



CULTURAL, ECO-FRIENDLY AND SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISES

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Abstract

The growing emphasis on sustainability has transformed the way enterprises operate by integrating economic growth with environmental conservation and socio-cultural preservation. In India, cultural enterprises rooted in traditional knowledge, indigenous crafts, handloom, handicrafts, eco-tourism, Ayurveda, and local entrepreneurship play a significant role in promoting sustainable development while preserving the nation's rich cultural heritage. Eco-friendly enterprises adopt environmentally responsible practices such as the use of renewable resources, waste reduction, recycling, green technologies, and sustainable production methods, thereby minimizing ecological footprints. Sustainable enterprises combine economic viability with social equity and environmental responsibility, aligning their business strategies with the principles of the circular economy and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This article examines the interrelationship between cultural values, eco-friendly business practices, and sustainable enterprises in the Indian context. It reviews existing literature, discusses relevant government initiatives such as Make in India, Startup India, Skill India, Atmanirbhar Bharat, and the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture, and presents case studies of successful enterprises that demonstrate sustainable business models. The study also identifies key challenges, including limited access to finance, technological constraints, market competition, inadequate awareness, and policy implementation gaps. The findings suggest that integrating traditional cultural knowledge with innovation, digital technologies, and environmentally sustainable practices enhances enterprise resilience, competitiveness, and long-term growth. The article concludes by recommending stronger policy support, capacity building, green financing, and stakeholder collaboration to foster a vibrant ecosystem for cultural, eco-friendly, and sustainable enterprises in India. Such enterprises contribute significantly to inclusive economic development, environmental protection, and the preservation of India's cultural heritage while advancing national and global sustainability objectives.

Keywords: Cultural enterprises, Eco-friendly enterprises, Sustainable enterprises, Green entrepreneurship, Traditional knowledge, Circular economy, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), India.



In the twenty-first century, businesses are increasingly expected to create value that extends beyond financial performance. Rising environmental concerns, climate change, resource depletion, social inequalities, and the loss of cultural heritage have prompted enterprises to adopt business models that integrate economic prosperity with environmental stewardship and social responsibility. This transformation has led to the emergence of **cultural, eco-friendly, and sustainable enterprises**, which seek to balance profitability with the preservation of cultural traditions, ecological conservation, and inclusive community development.

Cultural enterprises play a vital role in safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage by promoting traditional knowledge, indigenous skills, local craftsmanship, performing arts, and heritage-based tourism. These enterprises not only preserve cultural identity but also generate employment opportunities, stimulate local economies, and foster social cohesion. In many developing countries, including India, cultural enterprises contribute significantly to rural livelihoods through sectors such as handloom weaving, handicrafts, traditional food processing, and folk arts. By integrating innovation with cultural values, these enterprises enhance competitiveness while ensuring that cultural traditions are passed on to future generations.

At the same time, growing environmental challenges have accelerated the adoption of eco-friendly business practices. Eco-friendly enterprises prioritize the efficient use of natural resources, minimize waste generation, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and adopt cleaner production technologies. They emphasize renewable energy, sustainable sourcing, environmentally friendly packaging, recycling, and circular production systems that reduce environmental impacts throughout the product life cycle. Such enterprises respond to increasing consumer demand for green products while contributing to global efforts to mitigate climate change and conserve biodiversity.

The concept of sustainable enterprises extends beyond environmental responsibility by integrating the three dimensions of sustainability—economic viability, environmental protection, and social equity—commonly referred to as the **Triple Bottom Line (People, Planet, and Profit)**. Sustainable enterprises create long-term value by ensuring financial resilience, protecting ecosystems, promoting ethical governance, supporting employee well-being, and contributing positively to local communities. Their business strategies align with international sustainability frameworks such as the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly goals related to responsible consumption and production, decent work and economic growth, climate action, sustainable cities and communities, and partnerships for sustainable development.

The convergence of cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and responsible entrepreneurship has created new opportunities for innovation and inclusive growth. Enterprises that integrate cultural heritage with eco-friendly production methods often develop unique products and services that appeal to environmentally conscious consumers while strengthening local identities. For example, businesses producing handwoven textiles from natural fibres, organic food products based



on traditional farming methods, or eco-tourism services centered on indigenous communities demonstrate how cultural values and environmental responsibility can coexist within profitable business models.

Introduction: Review of Literature

The concepts of cultural enterprises, eco-friendly enterprises, and sustainable enterprises have evolved significantly over the past three decades as businesses increasingly recognize the need to balance economic performance with environmental protection and social responsibility. The literature reflects a gradual transition from conventional profit-oriented business models toward integrated approaches that emphasize sustainability, innovation, and stakeholder value creation.

Early research on sustainable development was strongly influenced by the **Brundtland Commission (1987)**, which defined sustainable development as meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This definition established the foundation for sustainability-oriented business practices and encouraged enterprises to incorporate environmental and social considerations into strategic decision-making.

Elkington (1997) introduced the **Triple Bottom Line (TBL)** framework, arguing that organizational success should be evaluated through three interconnected dimensions—economic prosperity, environmental protection, and social equity (People, Planet, and Profit). The TBL framework remains one of the most widely accepted theoretical foundations for sustainable enterprises and has influenced corporate sustainability reporting, environmental management systems, and responsible business practices.

Research on **cultural enterprises** highlights their contribution to preserving cultural heritage while generating economic opportunities. Cultural enterprises are viewed as organizations that transform cultural assets, traditional knowledge, creativity, and heritage into products and services that support local development. Studies indicate that these enterprises strengthen community identity, protect indigenous knowledge, encourage cultural tourism, and create employment, particularly in rural and marginalized regions. Recent systematic reviews further show that sustainability within cultural organizations increasingly encompasses environmental responsibility, digital engagement, and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The relationship between **culture and sustainability** has attracted increasing scholarly attention. A theoretical framework of **culturally sustainable entrepreneurship** argues that culture should be regarded not merely as an economic resource but as a value system and knowledge base that supports sustainable development. This perspective demonstrates that entrepreneurship can preserve both tangible and intangible cultural heritage while promoting innovation and community well-being, particularly within indigenous and local communities.

Growing environmental concerns have also expanded research on **eco-friendly enterprises**.



These businesses seek to minimize environmental impacts through renewable energy, cleaner production, resource efficiency, waste reduction, recycling, and sustainable supply chain management. Gast, Gundolf, and Cesinger (2017) reviewed ecological sustainability entrepreneurship and observed that research has focused on the drivers of green entrepreneurship, environmental innovation, business strategies, enabling conditions, and organizational outcomes. They also noted that the field remains conceptually fragmented, highlighting the need for more integrated theoretical frameworks.

The literature on **sustainable entrepreneurship** has expanded rapidly over the last decade. Sustainable entrepreneurship integrates entrepreneurial innovation with environmental stewardship and social responsibility to create long-term value. Rosário, Raimundo, and Cruz (2022) found that sustainable entrepreneurship contributes to solving environmental and social problems while generating economic opportunities. Their review emphasizes stakeholder collaboration, institutional support, and innovation as critical determinants of sustainable enterprise development.

Bibliometric and systematic reviews demonstrate the growing maturity of sustainable entrepreneurship research. Terán-Yépez et al. (2020) identified increasing scholarly attention to sustainable business models, circular economy, social entrepreneurship, and green innovation, while also noting the absence of a universally accepted theoretical framework. Similarly, recent bibliometric analyses indicate that current research increasingly focuses on digital transformation, green start-ups, sustainable financing, circular production systems, and ESG-oriented business practices.

Several scholars have emphasized the role of **sustainable business models** in creating shared value. Sustainable business models integrate environmental, social, and economic objectives into organizational strategy, enabling firms to achieve competitiveness while reducing ecological impacts. These models encourage resource efficiency, innovation, stakeholder engagement, and circular production systems, making sustainability a core component of value creation rather than a peripheral corporate responsibility initiative.

Recent research has also linked entrepreneurship with broader societal outcomes. Reviews indicate that entrepreneurship contributes to sustainable development through inclusive regional growth, social innovation, and institutional change. However, the literature also suggests that environmental outcomes remain less extensively examined than social outcomes, indicating the need for more balanced and interdisciplinary research.

Despite substantial progress, important research gaps remain. Most previous studies examine cultural entrepreneurship, eco-friendly enterprises, and sustainable entrepreneurship independently. Limited attention has been given to integrating these three dimensions into a comprehensive enterprise framework, particularly in developing economies such as India where traditional industries, cultural heritage, environmental conservation, and rural livelihoods are closely interconnected. Existing research also provides limited empirical evidence on how cultural preservation and eco-friendly innovation jointly influence enterprise competitiveness and long-term sustainability.

Accordingly, the present study seeks to bridge this gap by developing an integrated perspective on cultural, eco-friendly, and sustainable enterprises. It examines how these complementary dimensions collectively contribute to economic resilience, environmental protection,



cultural preservation, and inclusive development, thereby supporting national sustainability strategies and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Research Gap

The existing literature on cultural enterprises, eco-friendly enterprises, and sustainable enterprises has expanded considerably over the past two decades. Researchers have examined these concepts from various perspectives, including sustainable entrepreneurship, green innovation, corporate social responsibility (CSR), circular economy, cultural heritage preservation, and environmental management. Although these studies have contributed significantly to understanding sustainability-oriented business practices, several important research gaps remain.

First, most previous studies examine **cultural enterprises**, **eco-friendly enterprises**, and **sustainable enterprises** as separate areas of inquiry. Cultural enterprise research primarily focuses on preserving heritage, promoting creative industries, and supporting local economic development, while eco-friendly enterprise studies emphasize environmental management, green technologies, and resource efficiency. Sustainable enterprise research, on the other hand, generally concentrates on balancing economic, environmental, and social objectives through the Triple Bottom Line framework. Limited research integrates these three dimensions into a comprehensive framework that explains how cultural preservation, environmental responsibility, and economic sustainability collectively enhance enterprise performance.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the role of cultural, eco-friendly, and sustainable enterprises in promoting inclusive economic growth, environmental conservation, and the preservation of cultural heritage. The study seeks to develop an integrated understanding of how these enterprises contribute to long-term business sustainability while addressing contemporary social, environmental, and economic challenges.

Specific Objectives

1. **To examine the concept and characteristics of cultural, eco-friendly, and sustainable enterprises** and analyze their role in promoting sustainable business development.
2. **To explore the relationship between cultural heritage preservation and enterprise sustainability**, emphasizing the contribution of traditional knowledge, indigenous practices, and creative industries to economic development.
3. **To evaluate the adoption of eco-friendly business practices** such as green innovation, renewable energy, waste management, resource efficiency, and circular economy principles in enhancing enterprise performance.
4. **To analyze the economic, environmental, and social contributions of sustainable enterprises** using the Triple Bottom Line (People, Planet, and Profit) framework.
5. **To identify the major challenges and opportunities** faced by cultural, eco-friendly, and sustainable enterprises, particularly in developing economies such as India.



6. **To examine the role of government policies and institutional support** in promoting sustainable entrepreneurship, cultural industries, and environmentally responsible business practices.
7. **To develop an integrated conceptual framework** that links cultural preservation, eco-friendly innovation, and sustainable enterprise practices with long-term organizational performance and sustainable development.
8. **To provide policy recommendations and strategic suggestions** for entrepreneurs, business organizations, policymakers, and other stakeholders to strengthen cultural, eco-friendly, and sustainable enterprises and contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Cultural Enterprises

Cultural enterprises are organizations that create, produce, distribute, and market goods and services derived from cultural heritage, creativity, traditional knowledge, artistic expression, and indigenous practices. These enterprises integrate economic objectives with the preservation and promotion of cultural identity, thereby contributing to both economic development and cultural sustainability. Unlike conventional businesses that primarily focus on profit maximization, cultural enterprises generate economic value while safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural assets for future generations.

The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** defines cultural and creative industries as activities whose primary purpose is the creation, production, promotion, distribution, or commercialization of goods, services, and activities of a cultural, artistic, or heritage-related nature. These enterprises encompass sectors such as handicrafts, handloom textiles, performing arts, traditional music, publishing, museums, cultural tourism, film, architecture, and digital creative industries.

Characteristics of Cultural Enterprises

Cultural enterprises possess several distinctive characteristics that differentiate them from conventional business organizations.

- They preserve and promote cultural heritage and traditional knowledge.
- They are rooted in local customs, traditions, and indigenous practices.
- They combine creativity with entrepreneurship to produce unique products and services.
- They generate employment opportunities, especially in rural and marginalized communities.
- They contribute to social inclusion, community empowerment, and local identity.
- They emphasize authenticity, craftsmanship, and artistic excellence.
- They encourage innovation while respecting cultural traditions.
- They often adopt environmentally sustainable production practices through the use of natural and locally sourced materials.



Cultural Enterprises in India

- India possesses one of the world's richest cultural heritages, making cultural enterprises a vital component of its economy. Traditional sectors such as **Khadi, Pochampally Ikat, Kanchipuram Silk, Banarasi Sarees, Madhubani Painting, Warli Art, Bidriware, Blue Pottery**, and **Bamboo Craft** provide employment to millions of artisans and contribute to exports and tourism.
- Government initiatives such as the **Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)**, **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**, **One District One Product (ODOP)**, **National Bamboo Mission**, and the **Geographical Indication (GI) Tag** system have strengthened traditional industries by improving branding, marketing, skill development, and access to national and international markets.

Future Prospects

The future of cultural enterprises depends on their ability to integrate traditional knowledge with innovation, digital technologies, and sustainable business practices. Digital marketing, e-commerce platforms, artificial intelligence for cultural preservation, virtual museums, sustainable tourism, and green production methods are creating new opportunities for cultural entrepreneurs. Increasing consumer demand for authentic, ethically produced, and environmentally sustainable products further enhances the growth potential of cultural enterprises.

In conclusion, cultural enterprises represent a unique model of entrepreneurship that combines economic development with cultural preservation, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. By safeguarding heritage while embracing innovation, these enterprises strengthen local economies, promote sustainable livelihoods, and contribute significantly to national development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal

Concept of Eco-Friendly Enterprises

Eco-friendly enterprises are business organizations that integrate environmental sustainability into their core operations by minimizing ecological impacts, conserving natural resources, and adopting environmentally responsible production and consumption practices. These enterprises seek to balance economic growth with environmental protection by reducing pollution, conserving energy, promoting resource efficiency, and encouraging sustainable innovation. Unlike conventional enterprises that primarily focus on profit maximization, eco-friendly enterprises incorporate environmental stewardship as a strategic objective while maintaining long-term economic viability.

The emergence of eco-friendly enterprises is largely driven by increasing global concerns over climate change, biodiversity loss, resource depletion, pollution, and rising consumer demand for environmentally responsible products and services. Governments, international organizations, and businesses are increasingly recognizing that sustainable production and responsible consumption are essential for achieving long-term economic development. Consequently, eco-friendly enterprises play a crucial role in supporting the transition toward a low-carbon, resource-efficient, and circular economy.

Eco-Friendly Enterprises in India

India has made significant progress in promoting environmentally responsible enterprises



through various national initiatives and policy interventions. Programs such as the **National Solar Mission**, **PM-KUSUM Scheme**, **Startup India**, **MSME Sustainable (Zero Defect Zero Effect - ZED) Certification Scheme**, **Swachh Bharat Mission**, **National Green Hydrogen Mission**, and the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)** encourage businesses to adopt sustainable production methods and renewable energy technologies.

Several Indian enterprises have emerged as leaders in environmental sustainability. **SELCO India** has expanded access to affordable solar energy solutions in rural communities. **Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited** has invested extensively in renewable energy generation. **ITC Limited** has implemented large-scale afforestation, water conservation, and waste recycling initiatives. **Amul** promotes sustainable dairy practices through cooperative models, while **Eco Tasar Silk** and various organic farming enterprises demonstrate how environmentally responsible production can also preserve rural livelihoods.

Government Policies and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Governments play a crucial role in promoting cultural, eco-friendly, and sustainable enterprises through policy frameworks, financial incentives, regulatory measures, and institutional support. In India, various national policies and flagship programs encourage enterprises to adopt environmentally responsible production methods, preserve cultural heritage, promote innovation, and enhance inclusive economic development. These initiatives are closely aligned with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, which provide a global framework for achieving economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and social well-being by 2030.

Sustainable enterprises contribute to the SDGs by integrating environmental stewardship, social inclusion, ethical governance, and economic viability into their business models. Government support enables these enterprises to improve competitiveness while addressing pressing challenges such as climate change, unemployment, poverty, and cultural preservation.

Government Policies Promoting Sustainable Enterprises in India

Startup India Initiative

Launched in **2016**, the Startup India Initiative aims to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and employment generation by creating a supportive ecosystem for new enterprises.

Key Features

- Tax exemptions for eligible startups.
- Simplified regulatory compliance.
- Financial assistance through the Fund of Funds for Startups.
- Incubation and mentoring support.
- Promotion of innovation-driven enterprises.

Contribution to Sustainable Enterprises

- Encourages green entrepreneurship and social innovation.
- Supports enterprises developing eco-friendly technologies.
- Promotes sustainable business models among young entrepreneurs.



Make in India

The **Make in India** initiative promotes domestic manufacturing while encouraging industries to adopt environmentally sustainable production technologies.

Objectives

- Increase manufacturing's contribution to GDP.
- Generate employment opportunities.
- Improve industrial competitiveness.
- Promote innovation and technology adoption.

Sustainability Contributions

- Encourages energy-efficient manufacturing.
- Supports green industrial infrastructure.
- Promotes resource-efficient production systems.

MSME Sustainable (Zero Defect Zero Effect – ZED) Certification Scheme

The **ZED Scheme** supports Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in improving product quality while minimizing environmental impacts.

Major Objectives

- Promote zero-defect manufacturing.
- Reduce industrial pollution.
- Improve energy efficiency.
- Encourage sustainable resource utilization.
- Strengthen global competitiveness.

National Solar Mission

The **Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission** promotes renewable energy generation to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

Key Components

- Solar power generation.
- Rooftop solar systems.
- Solar parks.
- Research and technological innovation.
- Private sector participation.

Benefits

- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Expansion of renewable energy.
- Improved energy security.
- Green employment generation.

National Green Hydrogen Mission

The National Green Hydrogen Mission aims to position India as a global leader in the production and use of green hydrogen.



Objectives

- Reduce carbon emissions.
- Promote clean energy.
- Encourage industrial decarbonization.
- Develop green manufacturing ecosystems.

National Bamboo Mission

The National Bamboo Mission promotes bamboo cultivation and value-added industries.

Significance

- Supports rural livelihoods.
- Encourages eco-friendly products.
- Conserves natural resources.
- Strengthens sustainable rural enterprises.

Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)

SFURTI strengthens traditional industries by organizing artisan clusters and improving competitiveness.

Major Components

- Skill development.
- Technology upgradation.
- Infrastructure development.
- Marketing support.
- Product diversification.

Contribution

- Preserves traditional crafts.
- Enhances artisan incomes.
- Promotes cultural enterprises.
- Encourages sustainable production practices.

PM-KUSUM Scheme

The PM-KUSUM Scheme promotes the use of solar energy in agriculture.

Benefits

- Renewable energy adoption.
- Reduced dependence on diesel pumps.
- Increased farmer income.
- Sustainable agricultural practices.

National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)

The NAPCC provides a comprehensive framework for climate-resilient and sustainable development.

Its missions include:

- National Solar Mission
- National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency
- National Water Mission
- National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture



- National Mission for a Green India

These missions support enterprises in adopting environmentally responsible business practices.

Challenges and Opportunities of Cultural, Eco-Friendly, and Sustainable Enterprises

Cultural, eco-friendly, and sustainable enterprises have emerged as important drivers of inclusive economic growth, environmental conservation, and social development. These enterprises create value by integrating cultural heritage, green innovation, and sustainable business practices into their operations. Despite their growing importance, they face numerous challenges related to finance, technology, market access, policy implementation, and consumer awareness. At the same time, increasing global demand for sustainable products, advancements in digital technologies, supportive government policies, and the expansion of green finance present significant opportunities for their future growth. Understanding these challenges and opportunities is essential for developing effective strategies that enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of such enterprises.

Recommendations

Based on the review of literature, analysis of government policies, and Indian and international case studies, several strategic recommendations are proposed to strengthen the development of cultural, eco-friendly, and sustainable enterprises. These recommendations are intended for policymakers, entrepreneurs, business organizations, financial institutions, academic institutions, and civil society organizations. Their effective implementation can enhance enterprise competitiveness, preserve cultural heritage, promote environmental sustainability, and contribute to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Policy Recommendations

Strengthen Policy Integration

Governments should formulate integrated policies that simultaneously promote cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and economic development. Greater coordination among ministries responsible for culture, commerce, environment, MSMEs, tourism, and rural development will ensure effective implementation of sustainability initiatives.

Expand Financial Support

Financial institutions should increase access to affordable credit, green loans, venture capital, impact investment, and sustainability-linked financing for cultural and eco-friendly enterprises, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and start-ups.

Improve Regulatory Support

Governments should simplify environmental compliance procedures, certification processes, and licensing requirements while maintaining high sustainability standards. A transparent and business-friendly regulatory environment will encourage greater adoption of sustainable business practices.

Conclusion

The transition toward cultural, eco-friendly, and sustainable enterprises requires coordinated action by governments, businesses, financial institutions, academic organizations, and civil society. Strengthening policy support, improving access to finance, promoting technological innovation, preserving cultural heritage, and encouraging responsible consumption will enhance the long-term



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competitiveness and resilience of sustainable enterprises. Enterprises that successfully integrate economic performance with environmental stewardship and social responsibility will be better positioned to address emerging global challenges while contributing to inclusive development and the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These recommendations provide a comprehensive roadmap for creating a sustainable enterprise ecosystem that benefits businesses, communities, and the environment alike.

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