

India's Creative Economy FROM IMAGINATION TO INNOVATION



The creative economy has become a **powerful transformative force** in the world today and is one of **the most rapidly growing sectors of the world economy**, not just in terms of income generation but also for job creation and export earnings. **India is taking lead in growing this sector by becoming a \$30 billion industry'** now. However, besides facing issues related to intellectual properties, the creative industry also faces challenges from the competition faced by technology.

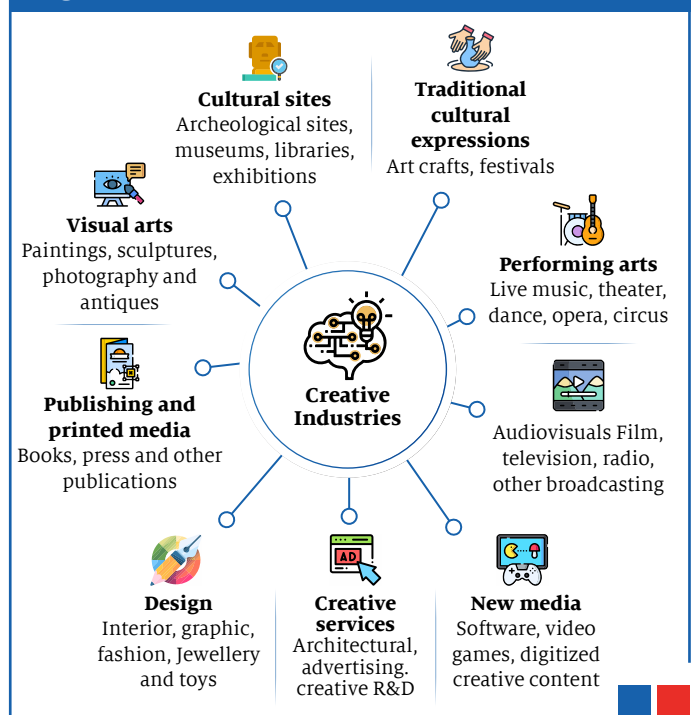
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I. What is Creative Economy?

- Creative economy is **an evolving concept** and **not bound by a single definition**.
- UNCTAD defines creative economy as an **interplay between human creativity, ideas, intellectual property, knowledge and technology**.
- Essentially, **it is the knowledge-based economic activities upon which the 'creative industries' are based**.
- According to UN estimates, the creative economy industries **generate annual revenues of over \$2 trillion** and account for nearly **50 million jobs worldwide**.
- Within this broad framework, the concept of the **creator economy** emerges as a pivotal component.
 - **Creator economy** involves content creators like individual bloggers, YouTubers, podcasters and social media influencers who leverage digital platforms and social media to distribute their work and generate revenue.
 - According to Goldman Sachs, the Creator Economy is **currently valued at \$250 billion and projected to grow to \$480 billion by 2027**.

Figure I.1 Creative Industries



Box I.1. Evolution of Creative Economy

- The evolution of the term “creativity” dates to the **mid-twentieth century in 1920s**.
- **In 1990s**, economists and policymakers began to look at economic activities through the lens of creativity, and the term **“creative industries” gained traction**.
 - **Prior to that**, activities, like dance, music, film, and visual arts, were seen as “cultural industries,” owing to their strong cultural roots.
- The idea of “creative industries” was **first brought forward in the “Creative Nation” report** published by the Labour Government of Australia in 1994.

I.1. What are the characteristics of creative occupations?

Creative economy comprises all activities undertaken by an individual within a “specific” occupation for the purpose of income generation and wealth creation. The characteristics of these occupations include-

- **Knowledge-based economic activities:** Creative occupations are based on **knowledge that is either formally acquired** through education and training or is **inherited, that is, informal skill transfer** that has been preserved over generations.
 - **For instance**, occupations like the **crafting of blocks for Sanganer textiles printing in Rajasthan**.
- **Original idea and imagination:** Creative occupations involve generation and exploitation of intellectual property. This involves **innovation in ways that are not necessarily mainstream but even frugal and flexible**.
 - For instance, India's **popularly known “Jugaad” approaches** to solving problems, using scarce resources in innovative ways.
- **Non-repetitive nature:** The associated creative impulse makes these occupations non-repetitive in nature **making them more adaptive against mechanization and automation**.
 - Studies suggest that 86% of highly creative jobs in the US and 87% in the UK having no or low risk of being displaced by automation.
- **Economic and culture value chain:** An individual's original idea, is developed into a cultural product through production and distribution which can spark innovation and new products based on consumer feedback.
 - **For instance**, the output of unorganized handicraft sector in Barmer, Rajasthan is sold through intermediaries to big production houses who process it before distributing it through either domestic retailer.

Box 1.2 Approaches to Measure Creative Economy and their Limitations







Measuring Creative economy faces the same challenge as it faces in being getting defined. Although various methods have been devised, **none of them provides a fool proof solution**. Three approaches can be considered for measuring the Creative Economy:

- ▶ **Industry-based approach:** Under this approach, the contribution of the creative economy is estimated **using a predefined list of creative industries**.
 - ▶ **Criticism:** The use of this method leads to an underestimation of creative employment within an economy **as it overlooks the creative employment present outside the industries that are deemed “creative”**.
- ▶ **Occupation-based approach:** This approach focuses on creative jobs across all sectors, **emphasizing the roles of cultural workers** over the products they create. This broadens the scope of the creative economy by including creative roles in various industries, unlike the industry-based approach, which mainly targets specific creative sectors.
 - ▶ **Criticism:** It tend to ignore self-employed workers because most official source data primarily contains information only on firms employing creative workers.
- ▶ **Combined industry-**This method uses combined approach of both industry and occupational classifications to map the creative economy, which is also known as **Trident method**.
 - ▶ **Criticism:** This method is unable to draw a linkage between the creative industries and occupations, treating occupations as an extension of creative industries rather than laying special emphasis on the significance of the creative workforce within and outside creative industries.

1.2. What is the status of Creative Economy in India?

In India, communities have long been the vanguard of the creative economy. Their cultural contribution through products and services, like architecture, dance, festivals, handicrafts, literature, and music, have created a legacy that has lasted across centuries.

Table 1.1 Trends in India’s Creative Economy

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|  <p>The number of people working in various creative occupations — is estimated to contribute nearly 8% of the country’s employment,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Much higher than the corresponding share in Turkey (1%), Mexico (1.5%), South Korea (1.9%) and even Australia (2.1%). |  <p>Creative occupations also pay reasonably well— 88% higher than the non-creative ones</p> |  <p>Creative economy contribute about 20% to nation’s overall GVA.</p> |
|  <p>In terms of spatial concentration of employment, the creative workforce is found to be concentrated in cities, with Tirupur, Mumbai Suburban, Bangalore, New Delhi, and Gurgaon turning out to be the top five creative centers in India.</p> |  <p>In terms of industrial concentration, the creative workforce was found to be most highly concentrated in the industries of: Media, Entertainment, and Recreation; Computer Programming and Software Publishing; Architecture, Design, and Engineering; Fashion; and Education and R&D industries.</p> |  <p>Creative workforce is found to be more urban-centric, younger, and less gender biased as compared to the non-creative workforce.</p> |

Box 1.3. In Conversation! The Contribution of Indian Cinema to the Creative Economy

Did you know the Indian film industry dates back to 1896 and 'Raja Harishchandra' was our first silent film in 1913?

That's fascinating, Vini. It shows how deep-rooted cinema is in our culture! But how significant is the film industry to India's creative economy?

It's huge, employing 7.4 lakh people with a gross output of more than 1 lakh crore, despite contributing less than 1% of our GDP.

So it's a key player in job creation and economic growth. Plus, our films impact global audiences too, boosting India's image worldwide.

Yes, and with digital advancements like VFX and OTT platforms, its impact is even broader. But funding, pandemics, and piracy are real challenges.

How's the government helping out?

National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), Film Promotion Fund, and tax incentives support film production.

It seems the film industry is a vital part of India's creative economy as well as a global ambassador for our culture.

Vinay

Vini

2. What is the significance of creative economy for countries like India?

The creative economy plays a significant role across various dimensions of economic and social development and its influence extends to cultural and technological spheres as well.

➤ **Economic Growth-**

- **Create linkages and Spill-over Effects:** The growth of the creative sector can lead to an increase in demand for goods and services from other sectors, such as the hospitality and tourism industry.
 - » For instance, the film industry in India, often referred to as Bollywood, is a major part of the creative economy, contributing significantly to the country's GDP and direct as well as indirect employment.
- **Innovation and Economic Diversification:** The associated creativity, imagination, and intellectual knowledge helps to produce a wide range of products and services which can help diversify the economy by **lowering reliance on established industries and opening up new opportunities.**

- **Export Earnings:** Creative economy plays a crucial role in promoting export earnings in India across various sectors, including film and entertainment, software and IT services, textiles and apparel, handicrafts, animation and VFX, and music and entertainment content.

➤ **Social Development**

- **Social Inclusion and Empowerment:** The creative economy gives underprivileged groups a forum to share their viewpoints, histories, and cultures.
 - » For example, online blogs, video channels, and social media accounts allow individuals from marginalized communities to amplify their voices and connect with like-minded individuals worldwide.

- ▶ **Driving Positive Social change:** Artists, filmmakers, and musicians address social issues such as gender equality, human rights, environmental sustainability, and mental health through their creative work, inspiring activism and driving positive change.
- ▶ **Cultural Preservation and Promotion:** Creative economy not only helps in keeping the cultural narratives alive but also markets them domestically and internationally, **contributing to cultural tourism.**
 - » For example, Handloom and handicraft industries in various parts of India protect and promote cultural heritage by sustaining traditional methods of production.
- ▶ **Skill Development and Education:** The rise of edutainment in India, where education is combined with entertainment through digital platforms, has transformed traditional learning methods. It not only makes learning more engaging for students but also encourages the development of new skills relevant to the creative economy.
- ▶ **Diplomacy and Soft Power:** The cultural exchange promotes mutual understanding and opens up avenues for diplomatic engagement.
 - ▶ For example, Indian cuisine has become integral part of India's soft power.
- ▶ **Sustainable Development:** Sustainable fashion brands in India are increasingly gaining prominence, focusing on environmentally friendly practices. These brands are tapping into global sustainability trends, driving demand for eco-friendly materials, and promoting sustainable consumption.

Box 2.1 Impact of Pandemic on Creative Economy

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the creative economy has been multifaceted, presenting **challenges as well as opportunities** for reimagining and strengthening the role of creativity and culture in society's economic and social fabric.

Major Challenges

- ▶ **Revenue and job losses:** As per UN, between 2019 and 2020, there was a **\$750 billion contraction** in gross value added by the creative economy globally. This corresponds to about **10 million job losses** in the sector worldwide.
 - ▶ For individual countries, **losses in revenue in 2020 ranged from 20-40%.**
- ▶ Global demand for cultural content has increased since COVID, but **distribution of work opportunities and revenue remains unbalanced.**
- ▶ **In India:**
 - ▶ **MSMEs and the freelance workforce** who cater to large companies **have been worst hit.**
 - » MSMEs make up **88% of the creative sector.**
 - ▶ **41% of the creative sector stopped functioning** during lockdown.
 - ▶ **61% of newly established creative organisations stopped** during lockdown.

Major Opportunities

- ▶ **Digital Transition:** The pandemic accelerated the shift towards digital platforms, as consumers and creators alike sought alternatives to engage with and distribute creative content. This digital transition **opened new opportunities for innovation and accessibility** in the creative economy.
- ▶ **Highlighted the social significance of creativity:** It brought to light the vital **role of creativity and culture in mental well-being and community cohesion**, prompting a re-evaluation of the value and support extended to the creative sector.



3. What are the major hurdles hindering the growth of the creative economy in India?

➤ Challenges related to Digitalisation:

- **Digital Divide:** While urban areas may have robust digital infrastructure, rural and semi-urban areas often lack reliable internet access, which is critical for the digital creative economy. This **limits the potential reach and growth** of creative digital services.
- **Cybersecurity:** As creative industries move online; many creative businesses may not have the knowledge or resources to effectively protect their digital assets.
- **Digital Literacy:** There's a significant portion of the population that lacks digital literacy, which is essential not only for consumption of creative digital content but also for its creation and distribution.
- **Skill Gaps:** India faces a shortage of professionals trained in skills in new digital technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and blockchain which can be used in the creative economy.
- **Inadequate Protection of Intellectual Property:** This includes the lack of an effective copyright enforcement framework, insufficient intellectual property training and expertise, a cumbersome registration process, a lack of coordination among enforcement agencies, and expensive judicial procedures.

➤ Systemic Issues:

- **Lack of supportive policy frameworks:** The policymaking for creative industries remains scattered among multiple ministries, limiting its growth.
 - » Further, due to the heterogenous nature of the creative economy, there is **no single industry body** to take forward its views on regulations and policies beneficial to its growth and development.
- **Lack of reliable and comprehensive data:** This hinders accurately tracking and measuring the creative activities. Measurement challenges are

intensified due to the **presence of a huge informal sector** that employs a large proportion of creative workers, such as folk artists, local artisans, handicraft workers.

- **Uneven Funding:** The creative and cultural industries, particularly minorities' artworks often struggle to access funding. As a result, they regularly miss out on opportunities to explore new projects or take new risks.

➤ Inherent issues of the sector:

- **Fragmentation of the Creative Industries:** Many of India's creative sectors, such as handicrafts and textiles, are fragmented and consist of numerous small-scale enterprises that lack the capacity to scale up.
- **Market Access and Distribution:** Creative products and services often struggle to find effective distribution channels. The dominance of large players in some creative sectors can make it difficult for smaller entities to compete.
- **Lack of transparency in the selection process:** The selection process is often random or based on subjective criteria. Talented artists, particularly those based outside the city, are unable to gain from sponsored platforms. This creates inequality in representation.

- **Challenges faced by online content creators:** These majorly include privacy and security concerns, mental health issues due to pressure to consistently produce content, legalities and compliance issues such as copyright infringement, tax obligations etc.

- **Inadequate Recognition:** The lack of awareness or misperception about local culture and arts in India is an impediment particularly in textile and handicrafts industry. Because of this, it is difficult to build a successful brand and expand both domestic and international customer bases.



Box 3.1. Ethical Concerns Associated with the Creative Economy

The creative economy, brimming with innovation and expression, also grapples with a range of ethical concerns. Here are some key areas where ethical questions arise:

➤ Intellectual Property and Labor

- **Exploitation and unfair contracts:** Freelancers and independent creators often face unfair deals, low wages, and lack of social security or benefits as a result of platform monopolies.
- **Attribution and ethical sourcing:** Utilizing elements of existing works or cultural appropriation without proper attribution or respect for origin.

➤ Technology and Automation

- **AI-generated content:** While AI can assist creativity, concerns exist about its potential to replace human creators, homogenize creative output, and lack genuine expression.
 - » There is also a **rise in virtual or AI influencers** created using AI tools, that raises the **transparency issue** as it becomes difficult to distinguish between them and real people.
- **Data privacy and surveillance:** Creative platforms collect vast amounts of user data, raising concerns about potential misuse and invasion of privacy.
- **Algorithmic bias and discrimination:** Algorithmic decision-making in platforms can unfairly favor certain types of content and creators, perpetuating bias and marginalizing diverse voices.

➤ Social and Environmental Impact:

- **Issue of Accessibility:** Digital divide poses a great challenge in bringing equity in accessibility, denying major population from the benefits.
- **Cultural commodification and appropriation:** Concerns exist about commercializing or exploiting cultural practices for profit without respect for their context and communities.
- **Environmental impact:** Many creative products can result in significant waste, from fashion industry offcuts to electronic waste from the tech industry.

4. What initiatives have been taken to support the growth of Creative Economy in India?

India has undertaken several initiatives to support and stimulate the growth of its creative economy, recognizing the sector's potential. These initiatives span government policies, digital infrastructure development, educational programs etc. Some of the key initiatives include:

- **National Creators Award:** To acknowledge digital innovators and content creators for their impactful contributions across various domains.
- **National Policy on IPR (2016)** to tackle issues related to the administration and enforcement framework for IPRs in India.
- **Zonal Cultural Centers**-The Ministry of Culture has set up **seven Zonal Cultural Centers (ZCCs)** in the country **to promote, protect & preserve various forms of folk art & culture.**
 - They implement number of schemes viz. **Award to Young Talented Artists, Guru Shishya Parampara, Theatre Rejuvenation, Research & Documentation, Shilpgram, OCTAVE and National Cultural Exchange Programme.**
- **Global Engagement scheme:** Promotes Indian culture internationally by supporting Indian art forms through the organization of "Festivals of India" internationally and the provision of financial assistance to cultural societies promoting Indian culture outside India.
- **UNESCO Creative Cities Network:** To foster cooperation and facilitate the exchange of experiences and knowledge across seven cultural domains: design, film, crafts and folk art, gastronomy, media arts, literature, and music.
 - Under this program, Mumbai has been designated as Creative City of Films and Hyderabad as a Creative City of Gastronomy.
- **National Handicrafts Development Programme (NHDP) and Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS)** - Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India implements NHDP and CHCDS for development, promotion, & preservation of handicrafts in a holistic manner and to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities to the artisans.

- ▶ **Scheme for Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Dance (SPIC MACAY):** It is a voluntary movement that organizes programmes of classical music and dance, folk arts, crafts, yoga, meditation, and cinema in schools, colleges, and institutions across the country to enrich the quality of formal education and increase awareness of the rich and diverse cultural heritage of India.
- ▶ **Startup India Scheme:** To catalyze startup culture and build a strong and inclusive ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship in India.
- ▶ Under it, activities like workshops, camps, exhibitions, conferences and seminars are organized aimed at raising awareness of the importance of cultural and creative industries.
- ▶ **Guidelines for transparency over social media:** Government has made it mandatory for social media influencers, including virtual influencers, to disclose promotional content in accordance with the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

Box 4.1. Emerging Technologies in the Creative Industry

Research suggests some ways in which artificial intelligence, augmented reality, virtual reality, and blockchain are reshaping creative work.

▶ Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

- ▶ **Changing value chains for creative content:** AI is helping creators to match content more effectively with audiences.
 - » For instance, a short film titled 'Sunspring' in 2016 was entirely written by an AI bot named 'Benjamin' using neural networks.
- ▶ **Extended Reality (XR):** The extended reality (XR) is a term that **engulfs all the immersive technologies such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and mixed reality (MR).**
 - ▶ **Transforming creative experiences:** XR have the capacity to provide truly transformative experiences by promoting new and meaningful feelings, skills, and understanding.
 - » **For instance,** Microsoft flight simulator offers the virtual reality mode which can give the users a virtual flight experience.

▶ Blockchain:

- ▶ **More Inclusive & better distribution-**Smart contracts can be integrated and can replace traditional contracts when it comes to the music and digital rights.
- ▶ **Better & efficient Pricing System:** The block chain technology can distribute the right share of revenue to stakeholders such as lyricists, music composers, singers, amongst others.



5. What strategies can be employed to better support and nurture the creative economy in India

- ▶ **Defining and Mapping the Creative Industries in India** – India must define the bandwidth of creative industry in the country to measure their contribution to the economy, society as well as international trade.
- ▶ **Finance** - Credit guarantee schemes and crowdfunding can be useful in financing entrepreneurs and MSMEs in the creative sector.
 - ▶ India could also establish a **joint programme for the creative sector funding** using its relationship with various multilateral fora.
- ▶ **Addressing the Issue of Copyrights** - Addressing the issue of intellectual property rights protection and enforcement to safeguard the interests of creators and innovators and incentivize their creativity.
 - ▶ India could explore **the Chinese model under 'Sword Net Action'** to crack down on online copyright infringement and piracy.
- ▶ **Increasing Recognition of Indian Culture Globally:** Promote Indian cultural and creative goods and services through the organization of events, trade fairs, and international festivals.
 - ▶ The Ministry of Culture's scheme called the Global Engagement scheme is in the right direction.
- ▶ **Establishing the Creative Districts/Hubs** - The Governments across India, both central and state, could **identify some of the districts** that could be put in the category of creative districts, **on the lines of the creative districts model in Thailand.**
 - ▶ Also, initiatives like HRIDAY scheme can be used to establish a creative cities network and improve their global reach.
- ▶ **Forming a Specialized Institution for Creative Industries** - A nodal agency can be set up which is specifically dedicated to the growth and development of the creative industries in India **on the lines of UK (Creative Industries Council), Thailand (Creative Economy Agency), Indonesia (Agency for the Creative Economy (BEKRAF)), etc.**
- ▶ **Human Capital Development among Youth:** India's education and skilling ecosystem must be improved to prepare its youth for the rapid technological changes. This entails instilling digital skills, such as digital marketing and graphic design in young workers and creative entrepreneurs.
 - ▶ Also, arranging workshops and courses for creators to **utilize the benefits of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Block Chain.**
- ▶ **Need for an Integrated Policymaking Institution:** Establishing an intermediary organization that can better inform policymakers on the policy support needed for the creative economy's growth and development.

Box 5.1. Global Best Practices

- ▶ **Europe:** An online portal "**Crowdfunding4Culture**" was created by the European Commission to collect data on the crowdfunding market for the cultural and creative industries and to facilitate connections among creative professionals and crowdfunding communities.
 - ▶ **UK:** The UK set up **the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) in 1997**. Subsequently, a **Creative Industries Task Force** was set up which released the **Creative Industries Mapping Document in 1998** and a follow-up report in 2001.
 - » The 1998 document **attempted to define and measure the creative industries.**
- ▶ **South Korea:** In 2013, South Korea released a plan called the '**Creative Economy Action Plan and Measures** to use Korea's strengths in science, technology, and ICT to boost the creative economy.
- ▶ **Australia:** Australia was **one of the first nations in the world to prepare a formal policy for creative industries. Recently, in 2021**, Australia also introduced its first-ever federal tax incentive for video game development.

Conclusion

India's journey in building a creative economy highlights the blend of its rich culture and new technology. As India keeps up with digital changes and supports creative businesses, it's opening up new chances for economic growth and jobs, while also enriching its culture while contributing to global diversity and prosperity.

The creative economy is the part of the economy that tells our stories and the creative works we leave behind as a society are likely to define how future generations understand us.

TOPIC AT A GLANCE

India's Creative Economy: From Imagination to Innovation

- ⊖ UNCTAD defines creative economy as an **interplay between human creativity, ideas, intellectual property, knowledge and technology** forming the basis of 'creative industries'. **The characteristics of creative occupations include** Knowledge-based economic activities, Original idea and imagination, Non-repetitive nature and Economic and Cultural value chain.
- ⊖ Creative Economy in India contributes nearly **8% of the country's employment** and about **20% to nation's overall GVA**.



Significance of creative economy for countries like India

- ⊖ **Contributes to Economic Growth:** Create linkages and Spill-over Effects, Promotes innovation, economic diversification and export earnings.
- ⊖ **Promotes Social Development-** Social Inclusion and Empowerment, Helps in driving positive social change, Cultural Preservation, Skill Development,
- ⊖ **Opens up avenues for diplomatic engagement**
- ⊖ **Supports Sustainable Development:** Driving demand for eco-friendly materials and promoting sustainable consumption.



Initiatives taken to support the growth of Creative Economy in India

- ⊖ **National Creators Award**
- ⊖ **Zonal Cultural Centers set up by the Ministry of Culture**
- ⊖ **National Policy on IPR (2016)**
- ⊖ **National Handicrafts Development Programme (NHDP) and Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS)**
- ⊖ **Global Engagement scheme** such as "Festivals of India"
- ⊖ **UNESCO Creative Cities Network**
- ⊖ **Other measures** such as SPIC MACAY, Startup India Scheme and Guidelines for transparency over social media



Major hurdles hindering the growth of the creative economy in India-

- ⊖ **Challenges related to Digitalisation:** Digital divide, Cyber security, Digital literacy, Skill gaps and Inadequate Protection of Intellectual Property
- ⊖ **Systemic issues:** Lack of supportive policy frameworks, reliable data and uneven funding for the sector.
- ⊖ **Inherent issues of the sector:** Fragmentation of the Creative Industries, Market Access and Distribution, Lack of transparency in the selection process, privacy and security concerns.
- ⊖ **Inadequate recognition for the creative activities**



Strategies to better support and nurture the creative economy in India

- ⊖ **Defining and Mapping the Creative Industries in India**
- ⊖ **Addressing Funding issues** through Credit guarantee and crowdfunding schemes
- ⊖ **Addressing the Issue of Copyrights**
- ⊖ **Need for an Integrated Policymaking Institution for Creative Economy**
- ⊖ **Others-** Increasing Recognition of Indian Culture Globally, Establishing the Creative Districts/Hubs, Human Capital Development among Youth, Specialized Institution for Creative Industries etc.

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1
AIR
ISHITA KISHORE



2
AIR
GARIMA LOHIA



3
AIR
UMA HARATHI N

39 in Top 50 Selection in CSE 2022

**8 in Top 10
Selection
in CSE 2021**



2
AIR
ANKITA AGARWAL



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AIR
GAMINI SINGLA



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UTKARSH DWIVEDI



6
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YAKSH CHAUDHARY



7
AIR
SAMYAK S JAIN



8
AIR
ISHITA RATHI



9
AIR
PREETAM KUMAR



HEAD OFFICE
Apsara Arcade, 1/8-B,
1st Floor, Near Gate-6,
Karol Bagh Metro
Station, Delhi

MUKHERJEE NAGAR CENTRE
Plot No. 857, Ground Floor,
Mukherjee Nagar, Opposite
Punjab & Sindh Bank,
Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi

FOR DETAILED ENQUIRY
Please Call:
+91 8468022022,
+91 9019066066



1
AIR

SHUBHAM KUMAR
CIVIL SERVICES
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