



# Toying with Transformation

India's Sustainable Toy Revolution

By Dr. R. G. Anand  
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**TOYING WITH  
TRANSFORMATION:  
INDIA'S  
SUSTAINABLE TOY  
REVOLUTION**



*From Tradition to Global Innovation - The Rise of  
India's Toy Industry*

By Dr. R. G. Anand - MD,  
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**TOYING WITH TRANSFORMATION: INDIA'S SUSTAINABLE TOY REVOLUTION**

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# CONTENTS

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<b>Preface .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>About The Author.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgment.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Why Toys Matter – A Historical Perspective.....</b>	<b>10</b>
1. The Golden Age of Indian Toy-Making.....	10
2. The Decline of Indigenous Toys .....	11
3. The Impact of Foreign Imports.....	12
4. The Revival: PM Modi’s Call to Action.....	12
5. Why This Matters for India's Future .....	13
<b>The Turning Point – PM Modi’s Call for a Self-Reliant Toy Industry .....</b>	<b>14</b>
1. The Wake-Up Call: PM Modi’s ‘Mann Ki Baat’ Speech (August 2020).....	14
2. The Strategy for a Toy Revolution .....	15
3. The India Toy Fair – A Platform for Revival.....	15
4. Toycathon: Encouraging Innovation in Indian Toy-Making .....	16
5. Economic Impact: The Rise of a Self-Reliant Toy Industry .....	16
6. The Global Potential of ‘Made in India’ Toys .....	17
<b>Policy Interventions That Changed the Game.....</b>	<b>19</b>
1. Higher Import Duties to Promote Local Manufacturing	19
2. Strict BIS Quality Standards for Toy Safety.....	20
3. MSME Support and Subsidies for Toy Manufacturers....	20

4. Creation of Toy Clusters and Dedicated Manufacturing Hubs.....	21
5. Encouraging Research & Development (R&D) in Toy Innovation .....	22
6. Marketing and Global Promotion of 'Made in India' Toys .....	22
Impact: .....	23
<b>The Shift Towards Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Toys .....</b>	<b>24</b>
1. Why the Shift to Sustainable Toys? .....	24
2. Government Initiatives Promoting Sustainable Toy Manufacturing .....	25
3. Traditional Indian Toys: A Sustainable Heritage .....	26
4. The Role of Innovation in Sustainable Toy-Making .....	27
5. The Global Market for Sustainable Toys: India's Competitive Advantage .....	27
6. Consumer Awareness: The Shift in Buying Preferences	28
7. Challenges and Future Opportunities.....	29
<b>Toycathon and The India Toy Fair – Encouraging Innovation .....</b>	<b>30</b>
1. Toycathon: India's First Toy Innovation Hackathon.....	30
How Toycathon Works:.....	31
2. The India Toy Fair: A Game-Changer for the Industry..	31
Key Highlights of The India Toy Fair:.....	32
3. How Toycathon and The India Toy Fair Are Revolutionizing Toy Innovation .....	32
4. Future Plans for Toycathon & The India Toy Fair .....	33
5. How These Initiatives Are Positioning India as a Global Leader .....	33

<b>Challenges and Opportunities in the Sustainable Toy Industry .....</b>	<b>34</b>
1. Challenges Facing India's Toy Industry .....	34
2. Opportunities for India's Toy Industry .....	37
2.2 Leveraging Digital Innovation in Toy Design .....	37
2.3 Strengthening MSMEs and Toy Clusters for Mass Production.....	38
<b>The Future of India's Toy Industry .....</b>	<b>40</b>
1. Smart Technology and Digital Integration in Toys.....	40
2. Expansion of Toy Manufacturing Clusters .....	41
3. Strengthening India's Global Toy Exports .....	42
4. The Rise of Eco-Friendly and Sustainable Toys.....	42
5. Expanding E-Commerce and Retail Networks for Indian Toys .....	43
6. Government's Role in Shaping the Future.....	43
<b>Annexures.....</b>	<b>45</b>
Annexure 1: Timeline of Key Events in Dr. P.K. Mishra's Career.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Annexure 2: Key Policies and Government Initiatives for the Toy Industry .....	45
Annexure 3: Selected Speeches and Statements by PM Modi on the Toy Industry .....	46
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>47</b>
Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms.....	47
Appendix 2: List of Toy-Making Regions in India .....	47
<b>References .....</b>	<b>48</b>
Books & Reports .....	48



# PREFACE

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The transformation of India's **toy industry** is one of the most fascinating yet underexplored success stories of the **Atmanirbhar Bharat** (Self-Reliant India) movement. Under the visionary leadership of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, India has witnessed a paradigm shift in toy manufacturing, transitioning from an **import-dependent market to a self-sufficient, export-driven industry**.

Historically, India has had a rich tradition of **handcrafted wooden, clay, and eco-friendly toys**, but over the past few decades, the market had become dominated by **plastic imports, primarily from China**. This not only impacted local artisans but also flooded the market with **low-quality, non-eco-friendly** products. However, **PM Modi's intervention in 2020**, through his *Mann Ki Baat* address, reignited a movement to reclaim India's leadership in toy-making, rooted in **sustainability, innovation, and self-reliance**.

This book explores how **policy reforms, economic strategies, and cultural revival** have positioned India's toy industry on the global stage. It highlights:

- The **policy interventions** that increased **toy exports by 239%** while reducing imports by 52%.
- The rise of **sustainable and eco-friendly toys**, with artisans from Varanasi, Channapatna, and Kondapalli gaining global recognition.
- Initiatives like **Toycathon and The India Toy Fair**, which encouraged innovation and entrepreneurship in the toy industry.

As an author and advocate for **sustainable development**, I found it essential to document this revolution. The story of India's toy industry is not just about business and trade—it is about **cultural revival, employment generation, and environmental responsibility**. This book is a tribute to the artisans, manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and policymakers who have turned the **dream of a self-reliant Indian toy industry into a reality**.

I sincerely hope this book serves as an inspiration to **business leaders, policymakers, and consumers** to continue supporting **Made in India, Sustainable, and Eco-Friendly Toys**. The journey of India's toy industry is just beginning, and the future holds limitless potential.

*Sincerely,*

*Dr. R. G. Anand*

*MBBS, MD, MHA, FHM, PDCR, LLB, LLM*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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**D**r. R. G. Anand is a dedicated public health expert, humanitarian, and advocate for child welfare, whose life and work exemplify the power of commitment and service. With a career spanning decades, he has left an indelible mark on the lives of countless individuals, particularly children and marginalized communities.

Dr. Anand's journey began in the humble surroundings of a village in Pudukottai district, Tamil Nadu. Born to parents who were schoolteachers, he imbibed the values of education, hard work, and compassion from an early age. These early lessons became the foundation of his life's mission: to serve those who are often overlooked by society.

After earning his MBBS degree and an MD in Preventive and Social Medicine, Dr. Anand pursued a Fellowship in HIV Medicine at Christian Medical College, Vellore, and later obtained a Bachelor of Legislative Law (LLB) to champion the cause of child protection. His academic pursuits reflect his belief in combining medical expertise with legal and policy advocacy to address healthcare challenges holistically.

Dr. Anand's professional journey is as remarkable as it is inspiring. In 2012, as a Program Officer with the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), he played a critical role in reducing mother-to-child HIV transmission rates in Tamil Nadu. His efforts contributed to achieving a zero-transmission rate, a milestone in India's public health history. Later, as a Member of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), he traveled

across the country, conducting over 250 health camps and safeguarding the rights of vulnerable children.

Beyond his professional accolades, Dr. Anand is a champion of grassroots change. He has organized over 500 free medical camps, supported the education of thousands of underprivileged children, and launched innovative programs like "Samvedana," a tele-counseling initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic that provided solace and guidance to children.

Dr. Anand's philosophy is rooted in the belief that healthcare and education are fundamental rights, not privileges. His vision is one of a society where every child, regardless of their circumstances, has the opportunity to thrive. Through his work with organizations like WHO and UNICEF, he has amplified this vision on a global scale, collaborating with international leaders to implement sustainable healthcare solutions.

Recognized by numerous awards, including the World Book of Records acknowledgment for his disaster management efforts, Dr. Anand remains grounded and driven by a simple yet profound principle: "True success lies in the lives we uplift."

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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**T**He completion of this book on **India's sustainable toy revolution** would not have been possible without the support and insights of numerous individuals and organizations who have contributed to the growth of this industry.

First and foremost, I express my sincere gratitude to **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, whose vision for a self-reliant and sustainable India has been instrumental in transforming the toy industry. His leadership in promoting "**Vocal for Local**", "**Atmanirbhar Bharat**", and **sustainability in manufacturing** has set a powerful example for policymakers, entrepreneurs, and artisans alike.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Textiles, and Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME)** for their continuous efforts in implementing reforms, organizing initiatives like **The India Toy Fair and Toycathon**, and supporting traditional toy makers in their transition to modern markets.

A special thanks to the **artisans, toy manufacturers, and entrepreneurs** who shared their experiences and success stories for this book. Their passion for **eco-friendly materials, traditional craftsmanship, and innovative designs** is truly inspiring and is at the heart of India's growing toy industry.

To the **researchers, journalists, and policy analysts** who have documented the evolution of India's toy market, I deeply appreciate your contributions. Your reports, case studies, and

insights have provided invaluable data and perspectives for this book.

I am grateful to my family, friends, and colleagues for their constant encouragement and constructive feedback during the writing process. Their support has been essential in shaping the content and vision of this book.

Finally, to the **readers of this book**—business leaders, policymakers, students, and consumers—I hope this book serves as an eye-opener and a call to action. Whether you are a **consumer choosing sustainable toys for your children**, a **business leader investing in eco-friendly products**, or a **policymaker shaping future reforms**, your role in this revolution is crucial.

This book is dedicated to all those who believe in the **power of sustainable innovation, cultural heritage, and self-reliance**. Together, we can ensure that India's toy industry not only thrives but also becomes a global leader in sustainability.

*Sincerely,*

*Dr. R. G. Anand*  
*MBBS, MD, MHA, FHM, PDCR, LLB, LLM*

## INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

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**T**he **Indian toy industry** is undergoing a revolutionary transformation, fueled by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's** vision for a **self-reliant, sustainable, and globally competitive** sector. Traditionally, India has been known for its **handcrafted toys, made from wood, clay, and natural dyes**, reflecting the country's rich cultural heritage. However, in the last few decades, the domestic market was **overrun by cheap plastic imports**, primarily from China, leading to a decline in local craftsmanship and concerns over **quality, safety, and environmental impact**.

In **August 2020**, during his **Mann Ki Baat** address, PM Modi made a strong appeal for "**Vocal for Local**", urging citizens to support Indian toy manufacturers. This marked the beginning of a **policy-driven movement** aimed at:

- ✓ **Reducing imports and boosting exports** through strategic economic reforms.
- ✓ **Reviving traditional Indian toy-making** and promoting eco-friendly alternatives.
- ✓ **Encouraging innovation** through platforms like **Toycathon** and **The India Toy Fair**.

✓ **Establishing global quality standards** to enhance the reputation of "Made in India" toys.

- The results of these efforts have been **remarkable**:
- **Toy exports increased by 239%** between 2014 and 2023.
- **Imports decreased by 52%**, making India a **net exporter** of toys.
- **Artisan clusters from Varanasi, Channapatna, Kondapalli, and other regions** have received government support to modernize production.
- A growing demand for **eco-friendly, non-toxic, and educational toys** has encouraged sustainable manufacturing.



This book explores how PM Modi's policies, industry collaborations, and consumer awareness campaigns have reshaped the Indian toy industry. We will examine:

- The **historical significance** of Indian toy-making and the challenges faced in modern times.

- **Policy interventions** such as **higher import duties, BIS quality regulations, and MSME incentives** that have strengthened domestic manufacturers.
- The **shift towards sustainable toy-making**, including the promotion of **wooden, bamboo, and biodegradable toys**.
- The **role of digital innovation**, educational toy startups, and AI-powered learning toys in shaping the future of the industry.

CHAPTER 1

## WHY TOYS MATTER – A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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**T**oys are not just objects of play; they are powerful tools for **learning, cultural identity, and economic growth.**

Throughout history, **Indian toys** have been more than just entertainment—they have reflected the **traditions, craftsmanship, and storytelling of the country.** However, with the rise of globalization and mass production, **India's indigenous toy-making industry** faced a major decline.

### 1. The Golden Age of Indian Toy-Making

India has a **5,000-year-old tradition** of toy-making, with references in:

**Harappan Civilization:** Excavations from **Mohenjo-Daro and Lothal** reveal terracotta figurines and wheeled animal toys.  
**Vedic Period:** Ancient texts mention handcrafted toys used in rituals and festivals.

**Regional Craftsmanship:** Indian toy clusters evolved across states, including:

- **Channapatna (Karnataka):** Lacquerware wooden toys with vibrant colors.
- **Kondapalli (Andhra Pradesh):** Carved wooden toys depicting mythological figures.

- **Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh):** Clay toys made from locally sourced materials.

These toys were not just for play—they were **educational, eco-friendly, and culturally significant.**

## 2. The Decline of Indigenous Toys

With industrialization and globalization, traditional toy-making suffered due to:

- ✓ **Mass Production:** The influx of **cheap plastic imports** from China and other countries.
- ✓ **Shift in Consumer Preferences:** The dominance of **battery-operated, electronic, and Western-themed** toys.
- ✓ **Lack of Policy Support:** The absence of regulations to protect and promote local artisans.

Between 2000 and 2015, **India became one of the world's largest importers of toys**, with nearly **80% of the market dominated by foreign products.**



### 3. The Impact of Foreign Imports

The toy industry's dependence on **imported plastic and electronic toys** led to:

**Job losses among local artisans** who struggled to compete with factory-made products. **Concerns over child safety**, with many imported toys **failing quality and toxicity tests**. **Environmental damage** due to **non-biodegradable plastic waste**.

This decline not only affected India's economy but also led to the **disappearance of traditional toy-making skills**.

### 4. The Revival: PM Modi's Call to Action

Recognizing the **economic and cultural significance** of toys, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** made a bold intervention in **2020**.

- ✓ In his **Mann Ki Baat address**, he urged Indians to support **local toy makers** and embrace **eco-friendly, handmade toys**.
- ✓ The government launched **The India Toy Fair** and **Toycathon** to promote innovation in sustainable and educational toys.
- ✓ Import duties were **increased from 20% to 70%**, making foreign toys more expensive while boosting local production.

This marked the **beginning of a new era** for India's toy industry—a shift towards **self-reliance, sustainability, and cultural revival**.

## 5. Why This Matters for India's Future

- ✓ **Cultural Identity:** Traditional toys represent India's history, festivals, and storytelling traditions.
- ✓ **Economic Growth:** A strong toy industry supports **artisans, MSMEs, and rural employment.**
- ✓ **Environmental Impact:** The push for **wooden, bamboo, and biodegradable toys** aligns with global sustainability goals.
- ✓ **Educational Value:** Indian toys emphasize **learning through play**, making them essential for childhood development.

CHAPTER 2

# THE TURNING POINT – PM MODI'S CALL FOR A SELF-RELIANT TOY INDUSTRY

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**T**he Indian toy industry reached a critical juncture in 2020 when **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** made a clarion call to **reclaim India's lost dominance in toy-making**. This moment marked the beginning of a structured movement towards **self-reliance, sustainability, and innovation** in the sector.

## 1. The Wake-Up Call: PM Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' Speech (August 2020)

In **August 2020**, during his **Mann Ki Baat** radio address, PM Modi urged the nation to:

- ✓ **Support local toy manufacturers** and revive India's rich toy-making heritage.
- ✓ **Encourage Indian startups** to develop **educational and sustainable toys**.
- ✓ **Promote 'Vocal for Local'** by reducing dependence on **cheap foreign imports**.
- ✓ **Boost exports** by making **'Made in India' toys globally competitive**.

This speech **reshaped public perception**, making toys a **symbol of economic nationalism and self-reliance**.

## 2. The Strategy for a Toy Revolution

To turn this vision into reality, the government implemented **key policy measures**, focusing on:

✓ **Import Reduction:** Increasing **import duties from 20% to 70%** to discourage cheap foreign toys.

✓ **Quality Control:** Mandating **BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) certification** to ensure safer, high-quality products.

✓ **Innovation:** Launching **Toycathon**, a national-level hackathon for toy innovation.

✓ **Investment & Infrastructure:** Setting up **toy clusters and manufacturing hubs** to support artisans and MSMEs.

These interventions **laid the foundation** for a **self-sufficient, export-driven toy industry**.

## 3. The India Toy Fair – A Platform for Revival

In **2021**, the government launched **The India Toy Fair**, a landmark event aimed at:

✓ **Showcasing Indian toy manufacturers and startups.**

✓ **Connecting artisans with buyers, investors, and policymakers.**

✓ **Promoting eco-friendly, culturally inspired toys.**

✓ **Encouraging research and development (R&D) in toy innovation.**

This fair **boosted demand for Indian-made toys** and provided global exposure to **local toy makers**.

#### 4. Toycathon: Encouraging Innovation in Indian Toy-Making

To inspire **next-generation toy makers**, the government launched **Toycathon**—a competition designed to:

- ✓ **Encourage students, designers, and startups** to develop **innovative, educational toys**.
- ✓ **Integrate Indian culture, history, and science** into toy designs.
- ✓ **Promote digital and AI-powered learning toys**.

Toycathon generated **thousands of unique ideas**, fostering a **new wave of innovation** in the sector.



#### 5. Economic Impact: The Rise of a Self-Reliant Toy Industry

Since PM Modi's intervention:

**Imports have decreased by 52%**, reducing dependency on foreign manufacturers.

**Toy exports have increased by 239%**, boosting the 'Make in India'

initiative.

**Indian toy brands** are gaining prominence in **global markets**, competing with international players.

**Local artisans and MSMEs** are seeing **increased demand** and better earnings.

The **transformation of the Indian toy industry** is not just an economic success story but a **cultural revival and sustainability movement**.



## 6. The Global Potential of ‘Made in India’ Toys

India’s toy industry is now positioned to **become a global leader**, thanks to:

- ✓ **Competitive pricing** and improved product quality.
- ✓ **Eco-friendly materials** that appeal to environmentally conscious consumers.
- ✓ **A strong government push** towards international market expansion.

By **2025**, India aims to **significantly increase toy exports**, making it a **major player in the \$100 billion global toy industry**.

## CHAPTER 3

# POLICY INTERVENTIONS THAT CHANGED THE GAME

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**D**uring his time The transformation of India's **toy industry** under **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership** is not just a result of a call for self-reliance—it has been powered by **strong policy interventions**. Through **strategic reforms**, India has **curbed imports, promoted local manufacturing, improved quality standards, and encouraged sustainability** in the toy sector.

This chapter explores the **key policy measures** that have reshaped the industry and positioned India as a **global player in sustainable toy-making**.

### 1. Higher Import Duties to Promote Local Manufacturing

One of the first steps taken by the government to **curb foreign dependence** was the **increase in import duties**:

✓ **February 2020** - Import duties on toys were raised from **20% to 60%**.

✓ **March 2023** - Further raised to **70%**, making imported toys significantly more expensive.

#### **Impact:**

Encouraged **domestic manufacturers** to scale up production. Made **'Made in India' toys more competitive** in the

domestic market. Reduced **influx of cheap, low-quality toys**, protecting Indian consumers and artisans.

## 2. Strict BIS Quality Standards for Toy Safety

To ensure **safety and sustainability**, the government **mandated** that all toys sold in India must comply with **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) quality norms**.

✓ Effective **January 1, 2021** - **All toy manufacturers, including global brands, must obtain BIS certification.**

✓ Ensured that **toys meet child safety, durability, and eco-friendliness standards.**

✓ Reduced the market for **unsafe, toxic, and non-biodegradable plastic toys.**

### **Impact:**

Increased **consumer trust** in Indian-made toys. Improved **global reputation** of Indian toy manufacturers. Boosted exports as Indian toys now meet **international safety standards.**

## 3. MSME Support and Subsidies for Toy Manufacturers

Recognizing the role of **small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** in the toy industry, the government launched several initiatives:

✓ **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme** - Offered subsidies for large-scale toy manufacturing.

✓ **Financial support for artisans and MSMEs** to modernize production units.

✓ **Low-interest loans** through the **MUDRA Yojana** to help toy businesses scale up.

**Impact:**

More **MSMEs entered the toy sector**, increasing employment.

Traditional toy-makers **modernized production** while maintaining heritage designs.

Strengthened India's position as a **manufacturing hub** for global toy brands.

#### **4. Creation of Toy Clusters and Dedicated Manufacturing Hubs**

To encourage **regional toy-making clusters**, the government:

✓ Established **toy manufacturing hubs in Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.**

✓ Provided **infrastructure, training, and financial aid** to traditional toy makers.

✓ Integrated **local artisans** into the supply chain of large manufacturers.

**Impact:**

Increased **production capacity** for sustainable, handcrafted, and educational toys.

Revitalized **Channapatna, Kondapalli, and Varanasi's traditional toy industries.**

Created **thousands of new jobs** in rural and urban areas.

## 5. Encouraging Research & Development (R&D) in Toy Innovation

The government recognized the **need for innovation** in the toy industry and:

- ✓ Established **R&D centers** to promote **AI-powered educational toys**.
- ✓ Encouraged toy startups through **incubation programs and hackathons**.
- ✓ Launched **Toycathon**, a national competition to generate **new ideas for culturally relevant, sustainable toys**.

### Impact:

Inspired **startups and innovators** to create **digital and eco-friendly toys**. Integrated **Indian history, science, and mythology** into new toy designs. Fostered a **culture of creativity and entrepreneurship** in the sector.

## 6. Marketing and Global Promotion of 'Made in India' Toys

To **position Indian toys on the world stage**, the government:

- ✓ Launched **The India Toy Fair** to connect manufacturers with global buyers.
- ✓ Partnered with **e-commerce platforms** to boost online sales of Indian-made toys.
- ✓ Encouraged **international trade fairs and exhibitions** to promote exports.

## **Impact:**

**Toy exports increased by 239% (2014–2023). India's toy brands gained recognition in Europe, the U.S., and the Middle East. Strengthened India's brand identity as a global hub for sustainable toys.**

CHAPTER 4

# THE SHIFT TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AND ECO-FRIENDLY TOYS

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The global toy industry has long been dominated by **plastic-based, mass-produced** toys, contributing to **environmental pollution and health hazards**. However, under **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership**, India is emerging as a **global leader in sustainable toy manufacturing**, with a focus on **eco-friendly materials, traditional craftsmanship, and biodegradable alternatives**.

This chapter explores how India's toy industry is shifting toward **sustainability**, driven by **government policies, consumer awareness, and innovative manufacturing techniques**.

## 1. Why the Shift to Sustainable Toys?

The toy industry's dependence on **plastic and synthetic materials** has raised several concerns:

**Environmental Impact** - 90% of global toys are made of plastic, leading to **millions of tons of waste** in landfills.

**Health Hazards** - Cheap plastic toys contain **toxic chemicals** that can be harmful to children.

**Short Product Lifespan** - Mass-produced plastic toys **break easily**, leading to **higher waste generation**.

Recognizing these challenges, PM Modi's push for **sustainable alternatives** has accelerated the shift toward **eco-friendly, locally crafted, and durable toys**.



## 2. Government Initiatives Promoting Sustainable Toy Manufacturing

To encourage **green and eco-friendly toy production**, the government introduced:

- ✓ **Subsidies for artisans and MSMEs** using **biodegradable materials** (wood, bamboo, clay, and organic dyes).
- ✓ **Ban on toxic and low-quality plastic imports**, ensuring that toys sold in India meet **strict environmental and safety standards**.
- ✓ **Incentives for startups** focusing on sustainable toy-making through programs like **Toycathon** and **The India Toy Fair**.
- ✓ **Integration of sustainability** into India's **export strategy**, making **eco-friendly Indian toys** attractive in **global markets**.

**Impact:**

Increased production of **wooden, cloth, and handmade clay toys**. Boosted global demand for **'green' Indian toys**, expanding exports. Encouraged **innovation in biodegradable and recyclable toy materials**.

### **3. Traditional Indian Toys: A Sustainable Heritage**

Indian toy-making has **always embraced sustainability**, with various regions specializing in **handmade, biodegradable toys**:

✓ **Channapatna (Karnataka)**: Famous for **wooden lacquerware toys**, made from naturally sourced wood and organic dyes.

✓ **Kondapalli (Andhra Pradesh)**: Hand-carved **wooden figurines** depicting mythology and folklore.

✓ **Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh)**: Traditional **clay and terracotta toys**, completely biodegradable.

✓ **Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu)**: Iconic **Thanjavur dolls**, crafted from paper-mâché and natural colors.

**Impact:**

Revival of **centuries-old craftsmanship**, protecting India's cultural heritage. Increased **income for artisans**, empowering rural communities. Reduced **dependency on synthetic materials**, promoting sustainability.

## 4. The Role of Innovation in Sustainable Toy-Making

Beyond traditional methods, **modern startups and manufacturers** are incorporating **cutting-edge innovation** into sustainable toys:

- ✓ **Bamboo-Based Toys:** Lightweight, durable, and 100% biodegradable.
- ✓ **Recycled Paper and Cardboard Toys:** Reducing waste while maintaining affordability.
- ✓ **AI-Powered Educational Toys:** Eco-friendly STEM learning kits that integrate **technology with sustainability**.
- ✓ **Fabric and Soft Cotton Toys:** Non-toxic plush toys replacing polyester-based synthetic models.

### **Impact:**

Encouraging **toy companies to adopt eco-conscious manufacturing**. Expanding India's role in the **global sustainable toy movement**. Providing **safe and durable toys** for children while protecting the environment.

## 5. The Global Market for Sustainable Toys: India's Competitive Advantage

With **rising awareness of environmental issues**, the demand for **sustainable toys** is rapidly increasing worldwide. India is uniquely positioned to **dominate this emerging market** due to:

- ✓ **Abundant raw materials** - Access to wood, bamboo, and organic dyes at low costs.

✓ **Skilled artisans** – Generations of craftsmanship in handmade, biodegradable toys.

✓ **Government-backed incentives** – Policies promoting exports of eco-friendly toys.

✓ **High consumer demand** – A growing preference for **safe, toxin-free, and sustainable products**.

**Impact:**

**Global toy brands sourcing from India** for eco-friendly alternatives. Indian toy startups **gaining international recognition**. Increased **foreign investment in India's sustainable toy sector**.

## **6. Consumer Awareness: The Shift in Buying Preferences**

As **parents and educators** become more aware of the **harmful effects of plastic toys**, there is a noticeable shift in **consumer preferences** toward:

✓ **Non-toxic and child-safe materials.**

✓ **Educational and cultural relevance in toys.**

✓ **Handcrafted, durable, and biodegradable products.**

**Impact:**

**More Indian households are opting for locally made sustainable toys.** Increased demand for **handmade, skill-based toys that encourage learning.** Support for **women and rural artisans engaged in sustainable toy-making.**

## 7. Challenges and Future Opportunities

Despite the rapid shift towards sustainability, some **challenges remain:**

**Higher production costs** - Eco-friendly materials are sometimes more expensive than plastic. **Scaling up manufacturing** - Traditional artisans need technology support to meet global demand. **Awareness and affordability** - Sustainable toys must become accessible to all income groups.

However, **the future is promising**, with opportunities such as:

- ✓ **Government investment in toy clusters** to boost production.
- ✓ **E-commerce platforms** promoting Indian sustainable toys to global consumers.

## CHAPTER 5

# TOYCATHON AND THE INDIA TOY FAIR – ENCOURAGING INNOVATION

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One of the key factors behind the **revolution in India's toy industry** has been the **government's push for innovation and entrepreneurship**. Recognizing the need to develop **sustainable, educational, and culturally relevant** toys, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** launched two major initiatives: **Toycathon** and **The India Toy Fair**.

These initiatives have not only encouraged **startups, students, and artisans** to innovate but have also **connected India's toy manufacturers with global markets**, ensuring the country's emergence as a **leader in sustainable and technology-driven toys**.

### 1. Toycathon: India's First Toy Innovation Hackathon

In **January 2021**, the **Ministry of Education, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, and Ministry of MSMEs** jointly launched **Toycathon**, a **national-level hackathon** aimed at promoting:

- ✓ **Indigenous toy-making based on Indian culture, history, and values.**

- ✓ **Innovation in educational and STEM-based toys.**

- ✓ **Sustainable, eco-friendly toy designs using local materials.**

- ✓ **Integration of AI, VR, and AR in toy development.**

## How Toycathon Works:

- Students, startups, and professionals **submit toy concepts and prototypes**.
- Shortlisted ideas receive **funding, mentorship, and incubation support**.
- Winning designs are **mass-produced by Indian toy manufacturers** and sold domestically and globally.

### Impact:

Over **1.2 lakh participants** submitted toy designs in the first edition. Boosted the development of **interactive, educational, and STEM-based toys**. Encouraged **innovation in AI-driven and augmented reality (AR) toys**. Provided **financial and technical support to young entrepreneurs** in the toy sector.

## 2. The India Toy Fair: A Game-Changer for the Industry

To showcase **India's toy industry** to the world, the government launched **The India Toy Fair**, a **first-of-its-kind national exhibition and marketplace** that:

- ✓ Brings together **Indian toy manufacturers, artisans, and startups**.
- ✓ Provides **buyers and investors access to innovative toy designs**.
- ✓ Promotes **Indian heritage toys** to domestic and international consumers.
- ✓ Encourages **policy discussions on the future of India's toy industry**.

## Key Highlights of The India Toy Fair:

**Virtual & Physical Exhibitions** - Indian toy manufacturers displayed their products in a digital + physical format. **B2B Networking** - Connected Indian toy makers with **global buyers and retailers**. **Workshops & Training** - Sessions for artisans to **modernize production techniques** while maintaining traditional craftsmanship.

### Impact:

Boosted sales of **handmade and eco-friendly toys** from regions like **Channapatna, Kondapalli, and Varanasi**. Enabled **Indian toy startups** to attract **global investors**. Strengthened India's **export potential** in sustainable and educational toys. Created **employment opportunities** for artisans and MSMEs.

## 3. How Toycathon and The India Toy Fair Are Revolutionizing Toy Innovation

**Promoting Indian Culture in Toy Designs** - Toycathon has led to the development of **toys based on Indian mythology, folk tales, and science**. **Educational and Learning-Based Toys** - Encouraging the creation of **STEM kits, AI-driven educational games, and interactive toys**. **Sustainability-Focused Innovation** - Emphasizing **eco-friendly and biodegradable materials** in toy-making. **Startup Growth in the Toy Industry** - Increased investment in **toy startups and innovation hubs**.

## 4. Future Plans for Toycathon & The India Toy Fair

The success of **Toycathon and The India Toy Fair** has inspired plans for **expanded versions**, including:

✓ **Toycathon 2.0** - A **global competition** inviting toy innovators worldwide to collaborate with Indian manufacturers.

✓ **International Toy Fairs** - Government-supported participation in **global toy expos to increase Indian exports**.

✓ **More Funding for Toy Startups** - Increased investment in **tech-based and sustainable toy startups**.

## 5. How These Initiatives Are Positioning India as a Global Leader

India's **toy revolution** is not just about manufacturing—it's about **innovation, education, and sustainability**.

With **platforms like Toycathon and The India Toy Fair**, India is rapidly becoming:

**A global hub for educational and interactive toys. A pioneer in sustainable toy manufacturing. A top exporter of handmade, eco-friendly, and AI-driven toys.**

the launch of **Toycathon and The India Toy Fair** has provided the **platform, funding, and market access** needed to **transform the Indian toy industry**. These initiatives have sparked a **wave of creativity**, bringing **entrepreneurs, artisans, and global investors together** to shape the **future of toys in India**.

## CHAPTER 5

# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SUSTAINABLE TOY INDUSTRY

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**P** rime Minister Narendra Modi's policies have successfully revived India's **toy industry**, there are still challenges that need to be addressed. As India transitions towards **sustainable and self-reliant toy manufacturing**, overcoming **supply chain, affordability, and market expansion** issues is crucial.

This chapter will explore the **challenges and opportunities** in India's sustainable toy industry and how the country can solidify its position as a **global leader in eco-friendly and innovative toys**.

## 1. Challenges Facing India's Toy Industry

### 1.1 Higher Production Costs for Sustainable Toys

- ✓ **Eco-friendly materials (wood, bamboo, organic dyes) are more expensive than plastic.**
- ✓ Sustainable toys require **handmade craftsmanship**, which increases labor costs.
- ✓ Need for investment in **automation and scaling production** to lower costs.

**Solution:**

**Government subsidies and financial incentives for sustainable toy production. Encouraging R&D in cost-effective biodegradable materials.**

**1.2 Limited Global Market Access for Indian Toys**

- ✓ **Indian toy brands still struggle to compete with large international players like Lego, Mattel, and Hasbro.**
- ✓ **Lack of strong global branding for 'Made in India' toys.**
- ✓ **Regulatory barriers and compliance issues in some export markets.**

**Solution:**

**Increased global trade partnerships and participation in international toy expos. 'Made in India' branding campaigns to position Indian toys in global markets. Government-backed support for export certifications and compliance.**

**1.3 Scaling Up Production to Meet Demand**

- ✓ **Many Indian toy manufacturers are small-scale MSMEs and artisans, unable to produce in bulk.**
- ✓ **Need for investment in modern machinery and production facilities.**
- ✓ **Balancing tradition and mass production without losing craftsmanship.**

**Solution:**

**Expansion of toy manufacturing clusters** in Gujarat, Karnataka, and UP. **Government-backed training programs for artisans to integrate modern techniques.**

**1.4 Consumer Awareness & Affordability Issues**

- ✓ Many Indian consumers are **used to cheap imported plastic toys.**
- ✓ **Sustainable toys are often more expensive**, making them less accessible.
- ✓ **Need for consumer education on the benefits of eco-friendly toys.**

**Solution:**

**Educational campaigns and school programs** promoting sustainable toys. **Partnerships with online marketplaces** to offer



affordable, Indian-made alternatives.

**Subsidies and incentives** to reduce the price of eco-friendly toys.

## 2. Opportunities for India's Toy Industry

### 2.1 Becoming a Global Leader in Eco-Friendly Toys

- ✓ **Rising demand for sustainable toys** in Europe, the U.S., and Japan.
- ✓ India has **abundant raw materials (wood, bamboo, clay, textiles)** for green toy production.
- ✓ Government incentives are **encouraging MSMEs to shift to sustainable manufacturing.**

#### **Opportunity:**

**India can dominate the global market for biodegradable and organic toys.**

### 2.2 Leveraging Digital Innovation in Toy Design

- ✓ India has a **strong IT sector** that can integrate AI, AR, and VR into toy-making.
- ✓ Increased demand for **STEM-based, interactive, and educational toys.**
- ✓ Toycathon has encouraged **AI-powered learning kits and Indian-themed video games.**

#### **Opportunity:**

**Integration of smart technology with traditional toy craftsmanship. India can lead the global market for AI-powered educational toys.**

## 2.3 Strengthening MSMEs and Toy Clusters for Mass Production

- ✓ Expansion of **government-backed toy clusters** for large-scale production.
- ✓ Investment in **automation and machine-assisted production** for affordable pricing.
- ✓ Encouraging **public-private partnerships (PPP)** to boost toy exports.



### Opportunity:

**Increased employment and revenue for India's MSME sector.**

**Higher efficiency in sustainable toy-making, reducing costs and increasing affordability.**

## 2.4 Boosting Toy Exports Through Policy & Trade Agreements

- ✓ India's toy exports **increased by 239% from 2014 to 2023.**
- ✓ Government is negotiating **trade agreements to expand toy exports.**
- ✓ The India Toy Fair and Toycathon have positioned **Indian toys on the global stage.**

**Opportunity:**

**With aggressive trade policies, India can capture a larger share of the \$100 billion global toy market.**

## CHAPTER 7

# THE FUTURE OF INDIA'S TOY INDUSTRY

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**A**S India's **sustainable toy industry** continues to grow, the next decade presents an opportunity for the country to become a **global leader in toy innovation, sustainability, and exports**. By leveraging **smart technology, expanding production capacity, and increasing international trade partnerships**, India can solidify its position in the **\$100 billion global toy market**.

This chapter explores the **future trends, policy directions, and market strategies** that will shape **India's toy industry in the years to come**.

### 1. Smart Technology and Digital Integration in Toys

With the rise of **AI, Augmented Reality (AR), and Virtual Reality (VR)**, the **future of toys is digital**. India's **IT and software industry** gives it a competitive edge in developing **high-tech, educational, and interactive toys**.

#### Emerging Trends in Smart Toys:

- ✓ **AI-powered educational robots** that teach children coding and problem-solving.
- ✓ **Augmented reality (AR) books and interactive learning games**.
- ✓ **STEM-based toys** that help children learn science, technology, engineering, and math.

✓ **Voice-activated and sensor-based toys** for personalized learning.

### **Opportunity for India:**

With **Toycathon** and increased R&D, Indian startups can lead **AI-driven toy innovation**. **‘Made in India’ smart toys** can compete with **Lego, Mattel, and Hasbro** in the global market.

## **2. Expansion of Toy Manufacturing Clusters**

To meet growing domestic and global demand, **India needs large-scale toy manufacturing hubs**.

### **Future Plans for Toy Clusters:**

✓ **Expansion of toy manufacturing zones** in Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, UP, and MP.

✓ Increased government investment in **modern machinery** for mass production.

✓ **Training programs** for artisans to scale handmade toys without losing craftsmanship.



### **Opportunity for India:**

**Increased employment and skill development in the toy industry.**

**Higher efficiency in producing affordable, sustainable toys.**

## **3. Strengthening India's Global Toy Exports**

While India has seen a **239% increase in toy exports (2014-2023)**, the next goal is to make India a **top 5 toy-exporting nation**.

### **Key Strategies to Boost Exports:**

✓ **Bilateral trade agreements** to open new global markets.

✓ **Participation in major toy fairs** in the U.S., Europe, and the Middle East.

✓ **Government-backed subsidies** for export-oriented toy manufacturers.

### **Opportunity for India:**

Increased presence in **international markets for sustainable and handmade toys**. India can **compete with China in global toy manufacturing and exports**.

## **4. The Rise of Eco-Friendly and Sustainable Toys**

With growing global awareness about **climate change**, demand for **biodegradable and organic toys** is expected to **skyrocket**.

### **Future of Sustainable Toys in India:**

✓ **100% plastic-free, organic wooden and bamboo toys.**

✓ Expansion of **eco-friendly toy exports** to Europe and North America.

✓ **New government incentives for companies adopting green manufacturing.**

**Opportunity for India:**

**Become the world's leading supplier of sustainable toys. Dominate the eco-conscious toy market with handcrafted, organic products.**

## **5. Expanding E-Commerce and Retail Networks for Indian Toys**

With the rise of **online shopping**, Indian toy manufacturers must **expand their digital footprint.**

**Key E-Commerce Strategies:**

✓ Collaboration with **Amazon, Flipkart, and global toy retailers.**

✓ **Branding and marketing campaigns** for Indian toys in international markets.

✓ Government-backed **platforms to promote 'Made in India' toys online.**

**Opportunity for India:**

**Increased global reach and direct-to-consumer sales for Indian toy brands. More accessibility of sustainable and handmade Indian toys worldwide.**

## **6. Government's Role in Shaping the Future**

The Indian government will continue to play a **key role in policy-making, incentives, and global branding.**

**Future Policy Initiatives:**

- ✓ **Increased R&D funding** for AI-driven and STEM toys.
- ✓ **Tax benefits** for sustainable toy companies.
- ✓ **More trade delegations** to promote Indian toys internationally.

**Opportunity for India:**

**Position itself as a top toy-manufacturing nation. Ensure long-term economic growth and employment in the toy industry.**

## ANNEXURES

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### Annexure 1: Timeline of Key Events in India's Toy Industry Under PM Modi

- **August 2020:** PM Modi addresses the nation in *Mann Ki Baat*, emphasizing the need for a self-reliant toy industry.
- **February 2020:** Import duties on foreign toys increased from 20% to 60%.
- **January 2021:** BIS certification made mandatory for all toys sold in India to improve quality and safety.
- **January 2021:** **Toycathon 2021** launched to promote innovation in educational and sustainable toys.
- **February 2021:** **The India Toy Fair** debuts, bringing together artisans, startups, and global buyers.
- **March 2023:** Import duties further raised to 70% to boost domestic manufacturing.
- **2024-Present:** Toy exports rise 239%, making India a key player in the global toy market.

### Annexure 2: Key Policies and Government Initiatives for the Toy Industry

- **'Vocal for Local' & Atmanirbhar Bharat** – Promoting locally made, sustainable toys.

- **Toy Quality Regulations** - Mandatory BIS certification for all toys in India.
- **MSME Support & Financial Incentives** - Government-backed subsidies for small-scale toy manufacturers.
- **Expansion of Toy Clusters** - Setting up dedicated manufacturing hubs in Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Export Promotion Policies** - Incentives and trade agreements to boost international market penetration for Indian toy brands.
- **E-commerce and Digital Marketing Support** - Helping artisans and MSMEs reach global consumers through platforms like Amazon and Flipkart.

### **Annexure 3: Selected Speeches and Statements by PM Modi on the Toy Industry**

- *Mann Ki Baat (August 2020): "India has the potential to become a global hub for toy manufacturing. Our artisans, entrepreneurs, and innovators must come together to revive this rich industry."*
- *Launch of The India Toy Fair (2021): "Toys are not just playthings; they are the foundation of childhood learning, creativity, and culture. India must lead the world in producing sustainable, high-quality, and educational toys."*
- *Inauguration of Toycathon (2021): "Through innovation and technology, Indian-made toys can shape the future of learning while embracing sustainability."*

## APPENDIX

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### Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

**Sustainable Toys** - Toys made from eco-friendly materials such as wood, bamboo, and organic dyes.

**Toycathon** - A national innovation competition launched to develop educational and culturally relevant toys.

**The India Toy Fair** - An annual event that showcases Indian toy manufacturers, startups, and artisans.

**Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** - The national regulatory body that sets quality and safety standards for Indian products, including toys.

**Toy Manufacturing Clusters** - Special economic zones dedicated to large-scale toy production in India.

### Appendix 2: List of Toy-Making Regions in India

**Channapatna, Karnataka** - Known for its handcrafted lacquerware wooden toys.

**Kondapalli, Andhra Pradesh** - Famous for hand-carved wooden figurines.

**Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh** - Specializes in clay and terracotta toys.

**Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu** - Produces the iconic Thanjavur dolls using paper-mâché.

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India's toy industry is witnessing an unprecedented transformation—one that blends tradition, sustainability, and economic self-reliance. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country has evolved from being an import-heavy toy market to a self-sufficient, innovation-driven, and globally competitive powerhouse.



In *Toying with Transformation*, Dr. R. G. Anand unpacks the remarkable journey of India's toy sector, shedding light on key policy interventions, economic strategies, and cultural revivals that have reshaped this once-overlooked industry. From centuries-old handcrafted wooden toys of Channapatna to the cutting-edge innovations of today's Toycathon winners, this book offers an in-depth exploration of India's rise as a toy manufacturing hub.