Indian Institute of Advanced Study

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Three days National Seminar on

India's Cultural and Creative Economy:

Redefining Value in India's Performing and Stylised Traditions (27th to 29th November 2026)

Cultural and creative economy is an interface between culture, creativity, economics and sustainability. Cultural and creative industries are culture-based tourism, cultural events like festivals, fine and performing arts, traditional crafts, films and food industries, India's cultural and creative economy, frequently described as the "Orange Economy, "has transitioned from a legacy of tradition into a dynamic pillar of national wealth. As of 2025, this sector is valued at roughly $35 billion, contributing over 3% to India's GDP and sustaining 8% of the country's workforce. Report of OCED (2021) as part of G-20 meeting states the contribution creative sector to GDP of India is 2 per cent. The cultural and creative industries are defined by UNESCO as sectors of organised activity that prioritize the production, promotion, and distribution of services and goods with cultural, artistic, or heritage foundations (Raufast et al., 2015). India's artistic landscape has evolved from localized cultural expression into a formidable economic pillar by offering unique level of job security that often outpaces the stability of conventional manufacturing during economic shifts. Central to this growth is the transition from "manufacture" to "mindfacture," a strategic pivot where financial value is generated through intellectual property and creative innovation. By leveraging unique storytelling and indigenous narratives, Indian creators are no longer just preserving heritage; they are actively competing on the global stage through the monetization of imagination.

The creative and cultural economy is deeply rooted I the dynamic interplay between performance and stylised are forms, both of which shape how human expression is experienced, valued, valued, and sustained. The relationship between the two is inherently interdependent: performances draw strength from visual and stylistic elements to enhance their impact, while stylized arts often derive inspiration from the rhythm and energy of live expression. Together, they ensure that culture remains both a living practice and a material presence, capable of being preserved, adapted, and shared. In this way, performance and styling are not separate component but interconnected forces that drive the cultural economy, transforming creativity into meaningful social and economic value.

The performing arts sector, spanning classical traditions such as Kathak and Bharatanatyam to fold (Lok Kala) theatre forms has become a significant driver of India's experience economy. Recent industry reports highlight that the organized live events segment alone surpassed Rs.

12,000 crore in 2024 and continues to grow rapidly, reflecting increasing consumer demand for immersive cultural experiences. Additionally, the sector recorded measurable year-on-year growth, with organized live events expanding by about 15% in 2024 and generating in additional Rs. 13 billion in revenue. Importantly, this growth extends beyond metropolitan centres. Traditional forms such as Yakshagana continue to function as regional economic ecosystems, supporting livelihoods for artists within local communities. In this way, the performing arts not only contribute to large scale commercial entertainment but also act as vital engines of cultural continuity and decentralized economic development

Parallel to the live stage, stylized art forms play a significant role in shaping India's creative economy, encompassing visual arts, traditional crafts, and contemporary design practices. These forms translate complex cultural narratives into recognizable visual languages and decorative motifs, giving cultural expression a tangible and marketable form. Tradition as such as Madhubani painting and Pashmina have move beyond localized production and are now integrated into global value chains, influencing industries such as fashion, textiles, and interior design. This transformation is supported by policy frameworks like the National Education Policy 2020, which emphasizes art-integrated learning to foster creativity, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary skills. By linking traditional knowledge systems with modern education and entrepreneurship, such initiatives are nurturing a new generation of creative practitioners capable of converting cultural assets into marketable products and intellectual property. At a broader level, India's economic strategy increasingly recognizes the creative sector as a driver of innovation, cultural diplomacy, and global competitiveness. Investment in cultural heritage not only preserves traditional practices but also stimulates local economies by generating employment and supporting small-scale industries. In, addition, arts-based tourism-centred around crafts, festivals, and regional identities-provides a relatively sustainable source f income, strengthening community resilience while enhancing India's cultural visibility on the global stage.

Economically, this sector is characterized by its high labor intensity and its unique ability to generate a "multiplier effect" across the national value chain. Unlike traditional manufacturing, the creative industries-encompassing theatre, dance, music, and fashion styling- thrive on intellectual capital, which currently accounts for nearly 8% of India's total employment. This economic significance is validated by the market valuation of India's media and entertainment industry, which reached approximately Rs. 2.5 trillion in 2024, with the organized live events segment alone surpassing the Rupees 100 billion marks, Furthermore, as the economy becomes increasingly knowledge-driven, creative roles-particularly n design, media, and performanceare gaining enhanced market value and offering more competitive compensation. This reflects a broader shift in which specialized creative skills are increasingly recognized as key drivers of innovation and economic differentiation. The economic vitality of this sector is further reinforced by its deep integration with tourism and hospitality. Major cultural hubs such as Mumbai and Chennai actively leverage performing and visual arts t stimulate urban growth, attract investment, and enhance cultural tourism. At the same time, rural craft and performance clusters play a crucial role in sustaining local economies by supporting small-scale entrepreneurship, generating employment through seasonal festivals, and facilitating access to national and global markets for traditional products.

This economic evolution is anchored in a robust global policy framework, most notably the Kashi Culture Pathway, which was adopted during India's G20 Presidency. The pathway serves as a comprehensive blueprint for nations to formalize their creative sector, urging them to integrate cultural labor into national accounting systems and to treat the protection of living heritage as an economic necessity. This vision is bolstered by data-driven insight from the OECD, which highlight that India's creative exports are currently growing at an annual rate of 20%. According to OECD –aligned metrics, creative occupations in India contribute nearly20% to the overall Gross Value Added (GVA) of the economy, proving that creative talent is one of the most productive segments of the national workforce. Translating these highlevel policies into market reality is the primary objective of high-impact platforms like the WAVES Summit (World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit) 2025. This summit has become the commercial engine of India's Orange Economy, specifically designed to bridge the gap between traditional performers and global venture capitalists, with a goal of unlocking a $50 billion market by 2029. By creating an institutional framework for the arts, the summit helps transition stylized art forms- such as the complex rhythmic structures of Kathak or the intricate geometric motifs of Warli painting-into scalable global brands. Modernizing Intellectual Property (IP) is vital for the global survival of these arts. India is proactively using Geographical Indication(GI) tags to legally shield regional crafts – like kalamkari and Madhubani-against counterfeiting. Simultaneously, the WAVES Declaration established new standards for digital rights to counter AI –driven threats. By forming an Inter-Ministerial Committee, the government is tackling piracy to ensure original creators receive fair royalties from global streaming. The creative economy faces critical bottlenecks., beginning with a stark digital divide where urban performers build global brands while rural folk artists lack the infrastructure to access streaming markets. This is compounded by an infrastructure deficit in stylized arts, where a lack of standardized supply chains forces artisans to rely on predatory middlemen to reach international buyers. Furthermore, performing arts suffer from inherent IP vulnerability because they are often viewed as public heritage rather than private property leading to digital piracy and the mass production of counterfeit traditional goods. These challenges are now intensified by threat of AI displacement, as generative technologies mimic intricate pattern like Madubani in seconds, devaluing human craftsmanship and threatening the livelihoods of master artisans.

The creative economy faces a sharp disparity in visibility, where a small fraction of mainstream creators dominates public attention while a vast talent pool remains unrecognized. This gap is widened by the digital divide, as rural fold performers often lack the high-speed interned required to access global markets, and an infrastructure deficit that forces stylized artisans to rely on predatory middlemen. Furthermore, performing arts are often perceived as public heritage rather than private property, leaving them vulnerable to digital piracy and AI displacement, where generative tools can mimic intricate patterns in seconds. Ultimately, when 4% of artists receive nearly half of all museum recognition, it is clear that institutional backing and marketing access, rather than purely artistic merit, dictate who succeeds in the modem cultural landscape.

India's creative economy is no longer a peripheral sector but a technology-driven engine of growth aligned with Viksit Bharat 2047. By integrating traditional performing arts with strong

legal protection, fair remuneration systems, and digital marketplaces, the country can scale its cultural assets globally. Strategic investment in skills, infrastructure, and innovation will further strengthen this ecosystem. In doing so, India s well positioned to lead the Orange Economy, transforming cultural heritage into sustainable economic and global influence. The choice of developing a vibrant creative economy in the county is basically an economic choice and strategy. The opening of local culture to the outside world opens up further opportunities for creating global linkages.

Considering the above issues and importance of cultural and creative economy for a Viksit Bharat in 2047, the proposed national seminal on the topic***, "India's cultural and creative economy: Redefining Value in India's Performing and Stylized Traditions"*** seems very important to generate ideas and action plan with clarity on the area. We plan to invite professional artists with good academic background and proven research experience in the field. We also plan to invite policy makers and reputed creative entrepreneurs.

Issues to addressed:

1. How can India's education policy under Viksit Bharat 2047 move beyond generic vocational training to integrate "digital-entrepreneurial literacy" for rural artisans, effectively dismantling the systemic dependency on intermediaries.
2. What regulatory frameworks are required to mitigate the "commodification of the sacred," ensuring that the global scaling of traditional art forms does not erode their inherent spiritual and ethical ontologies?
3. Viewing culture as an economic and social investment of strategic choice of civilizational importance?
4. Whether do we have improved and internationally comparable statistics to establish that this sector plays the role of driver of economic growth and also well-being, social cohesion and sustainability?
5. Do current Geographical Indication (GI) and Copyright regimes possess the legal elasticity to protect "community authorship" and traditional knowledge against the algorithmic extraction and style-mimicry of generative AI?
6. Within the framework of international trade law, how can we transition from a privateproperty IP model to a "shared resource" model that prevents the corporate appropriation of community-owned cultural heritage?
7. To what extent does the "virtualization" of cultural experiences democratize market access for grassroots performers versus reinforcing a digital divide that devalues the socio-cultural authenticity of live, site-specific performances?
8. In the pursuit of Viksit Bharat, how can the principles of traditional Indian architecture be systematically integrated into modern urban planning to create climate-resilient, neutral "smart cities"?

9. What specific fiscal and policy mechanisms are necessary to extend robust social security and "creative basic income" to the informal creative workforce without compromising their artistic autonomy?
10. How can India's cultural "recognition systems" (e.g., Padma/Sahitya Academi Awards) be structurally reformed to replace urban-centric networking with decentralized, peervalidated mechanisms that honor rural mastery?
11. Beyond GDP, what multi-dimensional indices can India develop to rigorously assess the "social ROI" of the performing arts – specifically regarding community mental health, social cohesion, and soft power?
12. How can the Indian legal framework be re-engineered to provide "grassrootsaccessible" dispute resolution, effectively protecting semi-urban artists from predatory contracts and intellectual theft?

Significance of the seminar and Expected Outcome:

This seminar is on an emerging area and its potentiality is identified by the government of India especially in the context of G-20 meeting hosted by India. Creative economy is expected to contribute more than 10 per cent of India's GDP in the coming years as our mother land is a land of celebration considering its diversity, rituals, festivals, traditions and its diverse cultural practices. Arts both performing and stylized forms and also popular arts forms (Lok Kala) have its economy and entrepreneurship and this seminar is an attempt to identify its scope and importance. This proposal is on the firm understanding that arts and creative economy have its role in making India a developed nation (Vikasit Bharath) by 2047.