

Explanatory note: This sub-project of the TRIVENI initiative intends to explore India's everyday civilisational strengths—community bonds, hospitality, intergenerational ethics, traditional food wisdom, and frugality—as vital counterpoints to dominant deficit-based narratives about India. By documenting these lived practices and contrasting them with rising social fragmentation in Western societies, the project aims to equip young people with a grounded, research-based appreciation of India's cultural resilience and civilisational coherence.

Everyday Civilisational Strengths of India: Rethinking Bharat's National Image through Lived Practices

Background & Rationale

Public discourse on India—both within the country and internationally—often focuses on deficiencies: inefficiency, corruption, inequality, infrastructural gaps, and widespread poverty. While these challenges are real and demand attention, their dominance in mainstream narratives obscures the deeper civilisational strengths embedded in India's everyday life. These strengths—rooted in family structures, social ethics, community cohesion, hospitality, intergenerational relations, respect for elders and teachers, and sustainable household practices—form a resilient cultural bedrock that is rarely studied or communicated in a systematic manner.

For Indian youth, who increasingly encounter negative portrayals of India through global media and comparison-driven social contexts, a grounded yet affirmative framework is needed. Such a framework should highlight not triumphalist nationalism, but the lived wisdom and viability of contemporary Indian society and communitarian living: practices that sustain well-being, social trust, and ecological balance, especially in contrast to the social fragmentation, loneliness, and cultural erosion visible across many Western societies

Our Aim (within the TRIVENI initiative)

To document, analyse, and communicate the positive everyday practices of Indian society that contribute to social cohesion, psychological well-being, ecological frugality, and intergenerational continuity—and to present these in a form accessible and inspiring to young Indians.

Scope & Key Themes

1. **Community and Family Bonds** – Joint living arrangements, interdependence, and mutual caregiving compared with rising atomisation in the West.
2. **Hospitality and Everyday Compassion** – The cultural imperative to feed guests, include neighbours, and maintain open households.
3. **Ethics of Care and Respect** – Norms concerning elders, teachers, guests, and social responsibility.
4. **Culinary Knowledge as Everyday Health Culture** – Indian kitchen traditions as preventive medicine, food as healing, and seasonal/regional dietary intelligence.
5. **Frugality and Low-Waste Practices** – Traditional household management, repair/reuse habits, and ecological ethics embedded in everyday routines.
6. **Festivals and Rhythms of Collective Life** – Seasonal celebrations as spaces for community bonding, intergenerational participation, and cultural memory.

7. **Comparative Lens** – Identifying contrasts with contemporary Western everyday life: social isolation, transactional relationships, breakdown of intergenerational ties, food industrialisation, and waste cultures.

Methodology

- Ethnographic documentation of everyday practices across diverse Indian regions and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Comparative sociological and anthropological analysis with Western contexts.
- Interviews with youth to understand perception gaps.
- Creation of short, visually accessible outputs (capsules, infographics, field notes, micro-documentaries) for use in educational and youth-oriented spaces.

Expected Outcomes

- A grounded, research-based narrative counterbalancing the one-sided negative portrayals of India.
- A set of educational resources that can deepen young people's confidence, cultural literacy, and civilisational understanding.
- Contribution to broader conversations on alternative models of well-being and social cohesion rooted in Indian knowledge and lived experience.