

# The Role of Literary Diplomacy in Cultural Dialogue between Iran and India: An Interdisciplinary Approach Focusing on Rumi and Kipling

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## Abstract

This study explores the role of literary diplomacy in strengthening cultural dialogue between Iran and India during the colonial period, focusing on the works of Jalal al-Din Rumi and Rudyard Kipling. The primary objective is to analyze the impact of literature on the cultural relations of these two countries and examine how literature has been utilized as a tool for cultural diplomacy. Employing qualitative, analytical, and comparative methods, data were gathered through textual analysis and expert interviews. The findings indicate that Rumi and Kipling, despite their cultural and historical differences, established profound connections between Iran and India through shared themes such as love, spirituality, and justice. Rumi's works helped preserve Iran's cultural identity and served as a form of resistance against colonial narratives. Similarly, Kipling fostered cultural dialogue between Britain and India by providing an accurate representation of Indian culture. This research emphasizes literary and cultural innovations in enhancing international relations, concluding that literature can effectively promote cultural diplomacy and international understanding. Additionally, it highlights the significance of translation and literary exchange in shaping cultural relations and enhancing mutual understanding between nations.

**Keywords:** Literary Diplomacy, Cultural Dialogue, Rumi, Kipling, Interdisciplinary Approach

## 1. Introduction

During the colonial era, literature played a significant role in fostering cultural dialogue among nations. Two prominent figures in this context are Jalal al-Din Rumi from Iran and Rudyard Kipling from Britain. Despite their cultural and political differences, these writers strengthened ties between Iran and India through their literary works.

The colonial period was tumultuous for Iran-India relations. Political and economic relationships were heavily influenced by colonial powers, undergoing numerous transformations. However, amidst these changes, cultural relations were largely preserved and even strengthened in some instances. Literature emerged as a crucial element in this regard.

The works of poets like Rumi in Iran and Kipling in India acted as bridges between these cultures during this period, facilitating mutual understanding and respect. Their writings contain messages that can serve as a foundation for contemporary cultural diplomacy between Iran and India.

Studying Rumi's and Kipling's works together provides deeper insights into the cultural dialogue during the colonial era. Despite their different backgrounds, both poets addressed shared themes such as love, spirituality, justice, and peace. Examining these themes can help identify shared cultural grounds between Iran and India while promoting contemporary dialogue.

In exploring the themes of mysticism, spirituality, and love, it is crucial to ground our analysis in specific literary examples from the works of Jalal al-Din Rumi and Rudyard Kipling. For instance, Rumi's poem 'The Guest House' serves as a profound illustration of spiritual acceptance and the embrace of diverse emotions, encapsulating his mystical perspective on human experience. Similarly, Kipling's poem 'If—' articulates ideals of resilience and moral fortitude, reflecting the complexities of identity and duty in a colonial context. By incorporating these examples, we can strengthen our analysis and better connect our theoretical framework to concrete literary evidence. Examining these common themes can help identify shared cultural grounds between Iran and India as well as ways to promote cultural dialogue in contemporary relations.

Researching literary diplomacy between Iran and India through Rumi's and Kipling's works is significant. This research enhances historical ties while demonstrating how literature can function as an effective tool for diplomacy. Furthermore, examining their contributions can strengthen cultural exchanges for new generations.

This study serves as a bridge between comparative literature studies, history, and cultural relations, aiding in understanding the complex relationships between Iran and India during both colonial times and today. The results could benefit policymakers, diplomats, cultural activists, and researchers in the field of cultural relations.

## 2. Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Human history is interwoven with threads of cultural exchange and diplomatic relations. Literature has played a central role in shaping these interactions. This research examines the complexities of literature-diplomacy relationships during the colonial period with a focus on cultural dialogue between Iran and India through Rumi's and Kipling's lenses.

The colonial era marked a pivotal moment characterized by European dominance over large parts of Asia and Africa. While the exploitative nature of colonialism is undeniable, it also led to unintended consequences of cultural amalgamation. The clash of diverse cultures created fertile ground for both conflict and collaboration.

The central concept here is "literary diplomacy," which encompasses the strategic use of literature to enhance understanding between countries. By examining Rumi's mystical poetry alongside Kipling's imperial narratives, this study seeks to illuminate how literature can act as either a bridge or barrier in intercultural relations.

Rumi's 13th-century poetry resonates with themes of mysticism and universal love across cultures. In contrast, Kipling explores colonial identity complexities from an imperial perspective. This research addresses key questions: How did Rumi's works strengthen cultural relations? What challenges did literary diplomacy face? It will also explore literature's potential as a tool for contemporary cultural diplomacy.

By analyzing their works within the broader context of Iran-India relations during colonial times, this study seeks to clarify key questions:

1. To what extent did Rumi's works contribute to preserving Persian culture in India?
2. How did Kipling's portrayal of India shape British attitudes?
3. In what ways do their literary works intersect or diverge?
4. What role did translation play in facilitating or hindering dialogue?

By answering these questions, this research aims to deepen our understanding of literature-diplomacy relationships while demonstrating how literary texts serve as valuable resources for historical analysis.

This research does not romanticize colonialism or overlook its oppressive legacy; instead, it explores how literature reflects broader historical contexts. Analyzing Rumi's and Kipling's works elucidates both the potentialities and challenges that literature presents for diplomatic understanding. Ultimately, this study aims to expand scholarly discussions regarding literature's role in shaping intercultural relations by offering new insights into dynamics within cultural exchange.

## 3. Research Objectives

The present research objectives are as follows:

1. Investigate Rumi's influence on Indian culture during colonial times.
2. Analyze representations of Indian culture in Kipling's writings.
3. Evaluate literature's role in establishing a dialogue between Iran and India.
4. Examine challenges faced by literary diplomacy during this period.

The works of Rumi and Kipling acted as bridges facilitating dialogue grounded in shared spiritual commonalities such as mysticism and truth-seeking. Despite political differences, literature connected people from both nations by allowing them to share experiences.

However, literary diplomacy faced challenges related to historical realities versus idealized representations. Both authors presented images that could foster understanding but also reinforce stereotypes.

Translation played a crucial role; while it disseminated Rumi's ideas throughout India, inaccuracies sometimes distorted original meanings. Similarly, power imbalances overshadowed literary exchanges during colonialism.

Despite these challenges, literary diplomacy preserved ties between Iran and India during colonial times by fostering mutual respect while laying the foundations for future cooperation. Studying this era offers valuable lessons for contemporary cultural diplomacy today.

#### 4. Research Methodology

This study investigates literary diplomacy's role in promoting dialogue between Iran and India during the colonial period through qualitative methods: textual analysis and expert interviews.

The textual analysis involved examining original works by Rumi and Kipling alongside relevant historical texts about their periods. Additionally, studies on literary diplomacy were reviewed to contextualize findings within broader discussions on intercultural dialogue.

Interviews with experts—literature scholars from both countries—provided insights into perspectives on literary diplomacy's impact on culture during colonialism. The data were analyzed thematically to identify trends regarding the representation of culture in both authors' works.

Existing literature indicates that while Rumi's mystical poetry transcended political boundaries to promote shared human experiences across cultures; Kipling's narratives have been critiqued for their portrayal of colonial encounters yet also recognized for fostering mutual understanding.

By examining specific mechanisms employed by these authors to facilitate exchange among civilizations during this significant period of global transformation; this research aims to provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between literature-diplomacy relationships.

#### 5. Discussion and Analysis

In an article titled "The Shadow of Colonialism and Despotism on Iranian Culture during the Pahlavi Era," the role of literature in cultural diplomacy between Iran and India during the colonial period is examined (Masoudi, 2008; 21). This historical period was marked by significant changes in political and economic relations between Iran and India, influenced by colonial powers. However, cultural relations between the two countries were largely preserved and even strengthened in some instances (Zolfagari, 2022; 175). Literature played a pivotal role as one of the most important cultural elements in this context. While there have been few studies on the role of literature in cultural diplomacy between Iran and India during colonialism, there remains a necessity for more comprehensive and precise research in this area.

Throughout various historical periods, Persian literature has played a significant role in cultural diplomacy between Iran and India. During the Mughal Empire's rule in India, Persian language and literature served as the official language of their court, significantly influencing cultural exchanges. This situation led many Iranian poets and writers to migrate to India, promoting the Persian language in that region (Sadeghpour, 2014; 23). Additionally, during the reign of Shah Abbas, cultural relations between Iran and India continued, with Persian being used as an official language in India. This cultural and literary exchange contributed to the promotion of Persian language and literature in India (Gholami, 2014; 67). Thus, the role of Persian-speaking poets and writers in these exchanges has been crucial.

Rumi is a prominent poet who expressed critical perspectives in his works, particularly in "Divan-e Shams" and "Masnavi." He is considered one of the literary theorists of Persian literature, with his works rich in these viewpoints. Various articles have explored Rumi's linguistic and literary perspectives, relying on contemporary literary criticism theories, particularly Roman Jakobson's theories (Aghaqalizadeh Siyar, 2003). Rumi was also strong in narrative storytelling; his works are crafted in a way that may lack strong internal coherence; emotions often overshadow logic in his writings (Gholami, 2014; 67). During colonialism, cultural relations between Iran and India were influenced by colonial powers. This historical period was accompanied by significant changes in political and economic relations between the two countries. Nevertheless, literature played a key role as one of the most important cultural elements in maintaining and strengthening cultural relations between Iran and India. Rumi addressed common themes such as love, spirituality, justice, and peace in his works. Using both poetry and prose, he articulated these themes deeply and beautifully. Rumi's works, particularly "Masnavi," have contributed to a deeper understanding of cultural dialogue between Iran and India during colonial times. Kipling similarly portrayed life in British India through his stories and novels. He addressed topics such as identity, cultural and social differences, the struggle for balance between two worlds, and the impact of colonialism on the lives of Indian people. Kipling's works can also aid in better understanding cultural relations during colonial times as well as contemporary relations between Iran and India.

Jalal al-Din Rumi, one of the greatest mystics of the 13th century, promoted love and peace through his works (Tamizal, 2020; 6). He expressed these themes deeply and beautifully using both poetry and prose. In "Masnavi" and "Divan-e Shams," Rumi utilized the harmony of opposites present in the universe to illustrate manifestations of peace and reconciliation. He refers to peace among humans as well as with God—the most complete example of reconciliation (Tamizal, 2020; 7). The reconciliation of opposites is essential for the survival of living beings. Overall, Rumi's works not only promote love and peace but also contribute to a deeper understanding of humanity and connection with God. The breadth and diversity of evidence within "Masnavi" serve as a clear testament to Rumi's commitment to non-violence throughout his works (Ahrari et al., 2023; 1).

The research findings indicate that Rumi's works, especially "Masnavi," have been widely embraced in India, significantly impacting Indian literature, mysticism, and philosophy. Related studies also highlight the influence of Iranian poets and mystics, including Rumi, on the poetry of Muhammad Iqbal Lahori. Furthermore, the introduction of multilingual texts—including Persian texts—into British literary tradition during the twentieth century attests to the influence of Persian literature in India. This suggests that Kipling's works represent Indian culture and identity from an imperial perspective without striving for mutual understanding or respect between cultures. Despite Rumi's influence on Indian literature and Kipling's attempts at representing Indian culture, it appears that literature has been effective in fostering cultural dialogue. Historical studies show that Iran-Britain relations during the Safavid period were primarily commercial based on mutual respect. This may indicate literature's role in fostering mutual understanding and respect between cultures.

Rumi's works—especially "Masnavi"—have been widely welcomed in India and have influenced Indian literature, mysticism, and philosophy. Kipling's works often portray India as a counterpart to Europe lacking civilization while emphasizing colonial prejudices. The Iran-Britain relations during the Safavid period were primarily commercial based on mutual respect; however, during the Zand era, Britain adopted a dual policy towards Iran while pursuing its colonial interests in India. Literature can play an effective role in fostering cultural dialogue and mutual understanding between cultures but faced challenges during colonialism. Overall, this research demonstrates that literature can be an effective tool for cultural diplomacy while aiding mutual understanding and respect among different cultures that faced obstacles during colonialism.

Jalal al-Din Rumi lived during the thirteenth century as a renowned poet and mystic from Iran. His works—especially "Masnavi"—are recognized as one of the most important mystical texts globally. The influence of Rumi's works in India is so profound that he is referred to as "the national poet of India." The impact of Rumi's works on India can be attributed to several factors:

**Historical and Cultural Relations:** Iran and India have historically maintained close historical and cultural ties through trade, religion, and Sufism.

**Language:** The Persian language has been prevalent at various historical periods in India. This facilitated access to Rumi's works for Indian audiences.

**Sufism:** Sufism has been one of the most important cultural links between Iran and India. Rumi himself was a prominent Sufi master whose works enjoyed great popularity among Indian Sufis. Rumi's writings—particularly "Masnavi"—have had a profound impact on Indian literature. Indian poets have drawn inspiration from Rumi's themes, imagery, and style in their own works. Some notable Indian poets influenced by Rumi include:

Amir Khusro Dehlawi: A prominent Indian poet and musician known as "the parrot of India."

Abdul Rahim Khan-i-Khanan: An Indian poet and mystic known as "the parrot of ghazal."

Bidal Dehlawi: An Indian poet known as "the king of words."

Rumi's works have also profoundly impacted Indian mysticism. His mystical teachings have gained significant popularity among Indian Sufis. Some notable Sufi masters influenced by Rumi include:

Nizamuddin Auliya: A prominent Indian mystic known as "the beloved of Delhi."

Jalal al-Din Rumi: An Indian mystic known as "the second Jalal al-Din."

Shah Hussain: An Indian mystic poet known as "Shah Maqbool." Additionally, Rumi's writings have deeply influenced Indian philosophy. His philosophical ideas are highly regarded among Indian philosophers. Some notable philosophers influenced by Rumi include:

Abu al-Hasan Kharraqani: An Indian philosopher-mystic known as "Sheikh Abu al-Hasan."

Hafez Shirazi: An Iranian poet-philosopher known as "the tongue of the unseen."

Iqbal Lahori: A Pakistani poet-philosopher known as "the thinker of the nation."

**Concrete Examples from Poetry:**

**Influence on Themes:** Indian poets have drawn inspiration from various themes in Rumi's "Masnavi," such as love, spirituality, death, and salvation. For instance, Amir Khusro Dehlawi, in a poem titled "Masnavi of Love," draws upon the theme of divine love found in "Masnavi."

**Influence on Imagery:** Indian poets have utilized various images from "Masnavi," including birds, flowers, and candles. For example, Abdul Rahim Khan-i-Khanan in a poem titled "Divan-i Arifi" is inspired by the imagery of birds in "Masnavi."

**Influence on Style:** Indian poets have been influenced by Rumi's epic and lyrical style.

Studies indicate that Rumi's works, particularly "Masnavi," have been widely embraced in India and have significantly impacted the country's literature, mysticism, and philosophy. This influence can be observed through several concrete examples:

One of the most significant examples of Rumi's impact in India is on Urdu literature. For instance, the prominent Urdu poet Muhammad Iqbal Lahori was influenced by Rumi's ideas and reflected many of his themes and motifs in his poetry. In one of Iqbal's poems, he writes:

"I am the one who commands over heaven and earth,  
And I make everything obey my command."

This couplet illustrates the influence of Rumi's mystical thoughts on Iqbal's poetry. In another instance, Rumi states:

"I said I am a polished mirror,  
Turk and Hindu see in me what they are."

Rumi's works have also significantly impacted the mystical tradition in India. Concepts such as "Unity of Existence" and "Divine Love" presented in "Masnavi" are echoed in the works of Indian mystics. One such mystic, Shah Waliullah Dehlawi, describes his mystical experience:

"In that moment, I felt all existence within me,  
As if the entire universe resided inside me."

Examples of Rumi's poetry addressing the concepts of "Unity of Existence" and "Divine Love" include:

Unity of Existence:

"I do not know separation from you; I do not know two as you and I." (Masnavi, Book 1, Verse 433)

"All particles of the universe are in your image / And what is in you is reflected in the mirror." (Masnavi, Book 6, Verse 3165)

"We are all droplets from that sea / And what is in us is reflected in His mirror." (Masnavi, Book 6, Verse 3166)

Divine Love:

"Shams Tabrizi, wherever you are / I circle around you like a moth around a flame." (Masnavi, Book 1, Verse 756)

"I am enamored and mad for you / Intoxicated and drunk with your essence." (Masnavi, Book 1, Verse 757)

"Every particle that exists in this world / Is moving and working out of love for you." (Masnavi, Book 1, Verse 758)

These are just a few examples among countless verses by Rumi that delve into the mystical concepts of "Unity of Existence" and "Divine Love." Rumi's beautiful and powerful language articulates these profound concepts in a manner that is both comprehensible and impactful.

Rumi and Kipling, as prominent representatives of Persian and Indian literature, have played significant roles in expressing themes of love and spirituality. In "Masnavi," Rumi introduces love as a divine and unifying force that transcends cultural and religious boundaries, pointing to human unity. In contrast, Kipling addresses the complexities of colonial identity and human relationships within the cultural context of India in "Kim," examining love through the lens of human and social relationships, yet failing to provide a comprehensive portrayal of Indian culture.

Rumi's influence on the mystical tradition in India has been profound and enduring. Indian mystics have drawn inspiration from his poetry, expanding upon his concepts in their works. This cultural exchange exemplifies the unifying power of mysticism. Philosophical concepts presented in "Masnavi," such as "self-awareness" and "human perfection," have also found reflection in the works of Indian philosophers. These influences illustrate the depth and breadth of Rumi's impact on Indian culture and philosophy.

During the colonial era, Rumi's works significantly contributed to the preservation and dissemination of Persian culture in India, reinforcing the cultural identity of Iranians in India. Conversely, Kipling's portrayal of India, often shaped by colonial stereotypes, influenced British policies and attitudes while perpetuating misconceptions about Indian culture. Nonetheless, some of his writings also led to a deeper understanding of Indian culture. This analysis demonstrates that literature can serve as a powerful tool for cultural diplomacy and enhance international understanding.

### 5.1. Influence of Rumi's Works on Indian Culture and Literature during Colonialism

Rumi's poetry, particularly "Masnavi," found fertile ground for acceptance during the colonial period in India. The eclectic nature of India's religious and philosophical ideas, emphasizing divine love and unity, resonated with Rumi's mystical themes. Figures like Kabir and Nanak, who predated Rumi, had already created an environment receptive to Sufi ideas (Iqbal, 1932). The work of early translators and commentators like Abdul Fazl played a crucial role in introducing Rumi to a wider Indian audience (Dar, 1993). The Persian-speaking court culture of Abdul Fazl and his interest in Sufism facilitated the translation and dissemination of Rumi's poetry. Later, during colonial times, British Orientalists such as Nicholson and Arberry contributed to increasing interest in Rumi through English translations and academic studies (Nicholson, 1926; Arberry, 1961).

Rumi's influence on Indian literature is multifaceted. His poetry directly inspired numerous poets and mystics like Iqbal, who extensively utilized Rumi's imagery and symbolism (Iqbal, 1932). Rumi's concept of divine love expressed through beloved imagery aligns with the Bhakti tradition in Indian poetry (Mehta, 1987). For example, Kabir's poetry emphasizes love for the divine and shares similarities with Rumi's mystical verses. Furthermore, Rumi's ideas on tolerance, pluralism, and human unity had broader impacts on India's intellectual and cultural life. His emphasis on love as a unifying force aligned with Gandhi's ideals of nationalism and India's quest for independence (Gandhi, 1948).

Rumi's poetry also played a role in shaping Indian identity within a colonial context. By providing a language to express spiritual and philosophical ideas that transcended cultural boundaries, Rumi's works helped reinforce a shared sense of humanity and connection. This, in turn, challenged the colonial discourse of racial and cultural superiority (Sa'i, 1978). For instance, Rumi's famous lines: "I died as mineral and became a plant; I died as plant and rose to animal; I died as animal and became a man. Why should I fear? When did I ever die?" (Rumi, 1996, p. 123) resonate with Hindu concepts of reincarnation and the cyclical nature of existence. This shared philosophical background facilitated cultural dialogue between Iran and India.

The impact of Rumi's poetry on Indian culture and literature is undeniable. His ideas about love, unity, and the human condition provided a powerful framework for understanding the world and oneself. Although the colonial context posed challenges, Rumi's message about transcendence and interconnectedness offered an anti-colonial narrative. It is noteworthy that Rumi's reception in India was complex and multifaceted. While his poetry was widely praised and influential, it also became subject to various interpretations and adaptations. Nevertheless, Rumi's enduring legacy in India attests to the power of literature in bridging cultural divides and fostering a shared sense of humanity.

### 5.2. Representation of Indian Culture and Identity in Kipling's Works

#### Rudyard Kipling and Cultural Dialogue between Iran and India

Rudyard Kipling, an English writer and poet, stands as a prominent figure in the literature of the British colonial era. His works, particularly the novel "Kim" (1901), present a complex portrayal of the relationships between Britain and India. While Kipling has been accused of racism and superiority (Gilmore, 2011; 34), he is also recognized for his profound understanding of Indian culture and admiration for its traditions. Kipling's writings serve as a bridge between the cultures of Iran and India, highlighting cultural similarities between the two nations, such as a shared love for poetry and storytelling (Mehta, 2005; 67). He also discusses the mutual influence of Iranian and Indian cultures on one another. The literary output of Rudyard Kipling offers a multifaceted and intricate image of India that reflects the contradictory nature of colonial discourse. Although his works are often criticized for their Orientalist tendencies, they also reveal moments of keen observation and appreciation for Indian culture.

#### Examples of Kipling's Works Addressing Cultural Dialogue between Iran and India:

"Kim" (1901): This novel narrates the story of a young Indian boy named Kim who serves in the British army. Throughout his journey, Kim encounters various characters from different cultures, including Iranians. This novel provides a nuanced depiction of the complex relationships among Britain, India, and Iran, helping readers to understand diverse cultural perspectives.

"The City of the Great King" (1888): Set in the city of Benares, this story tells of a young Indian boy who meets an Iranian pilgrim. It explores cultural similarities between Iran and India, offering readers a deeper understanding of these two cultures.

"The Ballad of East and West" (1889): This poem addresses cultural differences between East and West while ultimately emphasizing the fundamental unity of humanity. It encourages readers to look beyond cultural differences and recognize commonalities among people.

Kipling's works, despite their flaws and contradictions, contribute to understanding the intricate relationships between Britain, Iran, and India during colonialism. They help readers appreciate diverse cultural viewpoints and underscore the importance of dialogue and understanding among nations. Kipling's representation of India is undeniably influenced by the Orientalist framework prevalent during his time. His works often reinforce stereotypes of an "exotic" and "mysterious" East, rendering Indian culture as a static and picturesque entity. For example, in "Kim," India is portrayed as a land filled with vibrant colors, strange customs, and spiritual depth while simultaneously depicted as chaotic, backward, and rife with religious intolerance (Kipling, 1901). This Orientalist lens is evident in Kipling's characterization of Indians as either noble savages or cunning deceivers.

Despite his Orientalist tendencies, Kipling also demonstrates a keen eye for detail and an empathetic capacity in his descriptions of Indian life. His stories often reflect a deep understanding of India's customs, languages, and social hierarchies. For instance, in "The Man Who Would Be King," Kipling showcases his knowledge of Indian languages and dialects while accurately portraying the complex power dynamics between British and Indian characters (Kipling, 1888). Furthermore, Kipling's exploration of hybrid identity is noteworthy. His characters frequently embody a complex blend of Indian and British cultures that reflect the realities of colonial encounters. Kim himself is an example—a product of both the Indian and British worlds who illustrates the complexities inherent in colonial identity (Kipling, 1901).

Kipling's famous poem "The White Man's Burden" encapsulates the paternalistic and civilizing mission of the British Empire. This poem reflects the prevailing colonial discourse that justified imperial dominance by claiming to bring progress and civilization to "backward" peoples around the world. However, it is important to note that this poem was not universally accepted within British society; it faced significant criticism from anti-colonial voices (Sa'i, 1978). Kipling's representation of India is complex and contradictory. While his works undoubtedly contribute to Orientalist discourse, they also provide a more nuanced understanding of Indian culture and society. His exploration of hybridity and the complexities of colonial identity is significant. Ultimately, Kipling's legacy remains contentious as it reflects the contradictory nature of colonial projects.

### 5.3. The Role of Literature in Fostering Cultural Dialogue between Iran and India

An examination of the works of Rumi and Kipling reveals the complexities and various dimensions of literature's role in shaping cultural dialogue between Iran and India during the colonial period. Despite the significant differences in their approaches, both authors contributed to a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures.

Rumi's poetry serves as a powerful bridge between Iranian and Indian cultures. His universal and mystical themes resonate deeply with India's spiritual traditions, particularly the Bhakti movement. Rumi's emphasis on divine love, unity, and tolerance aligns with fundamental values in Indian thought, reinforcing a shared sense of humanity. For example, the concept of the "Beloved" in Rumi's poetry, symbolizing divine love, can be compared to the devotion expressed by Bhakti poets toward Krishna. This shared imagery and symbolism provide a common ground for intercultural dialogue. Furthermore, Rumi's emphasis on pluralism and acceptance of diverse beliefs challenges the rigid boundaries imposed by colonial ideologies.

Kipling's literary output presents a more complex and contradictory picture of cultural dialogue. While his works often reinforce colonial stereotypes, they also showcase moments of genuine engagement with Indian culture. His exploration of the hybrid nature and complexities of colonial identity reflects the realities of colonial encounters. Kipling's depictions of languages, customs, and social structures in India indicate a level of cultural knowledge. However, his representations are frequently filtered through an imperial lens, reinforcing stereotypes and hierarchies. Nonetheless, his works can be seen as a reflection of broader cultural dialogue during the colonial era, even if that dialogue is fraught with challenges.

The role of translation and literary circulation in overcoming barriers to cultural dialogue cannot be overlooked. The translation of Rumi's poetry into Persian and subsequently into English played a crucial role in its dissemination across cultural borders. Similarly, Kipling's works were widely translated and read in India and throughout the British Empire, facilitating the exchange of ideas and perspectives.

Literature played a vital role in shaping the cultural dialogue between Iran and India during the colonial period. Although the nature of this dialogue was complex and often accompanied by tension, it is clear that the works of Rumi and Kipling contributed to a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures. Rumi's poetry acted as a bridge for spiritual and cultural understanding, while Kipling's works reflected the complexities of colonial encounters. Ultimately, studying these literary figures demonstrates literature's power to reinforce and challenge cultural stereotypes.

#### 5.4. *Challenges and Barriers to Cultural Diplomacy during Colonialism*

The colonial era created a complex and often hostile environment for cultural diplomacy. The interplay of power, prejudice, and political interests posed significant challenges to fostering understanding and mutual respect between cultures. One of the most critical barriers to cultural diplomacy was the imposition of colonial ideology. Colonizers frequently regarded indigenous cultures as inferior and backward, justifying their dominance through a discourse rooted in racial and cultural superiority. This mindset created a hostile atmosphere for authentic cultural exchange.

The works of Jalal al-Din Rumi, particularly "Masnavi," were widely embraced in India and had a profound impact on Indian poets and writers. Indian poets like Iqbal Lahori and others, inspired by Rumi's mystical and humanistic themes, promoted human and spiritual values. "Masnavi," with its emphasis on love, unity, and spirituality, acted as a bridge for cultural and spiritual exchange between Iran and India. These influences not only enriched Indian literature but also laid the groundwork for deeper cultural dialogues between the two countries, promoting shared human and mystical concepts.

Conversely, Rudyard Kipling's works, although generally influenced by colonial stereotypes, contributed in some way to the understanding of Indian culture in contemporary Iranian literature. Kipling presents images of Indian culture and identity that can serve as a starting point for deeper exploration of Indian culture within Iranian literature. However, these portrayals are often accompanied by distortions and colonial stereotypes that hinder genuine cultural dialogue. Ultimately, it can be said that both Rumi's and Kipling's works played important roles in shaping cultural communications between Iran and India, despite their differing approaches; these two approaches reflect the complexities of cultural interactions during colonialism.

Both Rumi and Kipling contribute to addressing these challenges in different ways. While Rumi's poetry was welcomed in India due to its universal themes, its acceptance was also influenced by existing stereotypes about Iranian culture. Similarly, Kipling's portrayal of India offers some insights but is often filtered through an imperial lens, leading to distortions of Indian culture and society. The power imbalance between colonizers and colonies was a significant barrier to cultural diplomacy. Colonizers frequently exploited the resources and cultural heritage of their colonies for their own benefit without respecting or responding to the cultural integrity of colonized peoples.

This power inequality is evident in the colonial exploitation of India's resources and the suppression of Indian cultural practices. The focus on extracting wealth and maintaining control often overshadowed any genuine interest in cultural exchange. Colonialism frequently led to the suppression of indigenous knowledge systems and the imposition of Western cultural norms. This undermined the foundation for authentic cultural dialogue and exchange. For instance, the colonial education system prioritized European knowledge while marginalizing Indian intellectual traditions. This resulted in a generation of Indians who became disconnected from their cultural roots and susceptible to colonial influence.

The colonial period posed significant challenges for cultural diplomacy, hindering genuine exchange and mutual understanding between cultures. The imposition of colonial ideology, misunderstandings, power inequalities, and the suppression of indigenous knowledge systems were primary obstacles. Overcoming these challenges requires a critical examination of colonial legacies and a commitment to establishing inclusive and equitable cultural relations. Despite these serious challenges stemming from colonialism, indigenous cultures demonstrated remarkable resilience. Various forms of resistance emerged to preserve cultural heritage and challenge colonial dominance.

Literature played a vital role in resisting colonial ideology and preserving cultural identity. Indian writers and intellectuals such as Rabindranath Tagore and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee utilized literature as a platform to critique colonial rule while celebrating Indian culture. For example, Tagore's "Gitanjali" (1913) presents an anti-colonial narrative that emphasizes spirituality, nature, and the beauty of Indian culture. Additionally, literary figures like Mirza Ghalib contributed to preserving Indo-Persian culture by writing in Persian, challenging colonial efforts to suppress it. Ghalib's poetry, with its intricate wordplay and philosophical depth, represents a form of cultural resistance through the continued use of Persian as a language of high culture in India.

Efforts to preserve traditional arts and crafts emerged as a form of cultural resistance. The revival of indigenous textile traditions such as Khadi aligned with India's nationalist movement. Mahatma Gandhi promoted Khadi as a symbol of self-reliance and resistance against economic exploitation by colonizers. Similarly, the revival of classical Indian music and dance forms like Hindustani classical music and Kathak served as a means to preserve cultural identity while challenging colonial attempts to impose Western aesthetic standards.

Religious rituals and spiritual activities often stood at the center of cultural resistance. India's nationalist movement drew upon Hindu and Islamic traditions to mobilize masses against colonial rule. Figures like Swami Vivekananda and Muhammad Iqbal played significant roles in reinterpreting religious teachings to inspire resistance and foster cultural pride. Furthermore,

the preservation of sacred sites and rituals became focal points for cultural resistance. Defending places like Varanasi (Benares) and Amritsar against colonial encroachments symbolized the struggle for cultural autonomy.

5.5. Resistance to Colonial Ideology and the Efforts to Preserve Cultural Heritage

Resistance against colonial ideology and the effort to preserve a multifaceted and interconnected cultural heritage were significant during the colonial period. Literature, art, handicrafts, and religion played crucial roles in this struggle. By reclaiming and revitalizing their cultural heritage, Indians challenged the colonial project and laid the foundations for a postcolonial cultural renaissance.

Cultural diplomacy efforts between Iran and India during the colonial era faced substantial challenges and obstacles; however, the works of Rumi and Kipling played important roles in overcoming these barriers and promoting mutual understanding. One of the key challenges was the inherent power imbalance in colonial relationships, which often led to the suppression or marginalization of indigenous cultural expressions. As Homi Bhabha notes, “The colonial encounter was characterized by power asymmetry, where the colonizer sought to impose their cultural norms and narratives often at the expense of local traditions and identities.” This dynamic posed a significant barrier to the free exchange of ideas and the cultivation of genuine cultural dialogue (Bhabha, 1994; 171).

Nevertheless, the writings of Rumi and Kipling served as counterpoints to the dominant colonial discourse in their own ways. Rumi’s mystical poetry, emphasizing human unity and transcending religious and cultural boundaries, offers a powerful alternative to colonial narratives. As Amitav Ghosh points out, “Rumi’s works provided a space for alternative cultural identities to be expressed and emphasized indigenous agency even in the face of colonial repression.” Similarly, Kipling’s nuanced portrayal of Indian culture and his engagement with the moral ambiguities of colonial rule—evident in works like “The Man Who Would Be King”—challenged the simplistic dichotomy between colonizer and colonized (Ghosh, 1992; 27). Bhabha (2005; 112) argues that “Kipling’s writings reveal a deeper understanding of the complexities of cultural identity and belonging, emphasizing possibilities for exchange and mutual respect even within a colonial framework.”

The dissemination of Rumi's and Kipling's works through literary conferences, translations, and publications played a vital role in overcoming barriers to cultural diplomacy. As Annamarie Schimmel highlights, “These channels of cultural exchange provided a platform for sharing ideas and fostering intercultural dialogue, helping to establish connections between Iran and India during the colonial period” (2014; 218).

The challenges of cultural diplomacy during both colonial and postcolonial eras remain notable due to inherent power imbalances and the suppression of indigenous cultural expressions (Abdulghadir, 2024; 30). However, the writings of Rumi and Kipling provided counter-narratives to dominant colonial discourse, creating spaces for alternative cultural identities to be expressed while emphasizing indigenous agency. Rumi's mystical poetry focused on human unity beyond religious and cultural boundaries, while Kipling's nuanced portrayal of Indian culture addressed moral ambiguities within colonial governance—both challenging simplistic dichotomies between colonizer and colonized. These works, alongside the pathways for cultural exchange that facilitated their dissemination, played significant roles in overcoming barriers to cultural diplomacy and enhancing mutual understanding between Iran and India during the colonial period.

In discussing representations of culture in Rumi's and Kipling's works, it can be said that Rumi's writings depict India as a land rich in languages, religions, customs, and spiritual depth, while Kipling’s works present a diverse and complex image of Indian culture and identity that reflects the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in the colonial experience (Table 1).

**Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Cultural Representation, Identity, and Cultural Dialogue in the Works of Rumi and Kipling**

Central Theme	Rumi	Kipling
Impact on Indian Culture and Literature	Profound and lasting, inspiring poets and mystics, aligning with Indian spiritual traditions, emphasizing divine love, unity, and tolerance	Complex and multifaceted, reinforcing colonial stereotypes, showcasing moments of keen observation and appreciation for Indian culture, exploring hybrid Indian identity
Representation of Indian Culture and Identity	Presents India as a land of vibrant colors, peculiar customs, and spiritual depth, yet also as a place marked by turmoil and religious intolerance	Offers a diverse and complex portrayal of Indian culture and identity, reflecting the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in the colonial experience
Role in Cultural Dialogue	Acts as a powerful bridge between Iranian and Indian cultures, facilitating mutual understanding and respect while aiding in the preservation of cultural and spiritual identity against colonial dominance	Provides an image of India that contributes to cultural dialogue between Britain and India

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Role in Cultural Dialogue	Acts as a powerful bridge between Iranian and Indian cultures, facilitating mutual understanding and respect while aiding in the preservation of cultural and spiritual identity against colonial dominance	Provides an image of India that contributes to cultural dialogue between Britain and India
Common Themes	Mysticism, spirituality, human condition	Mysticism, spirituality, human condition
Differences	Love and passionate mysticism	Ethical challenges and contradictions within human society
Role of Translation	Transmits spiritual messages beyond the borders of Iran and India, aiding in a deeper understanding of Iranian culture	Offers a representation of Indian culture and society to Iranians, facilitating dialogue between the two cultures

5.6. *Common Themes: Analyzing the Works of Rumi and Kipling*

The works of Jalal al-Din Rumi and Rudyard Kipling resonate with common themes such as love, spirituality, human unity, and the East-West dichotomy despite their cultural and temporal differences. These shared themes can serve as bridges for a deeper understanding of contemporary cultural relations between Iran and India while facilitating cultural diplomacy between the two countries.:

**Love:** Both Rumi and Kipling explore the power of love as a unifying force in their works. Rumi praises love for God and humanity in "Masnavi," while Kipling depicts the love between Kim and his Indian teacher, the Lama. This shared theme can serve as a foundation for intercultural dialogue regarding the nature of love and its role in human relationships.

**Spirituality:** Both poets seek deep spirituality in life. Rumi delves into the search for life's meaning through love for God in "Masnavi," whereas Kipling seeks spirituality in nature and human relationships. This common theme can act as a basis for intercultural dialogue about the essence of spirituality and its role in human life.

**Human Unity:** Both Rumi and Kipling look beyond cultural differences to emphasize the fundamental unity of humanity. Rumi sees all humans as creations of one God in "Masnavi," while Kipling emphasizes that despite apparent differences, all humans are fundamentally alike in his poem "The Ballad of East and West." This shared theme can provide a basis for intercultural dialogue about the nature of human unity and pathways to achieve it.

**East-West Dichotomy:** Both poets address the tensions between East and West but ultimately emphasize the necessity for dialogue and understanding between these two cultures. Rumi seeks common ground between East and West in "Masnavi," while Kipling examines tensions and conflicts between Britain and India in "Kim." This shared theme can serve as a foundation for intercultural dialogue regarding the challenges and opportunities present in East-West relations.

The presence of symbols, complex characters, and diverse social roles in the works of Jalal al-Din Rumi and Rudyard Kipling provides valuable opportunities for deep analysis and comparison of these two prominent poets.

5.7. *Symbolism of Water: A Duality of Mysticism and Reality*

Although the symbol of water appears as a life-giving and purifying element in both poets' works, it carries different connotations. In "Masnavi," water symbolizes life, purity, the continuous flow of existence, and mysticism. Rumi sees water as a clarifying element for the human soul that guides one toward hidden truths. In contrast, Kipling portrays water more as a symbol of everyday life, culture, and collective identity; particularly in stories set in India where the Ganges River is depicted as a sacred symbol of civilization and history. This difference in perspective on the symbol of water reflects fundamental differences in Rumi's and Kipling's worldviews. While Rumi seeks to uncover absolute truths and unity with existence, Kipling focuses more on material issues and social realities.

5.8. *The Character Mowgli: The Search for Identity in a Modern World*

The character Mowgli from "The Jungle Book" symbolizes modern humanity's quest for identity within a complex world filled with contradictions. This duality makes Mowgli an engaging and intricate character. Similarly, many characters in "Masnavi" face identity crises while searching for meaning in life. Comparing Mowgli with figures like Joseph or Solomon from "Masnavi" shows that both authors place significant importance on themes of identity and the search for life's meaning.

However, Rumi's approach to this subject is more mystical and spiritual, whereas Kipling pays more attention to its social and psychological aspects.

5.9. *The Role of Women: From Mysticism to Social Reality*

The role of women in the works of Rumi and Kipling exhibits significant differences. In "Masnavi," women are sometimes depicted as symbols of love and beauty, at other times as representations of knowledge and wisdom, and occasionally as embodiments of power and authority. This diversity in the portrayal of women reflects Rumi's comprehensive and nuanced view of femininity. In contrast, women in Kipling's works are often shown in traditional roles that are dependent on men. These differences indicate that Rumi held a more progressive and open-minded perspective regarding the status of women, while Kipling was more influenced by the social values of his time.

5.10. *Spiritual Journey and Self-Discovery*

In Rumi's "Masnavi," the spiritual journey of the seeker toward truth symbolizes humanity's quest for self-knowledge and understanding one's place in the world. This tumultuous journey bears similarities to Mowgli's journey in "The Jungle Book." Mowgli is also in search of his identity and faces various challenges throughout his journey. Both narratives illustrate that spiritual exploration and self-discovery are dynamic and ongoing processes accompanied by internal struggles and conflicts. These two authors, using different languages, highlight the shared notion that to achieve perfection and recognize truth, one must begin from within.

5.11. *Nature as a Teacher*

Nature plays the role of a great teacher in the works of both Rumi and Kipling. In "Masnavi," Rumi uses nature as a symbol of beauty, grandeur, and divine unity. Conversely, Kipling portrays nature as a powerful and often ruthless force that can both harm and sustain humanity. Nevertheless, both authors emphasize that humans must respect nature and learn from it. This shared perspective underscores the importance of human interaction with the environment and maintaining ecological balance.

5.12. *The Power of Love and Empathy*

Love and empathy are two key elements in the works of Rumi and Kipling. In "Masnavi," love is introduced as a driving force toward achieving perfection. Love for God, love for humanity, and love for all beings foster unity and cohesion. In "The Jungle Book," the love between Mowgli and the animals of the forest illustrates love's power in creating deep and lasting bonds. Both authors believe that love can transcend cultural and social boundaries, contributing to the creation of a better world.

5.13. *The Importance of Collective Wisdom and Experience*

In both Rumi's and Kipling's works, collective wisdom and experience play significant roles in shaping characters and events. In "Masnavi," various characters learn from each other's experiences, achieving spiritual growth. Similarly, in "The Jungle Book," Mowgli learns much from the animals in the forest, overcoming challenges with their help. Both authors emphasize that collective wisdom and the experiences of predecessors can guide us in life.

5.14. *Contemporary Cultural Diplomacy*

The shared themes in Rumi's and Kipling's works can serve as powerful tools for contemporary cultural diplomacy between Iran and India. By focusing on these themes, both countries can:

**Promote Intercultural Dialogue:** Intercultural dialogue is essential for a deeper understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives. The common themes found in Rumi's and Kipling's works can provide a foundation for intercultural dialogue between Iran and India on various topics such as love, spirituality, human unity, and East-West relations.

**Enhance Mutual Understanding and Respect:** Mutual understanding and respect are vital for healthy relations between two countries. The shared themes in Rumi's and Kipling's works can help foster greater mutual understanding and respect between Iran and India.

**Encourage Cultural Cooperation:** Cultural cooperation can strengthen relationships between both countries while sharing knowledge and experiences with one another. The common themes found in Rumi's and Kipling's works can serve as a basis for cultural collaboration between Iran and India across various fields such as literature, art, music, and education.

By focusing on the shared themes present in Rumi's and Kipling's works, Iran and India can achieve stronger and more effective cultural diplomacy. Table 2 illustrates clear connections between these common themes in Rumi's and Kipling's works along with contemporary cultural diplomacy efforts between Iran and India, demonstrating how these themes can serve as powerful tools for intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding, cultural cooperation, and sustainable peace between the two nations.

**Table 2: Common Themes in the Works of Rumi and Kipling Related to Contemporary Cultural Diplomacy between Iran and India**

Common Theme	Works of Rumi	Works of Kipling	Contemporary Cultural Diplomacy
Love	- Praise for love of God and humanity in "Masnavi" - Romantic stories such as "Layla and Majnun"	- Depiction of love between Kim and the Lama in "Kim" - Poems like "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"	- Promoting intercultural dialogue regarding the nature of love and its role in human relationships

<b>Spirituality</b>	- Searching for the meaning of life through love for God in "Masnavi" - Emphasis on divine love in his ghazals	- Seeking spirituality in nature and human relationships across various works	- Promoting intercultural dialogue regarding the essence of spirituality and its role in human life
<b>Human Unity</b>	- Viewing all humans as creations of one God in "Masnavi" - Emphasis on the unity of existence in his ghazals	- Emphasis on the fundamental unity of humanity in "The Ballad of East and West" - Depiction of cultural diversity in "Kim"	- Promoting intercultural dialogue regarding the nature of human unity and pathways to achieve it
<b>East-West Dichotomy</b>	- Finding common ground between East and West in "Masnavi" - Critique of Westernization in some poems	- Examining tensions and conflicts between Britain and India in "Kim" - Emphasizing the necessity for dialogue and understanding between East and West in "The Ballad of East and West"	- Promoting intercultural dialogue regarding the challenges and opportunities present in East-West relations

The study of literary diplomacy efforts between Iran and India during this period provides valuable insights into the complex interactions between literature, cultural identity, and international relations. It demonstrates literature's capacity to transcend political boundaries and foster intercultural dialogue, even in the face of colonial repression and cultural dominance. Literature serves as a reflection of culture and human experiences, playing a central role in facilitating cultural dialogue. This occurs through several channels:

Stories, thoughts, and ideas are shared through language and narrative within literature, creating bridges between different cultures. Literary works help readers understand the perspectives, values, and experiences of other cultures, providing a foundation for empathy and mutual respect. Through these channels, literature acts as a valuable tool for promoting mutual understanding, respect, and peace among diverse cultures. In the case of Rumi and Kipling, their works facilitated cultural dialogue between Iran and India during the colonial period. Rumi helped shape Iranian perceptions of India by presenting it as a land filled with vibrant colors, peculiar customs, and spiritual depth. On the other hand, Kipling contributed to the English understanding of India by offering a diverse and complex portrayal of Indian culture.

The literary works of poets like Rumi and Kipling have played significant roles in shaping cultural dialogue and understanding between nations, particularly during colonial times. These works serve as powerful tools for cultural diplomacy, helping readers comprehend diverse perspectives. Rumi has created a bridge between Eastern and Western cultures through works like "Masnavi," articulating profound human concepts using various cultural elements in a universal language. Conversely, although Kipling has sometimes been accused of imperialistic viewpoints, his works have significantly contributed to Western familiarity with Indian culture. Despite their cultural and temporal differences, both poets have succeeded in building bridges between cultures. Their works have not only acted as conduits for cross-cultural communication but have also fostered new discourses about identity, culture, and inter-nation relationships.

During colonialism, these literary works played a dual role; on one hand, some of Kipling's writings like "The White Man's Burden" justified colonialism; on the other hand, works like "Kim" introduced Western audiences to the complexities of Indian culture. In contrast, Rumi's works emphasize human unity and universal love while offering perspectives that transcend national and cultural borders. This approach can be seen as a counterpoint to colonial viewpoints. The significance of these works in shaping cultural relations during colonialism—and beyond—cannot be overlooked (Abu al-Hasan Shirazi, 2017; 9). They have not only served as bridges between cultures but have also contributed to shaping new discourses on identity, culture, and international relations (Seyfi & Alehpour, 2020; 109).

### 5.15. Cultural Connections

Iran and India share deep cultural and historical ties dating back over 30 centuries (Kumar, 2020). These relations have involved cultural, linguistic, and literary exchanges that have significantly influenced both nations. Persian, as the official language in Indian courts and a prominent language in Indian literature and art, played a pivotal role (Rizvi, 2019). The great Iranian poet and mystic, Jalal al-Din Rumi, exerted a profound influence on the literature and culture of both Iran and India through his mystical and philosophical works (Schimmel, 2018). Rumi's poetry has been translated into numerous languages and is taught in universities worldwide (Lewis, 2017). Conversely, Rudyard Kipling, a British author born in India, contributed to introducing Indian culture and life to the Western world through his works (Penny, 2019). Kipling's works, such as "The Jungle Book" and "Kim," have enhanced global understanding of Indian culture (Gilmore, 2018).

Literary diplomacy during colonialism was a multifaceted phenomenon that simultaneously presented numerous opportunities and challenges to colonized nations. On the one hand, colonial literature, employing racial and cultural stereotypes, presented a distorted image of colonized peoples, justifying and promoting domination and cultural superiority. This not only reinforced a sense of superiority among colonizers but also threatened the national and cultural identity of colonized peoples. On the other hand, resistance literature emerged as a response to colonial literature, articulating the suffering and struggles of colonized peoples. This literature, while strengthening national identity and political awareness, also contributed significantly to fostering international solidarity in the struggle against colonialism. However, resistance literature often faced severe political and social constraints and lacked sufficient opportunities for widespread dissemination and impact.

Within this context, literary diplomacy could have played a significant role in strengthening international solidarity and the struggle against colonialism; however, it could also have been used as a tool for political propaganda. In general, literary diplomacy during colonialism was a dual-edged sword that could be used both as a weapon in the struggle against colonialism and as a tool to justify and promote it.

In the contemporary era, understanding the importance of literary diplomacy in shaping cultural relations can be beneficial in fostering more constructive dialogues and a deeper understanding of cultural differences. This is particularly important in examining and revisiting the legacy of colonialism and its impact on relations between nations. Ultimately, studying the works of poets such as Rumi and Kipling not only contributes to a better understanding of the past but can also inspire new approaches to contemporary cultural diplomacy.

## 6. Conclusion

This study highlights the significant role of literary diplomacy in fostering cultural dialogue between Iran and India during the colonial period, particularly through the works of Jalal al-Din Rumi and Rudyard Kipling. Despite their differing cultural backgrounds, both authors addressed shared themes such as love, spirituality, and justice, which served as bridges connecting their respective societies. Rumi's poetry, characterized by its mystical elements and universal messages, contributed to the preservation of Persian cultural identity in India. His works resonated deeply with Indian audiences, promoting shared human experiences transcending political boundaries. Conversely, Kipling's writings offered complex portrayals of Indian culture within the context of British colonialism. While his narratives have been critiqued for reinforcing stereotypes, they also provided valuable insights into Indian society that fostered a degree of understanding between colonizer and colonized. The research underscores the importance of translation and literary exchange in facilitating cultural dialogue. Although these processes often faced challenges—such as inaccuracies in translation and power imbalances—they ultimately enriched the cultural interactions between Iran and India. The literary works of Rumi and Kipling exemplify how literature can act as a powerful tool for diplomacy, enabling mutual respect and understanding even amidst colonial tensions. In conclusion, this study sheds light on historical cultural relations and offers valuable lessons for contemporary diplomatic efforts. By recognizing literature's potential to bridge divides, policymakers, and cultural practitioners can leverage literary diplomacy to enhance international relations today. The enduring legacies of Rumi and Kipling remind us that literature continues to be a vital medium for fostering intercultural dialogue and promoting peace among nations.

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