with clear timeline and responsibilities. Technology plays a major role in these initiatives from preserving cultural assets and creating digital repositories to improving visitor engagement and cultural sites. A key component of this strategy is the establishment of 20 kalagams nationwide, inspired by the successful Prayagraj Kalagams during the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025. These cultural hubs aim to support artist, promote traditional art forms, and create economic opportunities within the creative sector.²⁶ Overall, these efforts show how India is thoughtfully drawing on its cultural heritage to promote inclusive development, foster a sense of shared identity, and build stronger recognition of global stage. Looking ahead to 2047, the country envisions its cultural strength becoming a major driving force, where tradition, creativity and economic progress move forward together in shaping the vision of *Viksit Bharat*.

The Effects of social Cohesion on communities:

Social cohesion can be defined as the ability of a community or society to remain united and work towards common goals. It is the glue that binds individuals together and creates a sense of belonging and shared identity. When a society is closely connected, people are more inclined to trust and help one another, which benefits the community in many ways. On a broader scale, this sense of togetherness makes society stable and resilient. Communities that cooperate and stand united often see stronger economic progress, as individuals collaborate, share knowledge and resources and come up with new ideas and together. Political stability tends to improve as well because people who feel connected to their society are more willing to follow rules and take part in public life in a positive way. A strong sense of togetherness also supports overall well-being, by easing social tension and encouraging mutual respect and shared pride. At the individual level, the impact of social connectedness can be very personal. When people that they belong to a community, they are less likely to experience loneliness or emotional distress. Well-being improves there is a circle of support made up of friends, neighbours or local groups. Physical health can benefit as close knit communities often encourages safer surroundings, healthier habits and shared access to resources. In addition, people who feel connected are more likely to take part in community life, whether through volunteering, joining locals' decisions – making processes or simply helping neighbours when they need support.²⁷

Cultural Practices in Northeast India as Foundations of Social Cohesion and Community Well-Being”

Northeast India is widely recognized for its remarkable tribal diversity and vibrant cultural heritage. The communities of the region continue to preserve distinct traditions, language and social practices that define their way of life. These cultural expressions are not just form of folk traditions; they shape relationships, guide everyday behaviour, and foster a strong sense of belonging and togetherness among people. This shared cultural life plays an important role in supporting the well-being of communities across the region.

²⁵ Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, “*Role of Cultural Heritage in making a Viksit Bharat by 2047*”, April 4, 2025, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1893652> (last visited Jan. 31, 2026).

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ lifestyle.sustainability-directory.com, *What Role Does Culture Play in Community Well-Being?*, <https://lifestyle.sustainability-directory.com/question/what-role-does-culture-play-in-community-well-being/> (last visited on 31 January 2026).

Festivals and Collective Celebrations as Sources of Unity

One of the most visible expressions of cultural life in Northeast India is festivals, which bring together people across age, gender and community lines when we think of festivals in Northeastern states each with their distinct tribes, traditions and spiritual practices offer a breathtaking array of vibrant celebrations that are equally captivating. From the Warriors dances of Nagaland to the Buddhist rituals of Sikkim. it explores the diverse and lesser-known festivals that breathe life into the cultural heart of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura and beyond.²⁸ Many festivals in the northeast are are link to agriculture, nature and community life. These celebrations symbolize gratitude, renewal, and interdependence, reminding people of their connection to land, livelihood and traditions.

Some of the Festivals are :

- **Losar (Monpa tribe)** : Losar is the New year festivals celebrated by the monpa community of Arunachal Pradesh, usually in February or March. The festivals begin with rituals meant to clear away negativity and invite good fortune for the coming year. Monasteries are adorned with prayers flags, butter lamps are lit and monk perform traditional Cham dances, families dress in new clothes, visit relatives and friends and prepare festive treats such as khapse, a type of fried pastry.²⁹
- **Wangala Festival (Garo tribe):** Wangala often called the “Hundred Drums Festivals”, is a harvest thanksgiving celebration of the Garo community. It is held in honour of Misi Saljong “The sun God”, who is believed to bless the fields with a good harvest. The festival comes alive with the steady rhythm of traditional drums, the sound of buffalo horns, and lively group dances performed in bright, traditional attire. Beyond its spiritual meaning, wangala is also joyful expression of Garo culture and heritage.³⁰
- **Chapchar Kut (Mizo):** Chapchar Kut is one of the most loved festivals of Mizoram. it is celebrated in spring after the clearing stage of jhum (shifting) cultivation is completed. The festivals reflect a time of joy and relaxation of the community and is filled with traditional dances such as Cheraw the well-known bamboo dance, along with music and festive meals. people dress in bright traditional dress and come together to celebrate as a community. chapchar Kut beautifully shows how closely Mizo cultural life is connected to the rhythm of agriculture.³¹
- **Hornbill Festival (Naga):** Held every December at the kisama heritage village near Kohima, the hornbill festival brings together all 16 naga tribe in a vibrant celebration of cultures. The event features traditional dances, folk music, craft display, traditional cuisine and indigenous sports such as wrestling and archery. the words Hornbill is named after the hornbill birds which hold a special place inn naga folklore, the festivals encourage interaction among tribes and helps keep their tradition Alive. visitors and tourist across India and other parts of the world comes to experience this lively and welcoming celebrations.³²
- **Pang Lhabsol (Sikkim):** Pang lhabsol is a special festival of Sikkim that honour Mount Kanchenjunga, regarded as the guardian spirit of the state. It also remembers the historic bond of brotherhood between Lepcha and Bhutia communities, symbolising unity and harmony, a major highlight of the celebration is the striking “chaam” Warrior dance performed by monks dressed in elaborate traditional costumes. The festivals bring together elements of history legend and a deep sense of cultural pride.
- **Garia (Tripura):** During Garia puja a bamboo pole representing lord garia the deity associated with livestock and prosperity is decorated with flowers and garland and

²⁸ *Beyond Bihu: Discovering the Rich Festivals of Northeast India (Except Assam),* ” The Cultural Heritage of India (cultureandheritage.org), online: *The Cultural Heritage of India* <https://cultureandheritage.org/beyond-bihu-discovering-the-rich-festivals-of-northeast-india-except-assam> accessed 31 January 2026

²⁹ *Celebrating the Losar Festival: A Joyous Tradition of the Monpas in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh,* ” Arunachal24.in (online), https://arunachal24.in/celebrating-the-losar-festival-a-joyous-tradition-of-the-monpas-in-tawang-arunachal-pradesh/#google_vignette accessed 31 January 2026.

³⁰ *Wangala – The 100 Drums Festival of Meghalaya,* ” Official Web Portal, Government of Meghalaya (online), <https://meghalaya.gov.in/wangala> accessed 31 January 2026.

³¹ *“Chapchar Kut / Festival,”* Aizawl District, Government of Mizoram (online), <https://aizawl.nic.in/festival/chapchar-kut-festival/> accessed 31 January 2026.

³² *“About Hornbill Festival,”* HornbillFestival.com (online), <https://hornbillfestival.com/about/> accessed 31 January 2026.

worshipped with devotions, the rituals involved several traditional items such as cotton threads, rice, riccha, a fowl chick, rice beer, wine, earthen pots and eggs, as part of long standing custom a fowl is offered in sacrifice, and its blood is presented before the deity as a prayer for blessing and good fortune. The Garia carnival follows the guidance of the ochai (priest), who leads the rituals according to traditions. It is believed that crossing the shadow of the symbolic representations of Lord Garia during the puja may offend the deity, so people are careful to avoid doing so. Throughout the festivals, children take part by playing drums, singing and dancing in front of Lord Garia as a way of showing respect and seeking his blessings.³³

Revitalizing Northeast India's cultural Heritage

As part of the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 (Developed India), the Govt of India is working to promote and preserve the rich cultural heritage of Northeast India. True development is not measured by economic growth alone, but also by the strength and diversity of nation's cultural life. By encouraging the arts, traditional practices, and festival of the region, these efforts help build national unity, promote tourism and create opportunities for local communities. To achieve this, Zonal Cultural Centres such as the North East Zone Cultural Centre (NEZCC) in Dimapur and the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (EZCC) in Kolkata play an important role. They regularly organise cultural programmes and festivals that keep folk and tribal art forms alive, while also giving young and talented artists from the region a platform to share and develop their skills. The North Eastern Council (NEC) also contributes by supporting well-known cultural festivals such as the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland, the Sangai Festival in Manipur, and the Behdienkhlam Festival in Meghalaya. These celebrations draw visitors from different parts of the country and help create stronger cultural ties between the Northeast and the rest of India. The region is further promoted through the "Destination Northeast" initiative, launched in 2017, which is organised in various cities across India to present the art, crafts, cuisine, and traditions of the Northeast to a wider audience. Similarly, the OCTAVE Festival, organised by the Zonal Cultural Centres, takes folk traditions from the region to different parts of the country, helping people connect through shared cultural experiences and deepening a sense of belonging.³⁴

Challenges to embracing diversity and achieving social cohesion

Diversity is a vital part of any lively and evolving society, but it can also bring certain difficulties. Although building a sense of togetherness is an important goal, it does not happen automatically. The differences in cultures, race, ethnicity, religion and language can sometimes create misunderstanding or distance between groups when these differences are not handled with care and respect, they may lead to exclusion, marginalisation or unfair treatment, which can slow down a society's overall progress.³⁵

Stereotyping: In a culturally diverse society, stereotypes can seriously damage the sense of togetherness because they reduce trust and mutual respect between communities. When a group is repeatedly judged through unfair assumptions, its members may experience unequal treatment in areas like education, jobs, housing, everyday social life. Over time this can create feelings of isolation and exclusions, making it more difficult for different communities to live side by side in harmony.

Cultural Difference: Cultural differences arise from the wide range of values, beliefs, traditions, languages, and social norms that shape how different groups live. In a diverse society, people often understand behaviour and communications based on their own cultural experience. When these differences are not properly understood or respected, they can cause confusion, tension, and sometimes even conflict. These differences may be seen in religion, food habits, clothing, gender roles, family life. Problems begin when one group treats its own way of life as the only "rights" way and looks down on others, this can leave people feeling disrespected or excluded and over time it can weaken the sense

³³ "Garia Puja," Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, Government of Tripura (online), <https://ica.tripura.gov.in/garia-puja> accessed 31 January 2026.

³⁴ Bharatideology.com, *Embracing the Richness of Northeastern Culture – Fostering Inclusivity*, <https://bharatideology.com/embracing-the-richness-of-northeastern-culture-fostering-inclusivity/> (last visited on 31 January 2026).

³⁵ *Ethnic Identity and Social Cohesion: Embracing Diversity*, FasterCapital (12 Apr. 2025), available at <https://fastercapital.com/content/Ethnic-Identity-and-Social-Cohesion--Embracing-Diversity.html> (accessed on 30 Jan. 2026).

of unity and cooperation within society Example: a clear present -day example of different gender norms can be seen among the Khasi and Garo communities of Meghalaya, who follow a matrilineal system. In these societies, family lineage and inheritances pass through the mother's side and after marriage, a husband often moves into his wife household. Ancestral property is usually passed to the youngest daughter known among the Khasis as Ka Khadduh.³⁶ This example shows how deeply rooted cultural norms about gender and family structures differ across communities.

Language Barriers: Language barriers come up when people from different linguistic backgrounds find it hard to communicate because they speak different languages, dialects, or use different styles of expression. In a multilingual country like India, where hundreds of languages and dialects are spoken, this can easily lead to misunderstanding, feeling of exclusion, and difficulty accessing important services. Gaps in communications can also make cooperation harder and weaken the sense of connection within society.

Example: In Tripura, the indigenous language Kokborok, spoken by many tribal communities, has long been part of a debate over which script should be used in education and official work. Several tribal organisations and student groups have supported the use of Roman script, saying it is easier to learn and could improve literacy, access to education and equal opportunities. In 2024, the Tripura Board of Secondary Education permitted students to write Kokborok examinations in both Roman and Bengali script, a move many viewed as helping to ease language-related difficulties. However, in January 2026, the state government decided not to formally adopt the Roman script, explaining that such decisions require careful consideration in order to protect cultural identity. This situation shows how choices about language and script can create practical communication challenges and influence how well linguistic communities feel included in society.³⁷

Lack of Empathy in Today's Diverse Societies: A lack of empathy arises when people are unwilling or unable to understand the experiences, challenges, or viewpoints of others. In diverse societies, this can appear as indifference or insensitivity toward minority groups, migrants, or communities that already face disadvantages. When empathy is missing, relationships between groups grow weaker, people feel left out, and mistrust and tension can begin to grow.

Political Polarizations: Political polarization happens when people with different political beliefs grow further apart and stop engaging in meaningful dialogue. This often leads to rising mistrust and a divided society. In diverse communities, the problem becomes more serious when political views start to overlap with identities such as race, ethnicity, religion, or culture. When this happens, people may begin to see those from other communities as rivals instead of fellow citizens. As political differences become tied to identity, disagreement can turn into feelings of exclusion or unfair treatment toward minority or dissenting groups. Instead of discussing policies in a healthy and respectful way, politics can become personal and group-driven. Over time, this weakens the sense of unity in society by reducing trust, shared understanding, and willingness to participate together in community life.

Strengthening Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion for Inclusive and Harmonious National Development

Inclusive Development Through Cultural Inclusion: Cultural inclusion means making sure that people from different linguistic, ethnic, and social backgrounds are recognised and meaningfully involved in the development process, when policies respect cultural identities and ensure fair access to education, jobs, and public services. Communities that have long been left out are more able to take part in the country's progress. This kind of inclusion helps reduce regional and social gaps and support the broader aims of balanced and fair development envisioned for Viksit Bharat 2047.

Example: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a good example of how cultural inclusion can support broader development. The policy acknowledges India's diversity in language, socio-economic background, gender, region, and disability and aims to make quality education

³⁶ Pranab Kumar Das Gupta, *Life and Culture of Matrilineal Tribe of Meghalaya* (New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 1984).

³⁷ *After weeks of protests and exchange of barbs, TBSE allows both Roman, Bengali scripts for Kokborok exam in Tripura*, indianexpress.com, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/tbse-allows-roman-bengali-scripts-for-kokborok-exam-tripura-9147463/> (last visited on 31 January 2026).

disadvantages, as well as children with special needs (CwSN). NEP 2020 attempts to address long standing barriers that limit equal participations in educations.³⁸

Social Stability Through Social Cohesion: Social cohesion a sense of togetherness builds on trust, shared values, and cooperations between communities is essentials for keeping society stable. in a culturally diverse country like India strong relationship across different groups help prevent divisions and lower the chances of conflict. a peaceful and stable social environment, in turn creates the right conditions for steady economic growth and lasting national progress.

Participatory Governance Through Community Engagement: When people feel connected to one another and to their communities, they are more willing to take part in public life and decision - making involvement in local development activities, welfare programmes and policy discussions makes governances more transparent and accountable, this kind of shared participations helps ensure that development of addresses the need of different sections of society and supports the broader goal of inclusive progress envisioned for Viksit Bharat 2047.³⁹

National Integration Through Shared Cultural Identity: Cultural inclusion helps people from different background feels that they belong, while still valuing their unique identities. when diversities are celebrated through common platforms, national programmes and heritage initiatives, it brings people closer without asking them to give up their distinct traditions. this balanced between unity and diversity strengthen national integrations, which is an important part of India's long term development journey.

Example: the "Learn one more Bhartiya Bhasha" initiatives in Gujarat encourages colleges student to learn an additional Indian language, this helps young people better understand different linguistic and cultural traditions and build a stronger sense of connection across regions supporting the idea of national unity.⁴⁰

Reduction of Inequality and Promotion of Social Justice: A strong sense of togetherness in society can help address the long-standing disadvantages faced by marginalized and vulnerable groups. policies that uphold dignity, fairness, and equal opportunities reduce exclusion and inequality linked to identity, when development reaches all sections of society, it supports the creation of amore just and peaceful social environment which is essential for the broader vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Conclusion and suggestion

The findings of this study show that cultural inclusion and social cohesion are not merely social ideals but important forces that support broad-based development. culture expressed through community participations, preservations of heritage and creative activities strengthen social connections and overall well-being, in turn this nurtures trust, a shared sense of identity, and peaceful coexistence, a stable and connected society creates better conditions for people to take part in economic life and support steady, long-term growth. the vision of viksit Bharat 2047 reflect this close link between culture and development by recognising cultural heritage and creative sector as meaningful parts of the national development path. supporting cultural activities and strengthening social bond s can also contribute to economic progress by generating employment, encouraging tourism and cultural enterprises, and enhancing Indians presence on the global stage. strengthening cultural sector and social cohesion can contribute to GDP growth by creating jobs stimulating tourisms and cultural markets and enhancing globally, thereby promoting not only social harmony but also economic resilience and competitiveness

³⁸ Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India, *Learning For All: Equitable and Inclusive Education*, <https://dse.education.gov.in/inclusive-education> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

³⁹ Anusha Jain, "Viksit Uttar Pradesh @2047: Over 21.5 lakh voices shaping the state's future," *IndiaTimes* (Oct. 5, 2025), <https://www.indiatimes.com/trending/viksit-uttar-pradesh-at-2047-over-215-lakh-voices-shaping-the-states-future-672532.html> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

⁴⁰ Amit Dave, "Gujarat colleges directed to adopt 'Learn One More Bharatiya Bhasha' initiative," *Times of India* (Dec. 5, 2025), <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/gujarat-colleges-directed-to-adopt-learn-one-more-bharatiya-bhasha-initiative/articleshow/125773801.cms> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

SUGGESTIONS

Set up community cultural centres: Create common spaces where people can gather for festivals, arts, and open conversations, helping to strengthen everyday social connections.

Bring local culture into education: include regional history, languages and traditions in learning so children grow up with respect for diversity.

Support cultural and creative livelihoods: Encourage crafts, performing arts and traditional food practices as source of income while keeping heritage alive.

Organise intercultural exchange programmes: Create opportunities for different communities to interact, helping reduce stereotypes and build understanding.

Use technology to safeguard heritage, with community involvement: Document and Preserve traditions digitally while ensuring local communities have control and their dignity is respected.

Recognise and support traditional knowledge holders: Provide financial help and institutional support to artists, artisans, and cultural custodians.

Encourage sustainable, community-led cultural tourism: Promote tourism in ways that benefit local people and protect cultural authenticity.

Include social connection in development planning – Look beyond economic growth by also considering trust, participation, and a sense of belonging in society.

REFERENCES

1. lifestyle.sustainability-directory.com, *What Role Does Culture Play in Community Well-Being?*, <https://lifestyle.sustainability-directory.com/question/what-role-does-culture-play-in-community-well-being/> (last visited on 31 January 2026).
2. Jane M. Cramm and Anna P. Nieboer, “Social cohesion and belonging predict the well-being of community-dwelling older people,” *BMC Geriatrics* 15, no. 30 (2015).
3. Jainish Roy and Lalit Sachdeva, “Social Cohesion and the Role of Local Governments in Fostering Inclusive Communities and Bridging Social Gaps,” *Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government* 23, no. S1 (2025).
4. Nima Orazani et al., “Editorial: ‘Divided or united’: strengthening social cohesion for well-being and prosperity,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 14 (2023).
5. Paul Walton, *Strengthening Social Cohesion to Improve Community Well-Being: A Literature Review* (Sydney: Mental Health Commission of New South Wales, 2016).
6. Bujar Aruqaj, “Social Cohesion and Well-being: Implications for the Human Development and Capabilities Approach,” HDCA Conference Paper, 2016.
7. Sally Fowler Davis and Megan Davies, “Understanding the Effects of Social Cohesion on Social Wellbeing: A Scoping Review,” *International Journal of Public Health* 70 (2025).
8. Debjani Goswami, “Impact of Globalization on the Society and Culture of the Northeast India” 2(12) *Sprin Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* 52 (2023).

9. Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, “*Role of Cultural Heritage in making a Viksit Bharat by 2047*”, April 4, 2025, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1893652> (last visited Jan. 31, 2026).
10. *Beyond Bihu: Discovering the Rich Festivals of Northeast India (Except Assam)*,” The Cultural Heritage of India (cultureandheritage.org), online: *The Cultural Heritage of India* <https://cultureandheritage.org/beyond-bihu-discovering-the-rich-festivals-of-northeast-india-except-assam> accessed 31 January 2026.
11. *Celebrating the Losar Festival: A Joyous Tradition of the Monpas in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh*,” Arunachal24.in (online), https://arunachal24.in/celebrating-the-losar-festival-a-joyous-tradition-of-the-monpas-in-tawang-arunachal-pradesh/#google_vignette accessed 31 January 2026.
12. *Wangala – The 100 Drums Festival of Meghalaya*,” Official Web Portal, Government of Meghalaya (online), <https://meghalaya.gov.in/wangala> accessed 31 January 2026
13. *Chapchar Kut / Festival*,” Aizawl District, Government of Mizoram (online), <https://aizawl.nic.in/festival/chapchar-kut-festival/> accessed **31 January 2026**.
14. *About Hornbill Festival*,” HornbillFestival.com (online), <https://hornbillfestival.com/about/> accessed 31 January 2026.
15. *Pang Lhabsol – Festival of Sikkim*,” Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, Government of Sikkim (online), <https://sikkimtourism.gov.in/Public/ExperienceSikkim/FairsAndFestivalDetails/FF20A071?type=Festival> accessed 31 January 2026.
16. *Garia Puja*,” Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, Government of Tripura (online), <https://ica.tripura.gov.in/garia-puja> accessed 31 January 2026.
17. Bharatideology.com, *Embracing the Richness of Northeastern Culture – Fostering Inclusivity*, <https://bharatideology.com/embracing-the-richness-of-northeastern-culture-fostering-inclusivity/> (last visited on 31 January 2026).
18. *Ethnic Identity and Social Cohesion: Embracing Diversity*, Faster Capital (12 Apr. 2025), available at <https://fastercapital.com/content/Ethnic-Identity-and-Social-Cohesion--Embracing-Diversity.html> (accessed on 30 Jan. 2026).
19. Pranab Kumar Das Gupta, *Life and Culture of Matrilineal Tribe of Meghalaya* (New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 1984).
20. *After weeks of protests and exchange of barbs, TBSE allows both Roman, Bengali scripts for Kokborok exam in Tripura*, indianexpress.com, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/tbse-allows-roman-bengali-scripts-for-kokborok-exam-tripura-9147463/> (last visited on 31 January 2026).
21. Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India, *Learning For All: Equitable and Inclusive Education*, <https://dsel.education.gov.in/inclusive-education> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).
22. Anusha Jain, “*Viksit Uttar Pradesh @2047: Over 21.5 lakh voices shaping the state’s future*,” *IndiaTimes* (Oct. 5, 2025), <https://www.indiatimes.com/trending/viksit-uttar-pradesh-at-2047-over-215-lakh-voices-shaping-the-states-future-672532.html> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

23. Amit Dave, "Gujarat colleges directed to adopt 'Learn One More Bharatiya Bhasha' initiative," *Times of India* (Dec. 5, 2025), <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/gujarat-colleges-directed-to-adopt-learn-one-more-bharatiya-bhasha-initiative/articleshow/125773801.cms> (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

