INDIA’S CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ECONOMY
NEW IMAGINATIONS AND EMERGING PRACTICES

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India’s Cultural and Creative Economy: New Imaginations and Emerging Practices
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Section 1: Framing the Cultural and Creative Economy

The conception and framing of the creative and cultural economy have largely focused on the OECD economies and contemporary global systems of circulation, accelerated through expansion of financial flows in the late 20th century. Most of these concepts have been framed and formulated in post-industrial contexts like the UK and Europe. There is a rich vein of theoretical literature that looks into the meaning of the terms ‘creative industry’, ‘creative and cultural industry’, the genealogy of such uses and their economic and cultural consequences, including the dynamic between the creative-cultural and the economic. This includes debate on the supposed role of the creative economy as an engine of growth, job creation, competitiveness and generation of export earnings. There is also critical interrogation of how the ‘creative economy’ might impact the role of ‘the artist’ as ‘innovator’ or even relegate the cultural and creative industries further. A prominent term popular among many city policymakers in the global North has been Richard Florida’s notion of a highly skilled and productive ‘creative class’, which tends to concentrate in cities that encourage creativity, diversity and innovation.

1 Research assistance for this paper was provided by Kaye Lushington and Amogh Arakali.
2 For instance, the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) model articulated by the UK in the 1990s, the symbolic texts model based on Europe and UK, and the WIPO Copyright model.
These memes raise a very different set of practical challenges and theoretical questions in the global South, particularly in India, with its millennial, plural forms of cultural expression and economic practices, situated within diverse cultural landscapes, epistemologies and worldviews. These expressions and practices are layered within multiple histories and continua – pre-colonial, colonial, modern and now emerging trans-modern urbanism. They span oral, literate and neo-digital cultures; traditional, informal and formal economies, situated within rural, peri-urban and urban settings. There is a layered simultaneity to such expressions and practices, not easily captured or subsumed within a typical linear frame. The cultural framework provides an interesting window to interrogate the creative economy and bring nuances which are more open ended and perhaps even dissonant.

In economic terms, India’s development trajectory has differed from the standard ‘model’ of economic development as a transition from primary to secondary to tertiary sector led growth, starting from ‘low value-added’ activities in agriculture and moving up the value chain. India’s ‘leapfrog’ transition from an agrarian economy to a services economy with a significant IT and ITeS sector, bypassing the middle step of large-scale industrial growth, has drawn considerable attention. In addition, the sheer persistence and ubiquity of informality in all sectors of the economy: agriculture, industry and services, makes the Indian experience particular. A large proportion of India’s workforce (over 80%) is employed in the informal economy and produces about half of India’s GDP at relatively low productivity rates. India suffers from a structural mismatch between output and employment across low and high productivity economic sectors.

Within this economic context, the articulation of what constitutes the Indian ‘creative economy’ as well as its role in economic development differs from standard formulations of much international literature.

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The Indian ‘creative economy’ seems to mirror the exceptional characteristics of the national economy in the following ways: the services sector is the largest in output terms and more strongly concentrated in cities; there is a structural mismatch between employment and output across the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors driven by more complex underlying dynamics than the standard dualist formulation; and there is a high degree of informality in economic output and employment across all segments of the national and creative economy. This leads to the necessity for a deeper exploration of the role of cities, and the pervasive nature of informal work and the role of the informal enterprise in India’s cultural and creative economy. In addition, a clear rationale emerges for focusing on livelihoods, employment security and social protection within creative occupations, in addition to sectors linked to the global creative economy with potential for high rates of output growth and exchange rate arbitrage.

In India, these processes of transition are also encased within the second largest urbanisation in human history that will play itself out over the next few decades, as the urban population rises from 375million to about 800million. ‘Rural’ and ‘urban’ in India are not just locations. They also embody complex histories and traditions. Nomenclatures such as ‘village industries’ carry meaning and have historically impacted policy decisions. Spaces within and between rural and urban locations, the emerging and ever changing margins and the multiple fault lines between these systems are all fecund locations for disruptive innovation for an early 21st century cultural and creative economy. Such opportunities could also embed and situate themselves in smaller places that build from ecological and cultural landscapes, propelled more by socio-cultural factors than material transformation alone. New forms of digital technologies have also created opportunities to expand space for intangible and living cultural practices through highly networked urban locations and communities of practice. The possibilities and implications of these developments in creating economic and non-material value are yet unexplored. If one were to acknowledge and appreciate the significance of the cultural dimension, within plural epistemologies, as well as the particularities of India’s development trajectory, there could be a
distinctive case for articulating a notion of the ‘cultural and creative economy’ that goes beyond its more commonly expressed, post-industrial framing. These would in turn create room for dialogue and discourse, not just on economic impact but also on critical cultural questions of locating self, place and community within increasingly connected realms.

Section 2: Economic Contours of India’s Cultural and Creative Economy

The Creative Economy Report 2010\(^7\) established the importance of the creative economy as an engine of growth, job creation and generation of export earnings. It also emphasised the importance and difficulty of building an evidence base for the creative economy in order to make the case for greater policy attention. Over the past decade, several countries have explicitly started focusing on the creative economy for the purpose of economic development and urban regeneration\(^8\), recognizing its growth potential. This is because in recent years, the creative economy has been growing more rapidly than the overall economy, along with employing high skill, high wage workers. It is increasingly recognized to have other ‘spillover economic benefits’ such as improving efficiency through innovation and a catalyst for the origination of new ideas that might lead to new products, services, or ways of doing business\(^9\).

Thus far, the definition, scope, and discussion of issues related to the creative economy have been largely framed in post-industrial settings, with a strong emphasis on its role as an engine of growth.

For this notion to have relevance in the South Asian context, especially in India, a different formulation and understanding of the cultural and creative economy may be necessary. There are key differences in

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\(^8\) Hong Kong Arts and Cultural Indicators, prepared for the Hong Kong Arts Development Council by International Intelligence on Culture, Cultural Capital Ltd and Hong Kong Policy Research Institute, October 2005

the structure, scale, and growth potential of the Indian economy when compared to post-industrial economies that view creativity as a means to revive growth and maintain competitiveness. The size of India’s economy is close to $2trillion\textsuperscript{10} in 2012. It has been growing annually at an average of 7.7% over the past decade\textsuperscript{11}. Even though growth is currently slowing, projections for growth are still in the 5-6% range for the coming five years. India’s economic growth has been largely driven by the services sector over the past few years, and its prospects and the sustainability of growth are closely linked to the simultaneous demographic and urban transitions that it is currently undergoing. At the same time, it is a large and populous country of 1.2 billion people, with a large workforce which is set to grow in the coming decades because of the demographic transition. It is anticipated that over the coming five years, about 4million people will be added to the labour force per year\textsuperscript{12}. In addition, India has layers of cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity, provoking invigorating questions of modernity and its discontents that do not permit a linear mapping or more conventional definition.

An exploration of the boundaries and dynamics of the cultural and creative economy therefore has to encompass a much wider framework, in keeping with India’s particularities. Such a formulation is different from those currently in international use in three economic respects:

i. **Scope**: In addition to activities traditionally included in the creative economy such as art, crafts, design, architecture, advertising, antiques, film, video, music, performing arts, radio, and publishing\textsuperscript{13}, for India, a wider set of occupations such as traditional medicine, handicrafts, cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity, provoking invigorating questions of modernity and its discontents that do not permit a linear mapping or more conventional definition.

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\textsuperscript{10} World Bank World Development Indicators, accessed on 5\textsuperscript{th} March 2013 at \url{http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators}.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{13} This is the UK classification of the creative economy given in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport ‘Creative Industries Mapping Document 2001’, which defines creative industries as “those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property”. The UK has been a pioneer in defining, classifying, and measuring the creative economy. Several countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia have followed a similar approach.
textiles and varieties of folk artefacts which have significant intangible, cultural and identity related value, that are currently inadequately clubbed together as ‘heritage preservation’. These activities have a communitarian character and orientation closely linked to family or community production and transmission and hence not easily reduced to commercial and economic value (for instance, see the case of the Chhipa community for block printing of Sanganeri textiles in the text box below).

**Box 1: Block Printed Sanganeri Textiles**

The case of hand-block printed Sanganeri textiles brings out various issues related to creative work by individuals, communities, or micro and small informal enterprises, informal systems of apprenticeship and skill transfer, community based ‘ownership’ of cultural content, as well as the changing nature of work linked to changing demand, both domestic and international, for handcrafted textiles which is in turn linked to patronage and branding.

Sanganer is a small town in the state of Rajasthan, not far from Jaipur, the state capital. It has become famous for its vivid block printed fabrics and clothes. It emerged as a prominent printing centre under the patronage of the Jaipur royal family, and because of the abundant mineral rich water and clay suitable for sun bleaching of textiles\(^{14}\). The chhipa community which is settled in Sanganer are all involved in block printing, and they believe in ‘the tradition of passing down the secrets of this manual trade from parent to child so that the expertise remains within the family.’\(^{15}\) However, demand for Sanganeri textiles started declining with the advent of mechanization, chemically coloured and machine printed fabrics\(^{16}\). More recently, however, these fabrics are enjoying a resurgence and have ‘entered the realm of chic contemporary fashion. Designers have revitalized traditional motifs which once again appear in regal splendor, albeit this time on the catwalks of Mumbai, London and New York’\(^{17}\).

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\(^{15}\) Of Prints and Paisley, Charukesi Ramadurai, Photo feature in Marwar, July-August 2012.

\(^{16}\) Sanganer | Traditional Textiles – Contemporary Cloth, Anokhi Museum of Hand Printing, AMHP Publications 2010

\(^{17}\) Ibid.
ii. The persistence of informality in the South Asian economy both in terms of informal enterprises and informal employment or occupations\textsuperscript{18}. The proportion of the informal economy in output terms has been estimated to be as large as half of total GDP\textsuperscript{19}, with informal employment being far higher. The cultural and creative economy encompasses several instances of ‘low productivity’ yet ‘high skill’ activities that are part of the informal economy. For instance, high skill occupations like the crafting of blocks for Sanganeri textiles printing are part of informal networks of apprenticeship and skill preservation, and are an instance of informal activity that is underrepresented in national income accounts as well as in policy making. Therefore, informal sector workers are generally viewed as having low productivity. It is a significant policy challenge to extend social safety nets and other policy supports to them. This is of particular significance in the context of the cultural and creative economy, since significant portions of this economy are informal. The informal economy consists not only of handicrafts and textiles workers and so on, but also individual creative endeavours such as photography, writing, music, as well as portions of large formal sectors such as Bollywood like spot boys and set construction. This leads to the dual problem of extending employment and social security but also the broadening of, or in cases, interrogating the nature of, the property rights regime, as classically conceived. There is a need to start to understand and enable the small, vital, and informal enterprise as the bedrock

\textsuperscript{18} The difficulty in categorizing and counting informal or unorganized workers and enterprises has been recognized. For the purpose of this report, we use the definition used by the National Sample Survey Organization and the National Commission on Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector, which are in line with the guidelines of the 15\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} International Conference of Labour Statisticians. Unorganized or informal enterprises are “all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than ten workers”, and unorganized or informal employment is that which “consists of those working in the unorganized enterprises or households, excluding regular workers with social security benefits, and the workers in the formal sector without any employment/ social security benefits provided by the employers”. Source: The Challenge of Unemployment in India: An Informal Economy Perspective, National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector, April 2009.

of creativity, while at the same time addressing the issue of employment and social security. The materiality of cultural production is often marginalized as mere ‘preservation’.

iii. **Developmental needs.** Understanding and leveraging the cultural and creative economy if it is viewed as a tool for growth or competitiveness versus an instrument for sustainable and livelihood oriented development and cultural significance, has very different implications for policy. In the South Asian context there is a clear rationale for the cultural and creative economy to be framed and viewed as a tool for livelihood protection and sustainable development, simultaneous with cultural preservation and expression that recognizes the intangible values of cultural production. The productivity ratios of workers in the cultural and creative economy in India are very different from those in the UK for instance (India’s labour productivity was estimated to be less than 15% of the UK level by the end of the 20th century[^20]), and therefore the policy implications and challenges are necessarily very distinct.

The key economic and definitional differences are highlighted above since these have a bearing on efforts to understand and document the contours of the Indian creative economy. This broader understanding of the Indian creative economy can be used as a lens to understand the inadequacy of the institutional and policy response to issues faced by the creative and cultural economy.

**Section 3: Reconceptualising Culture for sustainable development: the institutional dilemma**

The institutional response to the cultural and creative economy carries a historical legacy of the pre-colonial, the colonial, modernist-State planning as well as newer articulations of simultaneous State enablement and neo-liberal withdrawal. The contemporary Indian institutional apparatus relating to

[^20]: The Historical Roots of India’s Service-Led Development: A Sectoral Analysis of Anglo-Indian Productivity Differences, 1870 – 2000, Stephen Broadberry and Bishnupriya Gupta, Department of Economics, University of Warwick, September 2009.
cultural and creative economy is better understood within multiple historical disjunctures and respective spillovers. A look at history may explain why, for example, out of total 12\textsuperscript{th} Plan outlay of about US$900 billion, culture receives only US$1.5 billion amounting to roughly around 0.17\% of the outlay.\textsuperscript{21} Or why, within culture, the focus lies on more material dimensions of heritage rather than intangible and contemporary production.

Histories of pre-colonial Indian urbanism also help challenge some predominant notions of what constitutes ‘village industry’, and thereby invites a re-look at what urban possibilities could look like. In the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, a vibrant textile industry was located in a number of Indian towns described by historians then as ‘manufacturing towns’, where weavers were contributors to the town economy. In 1812, Munro wrote that Indians were not interested in European goods because of ‘climate, religious and civil habits, and more than anything else the excellence of their own manufacturers’.\textsuperscript{22} Colonialism changed the situation dramatically. ‘Forcible substitution of British textiles’ reduced weavers to desperation. By 1871, a large number of weavers had turned to agriculture, the qasba towns had declined and reduced to impoverished villages.\textsuperscript{23}

Industrialisation and its anxieties from 19\textsuperscript{th} century Britain also influenced the cultural conceptions of Indian industry. Notions of preserving ‘crafts’, ‘village industry’, ‘culture’ and ‘artisan’ gained salience since the ‘Great Exhibition of 1851’ in London, drawing on the disenchantment with industrialisation conveyed by the Arts and Crafts movement, notably John Ruskin (who Gandhi was influenced by) and


\textsuperscript{22} ‘Urbanism in South India’ by Narayani Gupta, from ‘The City in Indian History’ (ed. Indu Banga) Publisher: Manohar (2005) quoting Munro’s evidence, cited in WK Firminger (ed.) ‘The Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company, 28\textsuperscript{th} July 1812

\textsuperscript{23} ‘Urbanism in South India’ by Narayani Gupta, from ‘The City in Indian History’ (ed. Indu Banga) Publisher: Manohar (2005)
William Morris.\textsuperscript{24} Both Tagore and Coomaraswamy had provided spirited ‘aesthetic rebuttal to industrial capital’ by locating the primacy of the arts in building national identity under colonial rule. The ‘political leap was to come from Gandhi.’\textsuperscript{25} In its utilitarian, political pragmatism, Gandhi’s alternative to colonial industrialisation, by locating handicrafts and khadi at the very core of the national revitalisation, marked a departure from Crafts Socialism of the Arts and Crafts Movement, Tagore’s cosmopolitan aesthetic as well as centralised Soviet-style Planning.

The current project in India of locating culture as heritage, as part of a past that needs to be preserved, has historical roots. For an imperial colonial Europe too, the riches of ‘real India’ seemed to exist only in the past. In Nirmal Verma’s scathing critique, for Europeans the Indian past seemed to mean ‘a rich site of excavation, from where the treasures of ancient philosophy and literary classics can be dug up but the beliefs, myths and rituals, which provided a continuous cultural and spiritual nourishment to millions of Indians was not only not seen but it was firmly believed, it did not exist’.\textsuperscript{26} This project of literally digging up the past was also undertaken by Curzon in reorganizing what became the Archaeological Survey of India.\textsuperscript{27}

Nehru’s post-independence model of development was largely State-centric and oriented towards industrialisation, manufacturing and somewhat ambiguously urban, while embracing a ‘progressive modernity’. If Gandhian handicrafts were the \textit{elan vital} of the village, Nehru considered dams ‘temples of modern India’. Culture stood relegated to its symbolic uses, of supporting the task of nation-building in a plural society, still looking for post-colonial self-definition. State-run institutions were set up to

\textsuperscript{25} ibid
\textsuperscript{26} ‘India and Europe’, Nirmal Verma, in ‘Perceiving India: Insight and Inquiry’ (India international Centre Quarterly, Spring-Summer 1993), page 141
\textsuperscript{27} ‘Some Aspects of cultural policies in India’, Kapila Vatsyayan, UNESCO Paris, 1972, page 53
undertake the task of cultural preservation. Nehruvian legacies include the Sahitya Akademi (the National Academy of Letters, set up in 1952), the Lalit Kala Akademi (the National Akademi for Plastic Arts, set up in 1953), the Sangeet Natak Akademi (or the National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama, set up in 1953), the All India Radio (which patronised classical Indian music, amongst others) and so on.

As for khadi, handicrafts and handlooms, entities such as All India Village Khadi Development Board, All India Handicrafts Board and All-India Handloom Board were also set up to preserve the Gandhian project, if only as vestigial to the overall national development scheme.

Sixty years after the initiation of ‘planned development’, the recent 12th Five Year Plan, for example, while continuing to couch culture in heritage-related categories, provokes new questions on whether the State envisages reduced support for an already debilitated sector. It also uses the language of culture for development without getting into specific implications. On the one hand, the 12th Plan suggests that there is need to ‘adopt a new approach and appropriate policies that are less dependent on the Government financing and catalyse local partnerships.’ On the other, the Plan also states that ‘these programmes must be integrated into strategies for sustainable development at every level and take into account the needs and aspirations of the community where cultural assets are found...therefore a direct link must be made between safeguarding the heritage and socio-economic development. This calls for the deliberate recasting of heritage conservation as a development activity that brings economic opportunities, creates jobs and generates income based on traditional technologies and knowhow.’

An older archival project of preserving cultural memory has generated momentum of late, especially since the 2003 UNESCO Resolution on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), of which India is a signatory. A number of State and non-State initiatives are currently underway, each mapping contours and

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boundaries, memorialising details, locating origins and agents, documenting and archiving in text and digital forms. The latest budget for the financial year 2013-14 proposes to make an allocation of Rs. 100 crores to INTACH, a non-State actor engaged in this common task of preserving cultural heritage.

The Sangeet Natak Academy, designated as the ‘nodal centre’ for ‘coordinating various actions to maintain the National Inventory of ICH’ has ‘compiled an ICH database of institutions and organisations, as well as relevant links to documentation and audio-visual material. The IGNCA’s cultural mapping tasks include anthropological and historical audio-visual and photographic documentation (‘Kala Nidhi’), digital libraries (‘Kala Sampada’) and folkloric traditions and practices (‘Janapada Sampada’). Allied institutions such as CCRT serve purposes of resource documentation, preparation of ‘Culture Kits’ and allied training activities.

The Sangeet Natak Academy preserves a gallery of musical instruments (‘Asavari’). INTACH works in the intangibles space, including in its mission, subjects as wide ranging and universal as ‘Oral Traditions, including Language Performing Arts, Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events, Knowledge and Practices Concerning Nature and The Universe and Traditional Craftsmanship.

The Dastkari Haat Samiti, a nationwide organisation of over 1200 crafts persons/organisations, documents crafts and handloom textiles. There are reports that the Ministry of Culture has proposed to set up a new National Institute of Manuscripts and Manuscriptology (NIMM) to document Indian

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30 “Continuing the tradition of supporting institutions of excellence, I propose to make a grant of `100 crore each to: Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh campus, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati campus, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)”, Budget 2013-2014, Speech of P. Chidambaram, Minister of Finance, February 28, 2013. http://indiabudget.nic.in/ub2013-14/bs/bs.pdf
31 http://sangeetnatak.gov.in/sna/national-inventory.htm
32 Information obtained from IGNCA brochure and website: http://ignca.nic.in/
33 Centre for Cultural Resources and Training : http://ccrtindia.gov.in/aboutus.htm
34 Museum and Gallery of Musical Instruments, SangeetNatakAkademihttp://sangeetnatak.gov.in/sna/museum.htm
35 INTACH’s areas of work within the field of Intangible Cultural Heritage http://www.intach.org/divi-ic-heritage-workareas.asp?links=dich4
36 DastkariHaatSamiti: http://www.indiancraftsjourney.in/membership.htm
manuscripts and generate research capacity. These initiatives seek to commemorate, preserve, keep together, and protect.

In a similar vein, some remnants of colonial town planning also persist, significant in understanding policy dimensions of the cultural and creative economy today, especially in the Indian urban. For example, the 1962 Master Plan for the historic city of Delhi actually called for the ‘systematic weeding out’ of ‘village-like trades’ (such as dairies and potteries) by clubbing them with other ‘noxious industries’, which had to be removed to the then margins, to what became Delhi’s ‘urban villages.’ If ‘village industries’ was a Gandhian determination, it seems that the 1962 Master Plan inferred that such trades did not belong to the new ‘modern’ urban, even if Delhi had a rich history of such trades woven into its fabric. In locating the urban within heritage frames, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Mission on Urban Development (JNNURM) for example, has a separate funding component for 11 ‘heritage cities’. There are some municipality endeavours too, largely through their ‘Heritage Cells’, which can be much better located within a triad of livelihoods, culture and locality.

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37 The Ministry of Culture has proposed to set up the National Institute of Manuscripts and Manuscriptology (NIMM) on the lines of the National Archives of India to document Indian manuscripts, prepare their database, facilitate its conservation and create a national digital manuscripts library. [http://newindianexpress.com/nation/article1488611.ece](http://newindianexpress.com/nation/article1488611.ece)


39 While City Development Plan (CDP) templates under JNNURM did incorporate a Heritage component, it is only a supplemental measure.

The primary debate is still a political one, played out in the everyday minutiae of negotiations on the Indian street between informal economic actors and the State. The same State that preserves and protects ‘Culture’ also seems to illegalise local informal economic actors, such as the street vendor and the hawker, in most Indian cities. Newer legal frameworks also seek to regularise informal economic actors on the Indian street, while also acknowledging their informal character. Following protracted legal debate on the issue for over 25 years and subsequent to a recent policy formulation, a new ‘Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Bill 2012, for example, is in Parliament that seeks to regularize street vending through registration in ‘vending zones’ designated by the local authority.\(^4\) There is also the politics of displacement and eviction, playing out within the new debate on ‘redevelopment’ of cities. For example, the Kathputli colony in Delhi, home to traditional magicians, folk artists, puppeteers, has been the focus of an extensive debate on the notion of redevelopment, what \textit{in situ} rehabilitation really means, and if the particular character and synergies of a place can be preserved, while the State decides to ostensibly improve livelihood and other conditions of living.\(^2\)

\textbf{Enlarging the frame of discourse:}

A strong disjunct between economic development, livelihood and employment and cultural communities has tended to limit the imagination of new possibilities. The significant and powerful


votaries for livelihood generation as a prime focus of Indian developmentalism barely incorporate the cultural materiality of such production.\textsuperscript{43} The votaries of culture, engaged as they are in various forms of heritage conservation, aware of the challenges and opportunities of globalisation, do perceive the growing institutional need to incorporate culture within the development discourse. Most are unable to articulate what an alternate trajectory could be and whether particular cultural elements, no matter what the market’s impulse must be, still somehow need preservation as representative of authenticity.\textsuperscript{44} The Indian State peripherally accepts the role of culture for development in parts of the 12\textsuperscript{th} Plan but in others looks at culture largely as heritage and seems unable to look towards questions of livelihood generation through cultural preservation.

\begin{boxedminipage}{\textwidth}
\textbf{Box 2: SEWA Federation and Rural Electrification Corporation}

Illustration: New institutional illustrations which challenge traditional binary conceptions of ‘culture-livelihood’:

In February 2013, the National Culture Fund (under the Ministry of Culture), the SEWA Federation and the Rural Electrification Corporation entered into a tripartite Memorandum of Agreement of Rs. 1.58 crores to work together in ‘reviving crafts heritage and providing sustainable livelihood to artisans’ especially women artisans of the informal sector, in districts of Ahmedabad Mehsana, Patan, Kutchh and Surat, through women artist cooperatives and self help groups.\textsuperscript{45}
\end{boxedminipage}

\begin{footnotesize}


\textsuperscript{45}Corporatelawreporter.com/memorandum-reviving-crafts-heritage-11459.html
\end{footnotesize}
Reorienting Policy and State Institutions

A sectorally-and-spatially-differentiated policy strategy needs to be articulated based on the scale and spread of various cultural and creative economy sectors. Clearly, limited state intervention is required for ‘high value added’, organized sectors like TV or Bollywood, and a different type of intervention is required for textiles industries and yet a different intervention for GI-tagged food industries, because of the ways in which these industries are organized. Given India’s development challenges, an explicit focus on employment is required, while recognizing that the sectors that are high employment and ‘high value added’ do not necessarily match.

Within an enlarged culture and creative economy frame, there is a need to reduce institutional fragmentation and envisage better collaborative opportunities among multiple ministries performing diverse responsibilities. The Ministry of Culture is the nodal ministry for various institutions in charge of tasks pertaining to archaeology, archiving (including libraries, museums), promoting arts, literature, music and drama, conservation, capacity building as well as associated cultural funding. The Ministry of Textiles deals with aspects of handlooms and handicrafts. The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium (MSME) Industries is in-charge of Khadi, village industries (including the Khadi and Village Industries Commission) coir and rural crafts. The Ministry of Tourism deals with aspects of tours, services and marketing of cultural activities. The Ministry for Rural Development deals with rural technologies and rural artisanal products. Bemoaning the lack of coherence, a suggestion was made by an Inter-Ministerial Group in 2005 to create a new Ministry for ‘Artisans and Household Manufacturing’, a somewhat utopian formulation which seems to have predictably fallen through in subsequent years.46

The Ministry for Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA) has a direct mandate on creating better livelihoods and low income housing opportunities for the urban poor, including those involved in the

46 Report of the Inter Ministry Task Group on Technological, Investment and Marketing Support for Household and Artisanal Manufacturing, 2005
informal sector. But a more comprehensive vision is still necessary.\textsuperscript{47} The 12\textsuperscript{th} Plan’s sections on urban development, focussed as it is on infrastructure and governance, do not locate a broader view of culture within its priorities for the Indian urban.\textsuperscript{48} And as far as decentralisation goes, the 12\textsuperscript{th} Schedule of the Indian Constitution, as part of the landmark 74\textsuperscript{th} Amendment on decentralisation, does have entries related to ‘planning for economic and social development’ and the ‘promotion of cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects’ which urban local bodies can tap into, if only they are provided sufficient ‘funds, functions and functionaries’ by the respective state governments.\textsuperscript{49}

Mainstreaming culture in sustainable development requires a much wider re-imagining of the contours, dimensions and effects of culture, not just for its intrinsic role in individual and collective well-being but also as instrumental to livelihood, enterprise and economy, including the tangible as well as the symbolic. If indeed culture needs to be reconceptualised comprehensively as a means towards sustainable development, various Government ministries need to align themselves with such a broader vision and then develop synergies within their respective budgetary allocations and everyday implementation tasks and resolve a range of challenges around developing and IPR regime appropriate for the emerging Indian cultural and creative economy. ‘Cultural policy’ as commonly understood, nevertheless seems to be more towards repackaging cultural heritage as a separate component rather than mainstreaming or integrating cultural aspects into the everyday nuts and bolts of development and institutional policy.

\textsuperscript{47} See National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy, 2007. Also: http://mhupa.gov.in/policies/index2.htm
\textsuperscript{49} Article 243(W), 12\textsuperscript{th} Schedule, Constitution of India.
Section 4: Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the creative-cultural economy: new Indian initiatives and dilemmas

The question of IPR is central to the predominant conception of the creative economy in formalised industrial and post-industrial contexts. This frame envisages the generation of high monetary value through IPR (as classically conceived in terms of patents, copyrights, trademarks, designs and so on) and ‘closed’ systems of exclusive ownership, limited monopoly for a period of time and control over access of use, somewhat akin to physical control and use of private property. However, such a frame struggles to grapple with informal, open-ended, oral modes of production, transmission, reception and access, particularly in the poorer countries of the global South. This notion of IPR is also increasingly befuddled by rapid technological advances. Classically premised on formal modes of production and private property rights, IPR has a tenuous relationship with the commons.50

A particular challenge is the domain of Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Traditional Cultural Expression (TCE), both of which generate serious interrogation of predominant modes of IPR. Within the historical context of global North-South debates surrounding ‘misappropriation’, the dilemma is to find ways of ‘protecting’ TK and TCE without compromising on key epistemic dimensions such as the following:51

- Is knowledge always ‘generated’ through individual or collective effort or there are other ways of knowing that do not fit into this ‘production’ frame?
- Once generated, is knowledge always rendered a monetised commodity for the market or are there forms of knowledge embedded so deeply within the ‘place-time’ symbolic/material contexts that such ‘reduction’ is impossible?

• Can knowledge be always ‘owned’ by clearly identifiable individual on behalf of the community or could there be custodial relationships of trust, without negating from principles of equity, within and outside the community?

• Does knowledge always need to be written/documentated/archived as evidence of its existence? Are oral forms of knowledge and transmission more susceptible to pressures of ‘misappropriation’? What is lost or gained in ‘translation’ of oral knowledge into textual manifestations?

In other words, even if TK and TCE do not lend themselves easily to commodification, the IPR frame does not seem to provide an alternative, even if ostensibly the commodification is for protection, preservation and fair use. For example, without a written archive, how is it possible to prevent misappropriation of a folk song, which has traditionally existed in the commons? When a rendition of a folk song is subject to IPR, what is the most appropriate form of ensuring protection, wide dissemination and fair use, particularly of the communities who transmit and preserve the folk tradition? When it is written and archived, does it thereby become less ‘folk’ than before?

In India, aspects of Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCE) are governed by some specific IPR legislation (such as those for patent, trademark, design, copyright, geographical indications) as well as allied legislation with significant IPR implications (such as those for Biodiversity, Plant Varieties, Forests Rights and so on). The IPR frame is largely ‘defensive’, (i.e. in the IPR discourse, aimed at preventing misappropriation, unfair use and infringement). Some of the newer legislative initiatives, while falling short of a comprehensive sui generis legislation (i.e. encompassing IPR issues within other redistributive provisions), do incorporate some ‘positive’ measures (i.e. in the IPR
discourse, those aimed at empowering communities).\textsuperscript{52} TK enjoys far more salience in terms of priority than TCE. It seems that these margins of TK/TCE legislation exist along with typical IPR legislations on patent, copyright, and trademark that lend themselves more easily to the predominant creative economy understanding in terms of competitive advantage and the market economy.

**Indian IPR and the Cultural and Creative Economy**

A number of interesting innovations are emerging within the Indian legal and regulatory system in response to the conflicts and opportunities that an expanding cultural and creative economy throws up. Five examples are outlined below that raise questions on the nature of IPR and as classically conceived, especially regarding issues of TK and TCE.

1. **TK and TCE in Biodiversity Framework:** ‘Traditional Knowledge’ is curiously defined not in the specific Indian IPR legislations, but rather in the Protection, Conservation and Effective Management of Traditional Knowledge Relating to Biological Diversity Rules, 2009 under the Indian Biodiversity Act. This definition includes TK as well as TCE. This is the particular instance where TCE find mention, in a legislative framework where TCE are largely conspicuous by their absence. The Biodiversity Act read with the corresponding Rules incorporates ‘positive’ measures such as ‘fair and equitable benefit sharing’ and ‘prior informed consent’. These measures are under the purview of the National Biodiversity Authority which functions as an autonomous body of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF)\textsuperscript{53}. Other aspects of TK could come under the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Act, 2001\textsuperscript{54}. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006

\textsuperscript{52} The World Intellectual Property Organization Traditional Knowledge Documentation Toolkit, Consultation Draft, November 1\textsuperscript{st} 2012, pp. 16

\textsuperscript{53} The National Biodiversity Authority is an autonomous and statutory body of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India: http://nbaindia.org/content/22/2/2/aboutnba.html

\textsuperscript{54} Section 2(l) of the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Act, 2001
provides legal recognition to the rights of forest dwelling communities in India. It also provides for ‘the right of access to biodiversity and the community right to intellectual property and traditional knowledge related to biodiversity and cultural diversity.’ In spite of such legislation, questions of implementation persist. The Biodiversity framework, by bringing TCE within its ambit, applies the logic of ‘protection’ and ‘benefit sharing’. This is very different from the ‘copyright industries’ frame of the cultural and creative industries, as commonly applied.

Box 3: Traditional Knowledge

“Traditional Knowledge” means the collective knowledge of a traditional community including of a group of families, on a particular subject or a skill and passed down from generation to generation, either orally or in written form, relating to properties, uses and characteristics of plant and animal genetic resources; agricultural and healthcare practices, food preservation and processing techniques and devices developed from traditional materials; cultural expressions, products and practices such as weaving patterns, colors, dyes, pottery, painting, poetry, folklore, dance and music; and all other products or processes discovered through a community process including by a member of the community individually but for the common use of the community; (Biodiversity Rules 2009)

2. Geographical Indications: In its recognition of the place of origin as the distinguishing attribute for protection, the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 (“GI Act”) is an departure from classical IPR frames, even if it also assumes ‘exclusivity’ and defensive protection frames. Under the GI Act, ‘agricultural, natural or manufactured goods, any goods of handicrafts or of industry including foodstuff that originate or are manufactured in a particular geographic location which indicate a certain quality, reputation or characteristic that is attributable to that location may be registered as a geographical indication’. For example, some of the registered GIs include Darjeeling Tea (word and logo), Kancheepuram Silk from Tamil Nadu, Channapatna toys and dolls from Karnataka, and Kashmir Pashmina from Jammu

Section 3(1)(k) of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006
Section 2(1)(e) of the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999
and Kashmir\textsuperscript{57}. GI also represents a departure from the dominant creative economy frame, which allows the creation of knowledge and revenue generation through largely place-agnostic modes, especially in so far as IPR is concerned.

3. **Certification and Collective Marks:** The use of Certification Marks (CEM) and Collective Marks (COM), under the Trademark Act, 1999 help distinguish certain ‘categories of goods’ (and their registered ‘proprietors’), on the basis of ‘origin, material, quality, accuracy or any other characteristic’ (CEM)\textsuperscript{58} or on the basis of membership to ‘an association of persons’ (COM).\textsuperscript{59} For example, the ‘Handloom Mark’ introduced by the Ministry of Textiles (for which various categories and weaver collectives can register with the ministry for marketing under the mark) provides an avenue to marketing, branding as well as to authenticity and quality.\textsuperscript{60} Various handloom marketing organisations such as the Handloom Export and Promotion Council (HPEC) market their woven goods under this mark. The Handloom Mark has been registered as a Certification Trade Mark under the Trade Marks Act with the Department of Textiles as the proprietor.\textsuperscript{61} The ‘Craftmark’ is another certification trademark that has been granted to the All India Artisans and Craftworkers Association which is a collective for the artisanal and crafts sector. It provides a guarantee of authenticity in terms of the products produced under the ‘Craftmark’ scheme while enabling registered craftspersons to market their products under this brand.\textsuperscript{62} In this way, these marks serve as a means to ensure organised collective activity for protection and branding under a specific registered mark.

\textsuperscript{57}For complete list of registered GI’s, see: http://ipindia.nic.in/girindia/
\textsuperscript{58}Section 2(1)(e) of the Trademark Act, 1999.
\textsuperscript{59}Section 2(1)(g) of the Trademarks Act, 1999.
\textsuperscript{60}http://handlooms.nic.in/handloom-mark.pdf
\textsuperscript{61}http://textilescommittee.nic.in/HMS-Legal.pdf; also http://handlooms.nic.in/handloom-mark.pdf
\textsuperscript{62}The Craftmark has been registered as a Certification Trademark with the Trademark Registry under Class 27 of goods and services. For more information, see: http://www.aiacaonline.org/craftmark.asp and http://ipindiaservices.gov.in/tmrpublicsearch/tmsearch.aspx?tn=9290952&st=Wordmark#
4. **Copyright exceptions and Creative Commons:** While the Copyright Act, 1957, does not explicitly account for either TK/TCE, it does however contain general provisions which could be used to ensure ‘protection’ of TK/TCE, if only ‘authorship’ was clearly ascertainable and the ‘Work’ was ‘original’. In questions of TK/TCE, much of which has existed in the commons, the typical categories of ‘originality’ become complex. Creative Commons’ licenses provide innovative arrangements of ensuring copyright as well as attempting wider use and access. For example, the Bant Singh Project (a collaborative musical endeavour between Bant Singh, a Dalit protest singer in rural Punjab and three electronic artists) licenses the use of work online, under a CC licence which allows ‘non-commercial use’ and sharing, provided the work is attributed to its creator.

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**Box 4: Darjeeling Tea**

Tea Board is the owner of all IPR in the DARJEELING word and logo, which is a registered ‘certification mark’ under the Trademark Act of Tea Board; a registered GI under the GI Act; as well as copyright protected and registered as an artistic work under the Copyright Act. The word ‘Darjeeling’ has also been registered as a community collective mark under relevant European Union.

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5. **Patents exceptions:** The Patents Act explicitly prohibits the patenting of ‘any forms of traditional knowledge, methods of agriculture/horticulture as well as any processes for medicinal/surgical/curative treatment of human beings/ animals to render them free of disease.

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63 New developments in Indian copyright law pertain to rights of lyricists who are entitled to share of royalties, while questions persist on implementation.
64 For Bant Singh Project Creative Commons Licence: [http://www.wordsoundpower.org/seb/bantsingh.html](http://www.wordsoundpower.org/seb/bantsingh.html)
or to increase economic value. In view of serious misappropriation of TK in patent filings, the Government of India started the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) to ensure protection by providing ‘information on traditional knowledge existing in the country, in languages and format understandable by patent examiners at International Patent Offices (IPOs), so as to prevent the grant of wrong patents.’

Particular IPR Dilemmas

The relative absence of TCE from the mainstream IPR legislation means that TCE have to rely on the Biodiversity Rules for legal recognition and protection. The Biodiversity Rules are subsidiary to the Biodiversity Act, and lack sufficient implementation teeth, even as ‘benefit sharing’ and ‘informed consent’ are provided for. This makes reliance on documentation/registers perhaps inevitable but questions will continue to be asked on authentic representation. The second dilemma is of ownership/guardianship/custodianship: who is truly representative of the particular community in whose name the TCE is being recognised? In addition, issues regarding inter-ministerial institutional coordination on various forms of IP also arise. Biodiversity is under the aegis of the MOEF, copyright under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and patents, designs, GI and trademarks are under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The role of the State continues to be a vexed issue. On the one hand, the State is meant to facilitate the protection and empowerment of TK/TCE of groups that are otherwise marginalised. On the other, the State can, in paternalistic mode, can vest itself with significant discretionary power, including powers to

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66 Section 3 of the Patents Act, 1970
68 Examples of such documentation for IPR purposes include initiatives like TKDL, INTACH ICH documentation, the SRISTI-Honeybee Network.
determine legitimate use. An example is the colonial forest legislation of 1927 where traditional communities were disempowered from the very forests that they had lived in. This was eventually sought to be corrected through the new Act of 2006. Since the State’s role as ‘enabler’ actually involves continued negotiations with structures of power, there is a fear that, in the absence of a) safeguards (including implementation safeguards) and b) active and empowered community participation in actual decision making, TK/TCE could even be appropriated by the State, in the name of and to the detriment of the very communities that created such TK/TCE. Curious federal questions have also arisen. The state of Kerala did adopt an Intellectual Property Rights Policy in 2008, where all TK rights holders were deemed to hold such rights under a Commons license, which could permit others to only ‘non-commercial’ use. However, since the legislative competence on IPR lies with the Union and not the states, more federal interventions are rendered nugatory.  

Where the TK/TCE is inherently community driven, it is difficult to determine or assume exclusivity in authorship/ownership. A comprehensive sui generis legislation, which a) incorporates defensive as well as positive measures b) for TK as well as TCE, and c) weaves such enabling within the broader sustainable development of the community is yet to be formally articulated. This results in an ad hoc and somewhat marginal response on the part of the legal framework while dealing with TK and particularly TCE. While framing such legislation, it is also worth keeping in mind some of the philosophical dilemmas surrounding TK/TCE, namely commoditisation, authorship, transmission and markets. A clearer legal framework for TK/TCE is necessary.

At the heart of it, IPR debates are about control over property. The predominant model of IPR confronts newer challenges with increased technological innovation (including for example, new developments on a ‘voice web’ technology); the centrality of informal and open ended systems of innovation;

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developmental issues of knowledge access and use, especially in the global South; as well as cultural particularities of knowledge creation, access and dissemination. The supposed dualism between body and mind, nature and culture, what is moulded and what is received, how one reorders the earth and how one belongs to it, takes one back to Descartes, as ‘he is a marker for notions that have been and must be departed from’. These interrogations are necessary for a better understanding of the role of value generated by knowledge creation. Livelihood and human issues remain central to the cultural and creative economy discussion. Questions of value inform cultural production and are not easily subsumed in the material frame within which a lot of the creative economy debate is structured.

As Asian capitalism emerges driven by services sector growth, based fundamentally on human capital, people as infrastructure and immersed in informality, a key question is whether classical IPR and property rights frames can do justice to reality?

Section 5: Re-imagining Culture as transformative possibility in Indian urbanisation

Gandhi’s formulation of the ‘seven hundred thousand self-sufficient village republics’, with handicrafts and khadi at its core, was not just a symbolic counter to what he perceived as the ills of industrialisation, modernity and westernisation. Cities, an anathema to Gandhi, represented industrialization and colonial exploitation, a violent rupture from the rhythms of the village. In a sense Gandhi had more than an inkling of the crisis of industrialization which he tried hard to keep India from, when he wrote: ‘I have no doubt in my mind that we add to the national wealth if we help the small scale industries. I have no doubt also that true Swadeshi consists in encouraging and reviving these home industries...’  

'The conception underlying both the NaiTalim and the village industries programme, including Khaddar, was rooted in the same thing, viz., concern for the dignity and status of the village unit as against the big cities and of the individual against the machine.'  

Today, India is bustling, a nation of a billion-plus aspirations, undergoing significant transformations: political, cultural, economic, spatial and ecological. The country is becoming more urban, with nearly a third of its people living in about 8,000 cities and towns. At the same time, more than 400,000 villages still persist in India. This settlement structure makes India unique and creates room for multiple imaginative possibilities, built around synergies between the rural and the urban, as well as in the interstitial spaces. The rural is changing in multiple ways and so is the urban. A dispersed, decentralised form of urbanisation, if enabled with sensitivity, could yet salvage some of the lost imaginations of the role of culture, arts and aesthetics. This could also revitalise some of the conceptions around which the urban in India is situated.

The India of today is multi-layered but both Gandhian and Nehruvian archetypes, be it the idealised rural or the ‘progressive’ urban are confronted with newer realities of a globalising market economy, where considerations of culture (even as livelihood or sustainable development) are still marginal. In the meantime, the challenges brought about by this dislocation are perhaps as real as those confronted in the pre-independence moment. John Berger harked backed to an eloquent quote of Guy Debord, who had written that ‘the accumulation of mass produced commodities for the abstract space of the market, just as it has smashed all regional and legal barriers, and all corporate restrictions of the Middle Ages that maintained the quality of artisanal production, has also destroyed the autonomy and quality of

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72 Village Industries’, MK Gandhi, Printed and Published by Navajivan Publishing House Ahmedabad, also at www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/village_industries.pdf. From Harijan, dated 25-8-1946
places”. The post-modern, post-industrial moment, could well be a strangely utopian going back to the spirit of the Arts and Crafts Movement of the 19th century.

Colonial modernity did more than just alter economic relations: it also brought a deep sense of dissonance. Time was no longer circular but linear, progressive, moving ever forward for more and more material advancement. Arts and crafts, oral, local, reliant on the personal, on the nuance brought about by specific time, place and manner, could no longer fit snugly into the rationalized frame of industrial production. This is also seen in some of colonial notions of town planning, building upon Victorian morality and strict conceptions of hygiene, policing and control, be it Crawford’s irritation with dyeing in Bombay or the Indian Penal Code’s provisions on ‘public nuisance’. A sensibility towards local and contemporary Indian particulars, where the aesthetic and the material were inextricably linked, seemed absent. Why would otherwise, a ‘Lady’, while entering the petta of Bangalore sometime during 1836-39, be so piqued (or intrigued) by ‘Indian women painting their doorstep instead of sweeping it’?

But the historical wheel rolls on. Within newer global realities, the frame of culture as sustainable development provides opportunity as well as challenges. The most significant challenge is to find ways of accommodation between the need for survival and scale and the need to preserve the particular dimensions of place-time-work, where in a competitive global marketplace, notions of scale seem place-agnostic, person-neutral, creativity-indifferent and community-fragmented.

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75 In the City, Out of Place: Environment and Modernity, Delhi 1860s to 1960s, Awadhendra Sharan, Economic and Political Weekly, November 25, 2006, pp. 4905-4911. See also Section 268 of the Indian Pena Code for provisions on ‘public nuisance’
76 Urbanism in South India’ by Narayani Gupta, from ‘The City in Indian History’ (ed. InduBanga) Publisher: Manohar (2005), page 147; quoting ‘Letters from Madras 1836-39, By a Lady’, London, 1846, 139
This apparent contradiction could help better comprehend the paradoxical impulses that characterise more recent formulations of ‘craft as industry’, where in a somewhat recent piece, it was highlighted on the one hand that ‘we need no longer to be bound by the old attitudes towards what is accurately but slightly condescendingly termed as ‘cottage’ or ‘village industry’. We have become stultified in an image of industry representing standardized, monotonous, centralised production. If these are images of the industrial age, we can now alter ourselves for the post-industrial age of informational technology and globalised production of mass produced goods’. And on the other hand, the same piece immediately afterwards states, that ‘crafts by their very nature, are not mass produced. But if people working with their hands, albeit with the assistance of tools and machines, producing goods required in a wide market space, selling to make profits and thereby contributing to national wealth, crafts can be termed as a decentralised creative industry where human mind and hand is more important than the small machines and tools they use’.  

Such a contradiction also explains why Fabindia (one of the largest private entities in India for ‘products made from traditional techniques, skills and handmade processes’ linking rural producers to urban markets) shifted to power looms in the mid 2000s. The Harvard Business Case Study stated as follows: “One could say we did ‘compromise’ somewhat when we decided to use mill woven cloth for some of our hand block-printed home furnishing, but we did so because the supply of mill-made fabric was more reliable and available in larger volumes than the hand woven equivalent. In that case, we ensured that the link to craft is maintained by using mill-made fabric only where it acts as a base for a handicraft such as block-printing or embroidery.” And still more, when the policy maker confronts the sheer impoverishment of the handloom worker, where a total of 28% belong to Scheduled Castes (10 %) and

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77 “Crafts as Industry”, Jaya Jaitly, Creative Industries: a symposium on culture based development strategies, Seminar 553, 2005
78 See www.fabindia.com
Scheduled Tribes (18%) and 10% avail of the Government’s Antyodaya Scheme for the very poor.\footnote{“Other Priority Sectors”, Chapter 19, Economic Sectors-Volume II, Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017), Planning Commission, pp. 396-397. The Antyodaya Anna Yohana is aimed at providing help to the poorest families in India. Targeted families under the scheme are entitled to a minimum amount of rice and wheat at highly subsidised rates (35 kg of wheat and rice per month at Rs. 2 and Rs. 3 respectively)}

Within the globalising/’glocalising’ impulse, is it at all possible to preserve the relevance of place; the question of creation, the embedding of such creation within the socio-cultural and local economic relationships of the micro–environment? If change is indeed the only constant, what stays and what remains? Is authenticity still the pervading marker of meaning here or do other markers, more material, take over, while still preserving particular elements where possible?

Music, especially, folk music, exemplifies this dilemma.\footnote{Conversations with Sarthak Kaushik at Hit95FM; Suman Mukhopadhyay at Banglanatak dot com and Ashutosh Sharma at Amarrass Records provided valuable insights} Music has formed an integral part of the everyday Indian experience. Religious rituals, harvest ceremonies, the change of seasons, rites of passage–birth, marriage, celebrations, death, birth, festivals– all provide ceremonial occasions for musical expression. Cultural changes evoke newer forms of negotiation with patron, client and market, where traditional \textit{jajmani} relations find newer locations of belonging.\footnote{For instance, “As is the case with all hereditary castes in Rajasthan, the Manganiars have another caste as their patrons. This relationship is part of the jajman system, where hereditary groups provide customary services to other groups.” (“The Princess of the Musicians: Rani Bhatiyani and the Manganiars of Western Rajasthan”, Shuba Chaudhuri, Theorizing the Local: Music Practice and Experience in South Asia and Beyond, OUP, New York, 2009.pp.97)} The informal subsists and thrives within such negotiations, be it in a qawwali sung in an obscure Sufi shrine by a troop which may never make it to television headlines, or Bhajans in temples, or the forgotten jazz and blues singer in a now derelict and once thriving hotel bar.\footnote{“Taj Mahal Foxtrot”, Naresh Fernandes, Roli Books, 2011; Finding Carlton (film) at: http://www.findingcarlton.com/about_the_film/} Just as newer forms of musical experiences and markets open in a post globalised scenario, newer questions emerge on what creativity entails in the midst of the sheer needs of survival.
Folk music has typically been oral, informal, community-driven, part of the compact socio-economic structure of the rural, strung together within the symbolic and cultural motifs of largely stable collectives. The newer realities of urban experience bring the promise of aspiration but also the fear of symbolic desolation for such creative communities. Of particular relevance is transmission, which relies on ‘the master’ for ‘the art to come alive in spirit, content, form and technique’, where the ‘transmission of sensitivities, subtleties and nuances was a sacrosanct intimate matter between teacher and the taught’.\(^8\) Manganiars (a word derived from ‘Mangna’ or ‘to beg’) who are hereditary dependent castes perform music services at rites to their patrons under the jajman system, in return for gifts of clothes or money, or sometimes, a share in the harvest’s produce.\(^5\) Salvaging and celebrating Manganiar music requires engaging with Manganiars, and with the market, including the cross-over global market that seeks appreciates emergent ‘glocal’ traditions - music without boundaries, blended fusion, ‘world music’ where a Malian \textit{griot} singer sways with a Manganiar \textit{kamancha} player, each genre holding its own and yet mixing, a new hybrid universe of possibilities and risks. How would the traverse from such predictable (if contained) universes take place, without its attendant risks and rewards? Would a solitary Manganiar ‘rockstar’ be a departure, or a celebration, of the much feted but little rewarded Manganiar tradition?

Notions of cultural belonging, place and material production are yet to be incorporated within the discourse on livelihood and development policy in India. This has a bearing, not just in the marginalisation of culture within the progress-wheel of modernity, but also in the very re-imagination of

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\(^8\) ‘Some Aspects of cultural policies in India’, Kapila Vatsyayan, UNESCO Paris, 1972, page 44.

\(^5\) “They provide musical services at the time of births and weddings as well as any important life cycle event of the patron families, in return for which they are supported in various ways.” ("The Princess of the Musicians: Rani Bhatiyani and the Manganiars of Western Rajasthan", Shuba Chaudhuri, Theorizing the Local: Music Practice and Experience in South Asia and Beyond, OUP, New York, 2009.pp. 97.) See also Sina ba Sina or "From Father to Son": Writing the Culture of Discipleship, Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, page 181
place-based creative economic activity that generates significant livelihood opportunity in India.\textsuperscript{86} The paradigm of ‘cultural and creative industry’ provides a window of reconceptualising culture within the contours of sustainable development, but without institutional facilitation and re-orientation, such ‘recasting’ would be inadequate. Within the debate on globalised markets and the struggle for survival, would such facilitation be focussed on generating entrepreneurial/livelihood opportunity or would it be organised to further large-scale production and services, on manufacturing parallels? Would the latter compromise the very nature of such activity, which are more manual, small-scale and artisanal?\textsuperscript{87}

Newer imaginations of the urban need to incorporate dimensions of place on the one hand, complex histories and rhythms of life on the other. Citizen’s memory initiatives, oral histories of displaced, transient populations, conversation snatches and footage with artisans of the everyday (the domestic help, the plumber, the carpenter, the electrician, the painter, the sculptor, the dastangoi oral story teller) are all innovative ways of understanding, commemorating and celebrating the cultural everyday, in its various shades of grey, in our common lives. Each of these experiences indulges in a gaze inward, de-othering the exotic and looking at the familiar with new eye.

The traditional Orientalism of the aesthetic experience, a legacy of the colonial experience, is somehow turned on its head, by these new forms of commemoration and celebration. These are tactile imaginations of the everyday, where the task of preservation is at once rendered contemporary, and rooted in folk idiom, where the folk is not someone ‘out there’ but each and every one of us. Such an aesthetic is also a deliberate negotiation of the citizen in public spaces, and asks significant questions of the meaning, location and dimension of the commons as lived experiences.

\textsuperscript{86} See for example the work of Banglanatak dot com which engages in its Art for Livelihood Project and works with Baul and Fakiri musicians, Patachitra artists, Chau dancers, Jhumur singers and dancers as well as Gambhiras and Donni artists in some of the poorest districts of West Bengal.

\textsuperscript{87} “Capitalism in India and the Small Industries Policy”, \textsuperscript{\#}NasirTyabji, \textsuperscript{\#}Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 15, No. 41/43, Special Number (Oct., 1980), pp.1721-1732
'Ethnic chic' today plays its part in the very 'urban villages' where 'village like trades' were relegated in Delhi’s Master Plan of 1962 where “there is an extraordinary variety of activity down every lane...cheek and jowl with the traditional wayside store, dhaba, barber’s shop, fruit and vegetable stall is typically the garment ‘factory’ with rows of sewing machinists and cutters working away, seemingly oblivious of their cramped surroundings. Apart from other traditional trades and crafts such as embroidery work, jewellery, weaving, carpentry, copper and brass working, many establishments, however small, are engaged in printing, block making, computer and photosetting and other light industrial processing work”.

Unlike most other locations, where theories look for practice vindications, here various cultural-economic practices are looking for better theories which can help explain the contradictory open-ended rhythms of cultural production, reception and dissemination in times of change. With increasing urbanisation in India, there is need to re-look at possibilities of such urbanisation that have a better place for modes of cultural production in the everyday. Patrick Geddes’ formulation of ‘folk-work-place’ could be a guide, in the notion that ‘town planning is not merely place planning, nor even work planning. If it is to be successful, it must be folk planning’. Lefebvre’s idealisation of the ‘Right to the City’ is another framework. Lefebvre conceives of the Right to the City not just as a distributive claim, but more fundamentally, as a right to ‘urban living’ where the city is perceived as ‘oeuvre’, which has room for symbols, dream and play.

A particular re-imaginaation of the Indian urban, located with synergies with the rural, is a revisiting of the project of modernity with which the making of post-colonial Indian cities was inextricably linked. This project is in need of new theoretical articulations, rooted in India, and drawing from comparative

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imaginations. The role of culture, as art, artifact or livelihood, instrumental to sustainable development and constitutive of well-being, is the window for such a re-orientation, one which is itself based on freedom and dignity. As a humanizing impulse, the centrality of the cultural response could provide some answers to the increasing fragmentation of post-modern existence, and lead to possibilities of urban transformation in India.
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Case Study 1: Making Music for Livelihood: the case for folk

Music has formed an integral part of the everyday Indian experience. Religious rituals, harvest ceremonies, the change of seasons, rites of passage—birth, marriage, celebrations, death, birth, festivals—all provide ceremonial occasions for musical expression. Cultural changes evoke newer forms of negotiation with patron, client and market, where traditional jajmani relations find newer locations of belonging. The informal subsists and thrives within such negotiations, be it in a qawwali sung in an obscure Sufi shrine by a troupe which may never make it to television headlines, or Bhajans in temples, or the forgotten jazz and blues singer in a now derelict and once thriving hotel bar. Just as newer forms of musical experiences and markets open in a post-globalised scenario, leading to new ambitions for mainstream record labels, a few odd routes off the beaten track have also slowly begin to claim some marginal attention.

Banglanatak dot com, for its strangely post-modern name, engages with artists in some of the poorest districts of West Bengal. Baul and Fakiri musicians, Patachitra artists, Chau dancers, Jhumur singers and dancers as well as Gambhira and Domni artists— are all part of what Banglanatak calls its ‘Art as Livelihood’ mission. The notion is a simple though challenging one: use art as the primary tool for reaching out to these communities; create markets for such art forms (through live performances, radio and television shows, showcasing through the print media and highlighting their work online); engaging with critical development indicators (income, health, education, livelihood, sanitation and also of

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91 For instance, ‘As is the case with all hereditary castes in Rajasthan, the Manganiars have another caste as their patrons. This relationship is part of the jajman system, where hereditary groups provide customary services to other groups.’ (from ‘The Princess of the Musicians: Rani Bhatiyani and the Manganiars of Western Rajasthan’, Shuba Chaudhuri, Theorizing the Local: Music Practice and Experience in South Asia and Beyond, OUP, New York, 2009, pp. 97)


93 Based on interviews conducted with Suman Mukhopadhyaya (Vice President- Finance & Strategy) and “Rural Folk Art as Sustainable Livelihood: A Study of the Impact of a Social Enterprise on Community Development”, NIILM Centre for Management Studies, Noida. For more information see: http://www.banglanatak.com/
women and children in the villages) and as a result, furthering the musical heritage of such bustling, if globally under-recognised art forms. Banglanatak has largely leveraged State funds by articulating its case within some of the funding programmes of national scale (eg. The National Rural Livelihoods Mission, the National Skill Development Mission) as well as generating international funding (through the European Union). While granting ‘Advisory status’, in its ‘Summary Assessment Report’ on Banglanatak of 2011, UNESCO noted that ‘successful results in terms of income generation of artists after six years of project investment conform that using traditional artists and creative skills of people as source of livelihood is a viable developmental model for rural India’, while also highlighting that the ‘next challenge consists of addressing the disparity within folk artists communities [where] not all artists are equally talented and commercially successful’. Some numbers are pertinent. ‘Following the increase of the average income from Rs. 400 to Rs. 200+ per month, with top 10% earning to the tune of Rs. 12-17,000 per month…the availability of sanitation has increased from 4% to 87% of the overall project beneficiaries. The attitude to send their children to schools has increased from 3% to 94%. Equally important is the enhanced social status of the folk artists. Those who were surviving as unskilled daily wage labourers are now respected and earn income as full fledged artists’. 94

‘Folk Music is like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Indian music, neither Bollywood nor classical’, said Ashutosh Sharma, one of the co-founders of the innovative Amarrass Records label. 95 He adds: ‘This is like the black music scene was in the fifties and early sixties in USA, where artists had to earn their name in Europe before being acclaimed home’. Amarrass, unlike Banglanatak, does not rely on State funds. While it realises the nascent nature of the market for folk, it seems to stay clear of

marketing over-drives. It seems to stem from a passion for ‘good folk music’, realising that while people appreciate a generalisation called ‘Rajasthani folk music’, very few would be able to recall the name of a single Rajasthani folk singer. Salvaging some unknown but good musicians among the musically brilliant Manganiar community living in villages around Jaisalmer, Barmer and Jodhpur; pushing music through fair trade arrangements (50-50% division with artists); archiving and recording folk music; creating awareness, building capacity and marketing opportunity is all part of the Amarrass aim.

New cross-over, glocal experiences are beginning to find resonance. Amarrass’ ‘At Home’ Sessions include single-take unplugged like gigs with artists, whose feel is impossible to capture in studios in urban locales or in festivals abroad In its Desert music festival of 2011, performing stride by stride with the Manganiyars were the acclaimed Vieux Farka Toure and Madou Sidiki Diabate. In 2012, it was Bombino and Baba Zula with the newly created ‘Barmer Boys’ and the Siddhis from Gujarat who created unique trans-local musical experiences, probably happening for the first time in the country. The ‘Manganiyar Seductions’ (a musical and visual experience directed by Roysten Abel) drew rave reviews wherever it performed, in India and abroad and sold more than 1500 copies for Amarrass. Sakar Khan, now seventy six, who plays the kamancha, was recently awarded the Padma Shree for his illustrious services to folk music by the Government of India. Shankara Suthar, ‘the best Kamancha maker in India’ according to Ashutosh, now responds to online demands for kamanchas, in the Society for Performing Arts set up by Amarrass, ‘instead of having to make furniture in Pune for a living’. A little like Banglanatak’s own Golam Fakir, who used to earlier earn his living by carrying dead bodies from the police station to the morgue, and is now a well known folk performer. The Bant Singh Project was another unique collaboration between the radical Dalit Sikh protest folk singer, Bant Singh, and three
electronic musicians who came all the way to record sessions at his village Burjhabbar in Punjab’s Mansa District.96

Such heartwarming stories apart the market is only an emergent one. Unlike Bollywood or Indian classical music (mush rewarded after Ravi Shankar and George Harrison’s crossover experience), folk music in India is yet to find itself a niche in the market that can sustain itself. If it was left to the market alone, perhaps these too would be dying traditions. On the other hand, the State seems to be unable to incentivise quality folk music, beyond creating basket cases of genres and State-run performances which do not reach out to wider mass based platforms. So when Mame Khan, a Manganiyar, performs at an upmarket Turquoise Cottage in Delhi, jamming with guitarists providing newer riffs and keeping up with his solo journeys, it is not just a spine tingling musical experience, but also an uncannily cultural and economic one. Manganiyars (a word derived from ‘Mangna’ or ‘to beg’) are hereditary dependent castes that perform music services at rites to their patrons under the jajman system, in return for gifts of clothes or money, or sometimes, a share in the harvest’s produce.97 How would the traverse from such predictable (if contained) universes take place, without its attendant risks and rewards? Would a solitary Manganiyar ‘rockstar’ be a departure, or a celebration, of the much feted but little rewarded Manganiar tradition?

The question of what creativity entails in the midst of the sheer needs of survival requires better exploration. Folk music has typically been oral, informal, community-driven, part of the compact socio-

96 Bant Singh is a legendary Dalit folk protest singer in Punjab, who lost his arms and a leg from brutal attacks and continues to sing a protest genre which tells inspiring stories, his own as well as those of poor, ‘backward caste’ labourers. (Dancehall & Dalit Poetry, The Caravan- A Journal of Politics and Culture, 2010, Available at :http://www.caravanmagazine.in/arts/dancehall-dalit-poetry#sthash.Ml3KGuaI.dpuf). Also see: http://wordsoundpower.bandcamp.com/album/the-bant-singh-project

97 “They provide musical services at the time of births and weddings as well as any important life cycle event of the patron families, in return for which they are supported in various ways.” (“The Princess of the Musicians: Rani Bhatiyani and the Manganiars of Western Rajasthan”, Shuba Chaudhuri, Theorizing the Local: Music Practice and Experience in South Asia and Beyond, OUP, New York, 2009.pp. 97.) See also Sina ba Sina or “From Father to Son”: Writing the Culture of Discipleship, Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, page 181
economic structure of the rural, strung together within the symbolic and cultural motifs of largely stable collectives. The newer realities of urban experience bring the promise of aspiration but also the fear of symbolic desolation for such creative communities. Of particular relevance is transmission, which relies on ‘the master’ for ‘the art to come alive in spirit, content, form and technique’, where the ‘transmission of sensitivities, subtleties and nuances was a sacrosanct intimate matter between teacher and the taught’.98

The market brings promise, for those willing to experiment and deal with its multiple negotiations and challenges. Folk music in India is at such a transient and delicately poised state, where the inheritors are either the torch bearers of newer forms of articulation or the pall bearers of an entire way of being in a world that is changing faster than their needs, and newer idioms and motifs find popular attention. Whether folk music is able to innovate within the newer demands of Indian music (be it in the urban pub, the street, the radio or the television, the banyan tree, the courtyard, the shrine and the new rock show) without compromising with some of its essential artifacts is a difficult question to answer. The optimist argues that there will always be some folk in India so long as there are people willing to listen and enough occasions for their rendition. So long as there are sufi shrines in India, there would be qawwalis, even if the groups are unknown.

In its survival and thriving lie newer layers to ancient musical forms, which themselves undergo experimentation and yet retain some of its basic tools of belonging and expression. These new initiatives in folk music, market facing or State dependent, in their lived honesty and passion, are worthwhile explorations in the new cultural landscape of India.

Case Study 2: Mapping culture: going beyond preservation

The task of preserving cultural memory has generated momentum of late, especially since the 2003 UNESCO Resolution on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), of which India is a signatory. A number of State and non-state initiatives are currently underway, each mapping contours and boundaries, memorialising details, locating origins and agents, documenting and archiving in text and digital forms. For what is preservation if one is unaware of what to preserve? There is interesting discussion on methods in the face of newer technological innovation. Budgetary allocations have even been made to non-State actors engaged in this common task of preserving cultural heritage. This recognition of intangible cultural heritage, long overdue, follows from State run projects to protect Traditional Knowledge, driven in part by the spate of bio-prospecting and attendant Intellectual Property Rights threats, particularly from the global North. These measures, however significant, are not enough if one were to bring about a sea change in the State’s response to a more comprehensive view of culture in the everyday, where the ordinary and the commonplace find symbolic affirmation as the exotic.

The Sangeet Natak Academy, designated as the ‘nodal centre’ for ‘coordinating various actions to maintain the National Inventory of ICH’ has ‘compiled an ICH database of institutions and organisations, as well as relevant links to documentation and audio-visual material. The IGNCA’s cultural mapping tasks include anthropological and historical audio-visual and photographic documentation (‘Kala Nidhi’), digital libraries (Kala Sampada) and folkloric traditions and practices (Janapada Sampada). Allied institutions such as CCRT serve purposes of resource documentation, preparation of ‘Culture Kits’ and

100 “Continuing the tradition of supporting institutions of excellence, I propose to make a grant of 100 crore each to: Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh campus, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati campus, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)”, Budget 2013-2014, Speech of P. Chidambaram, Minister of Finance, February 28, 2013. http://indiabudget.nic.in/ub2013-14/bs/bs.pdf
101 http://sangeetnatak.gov.in/sna/national-inventory.htm
102 Information obtained from IGNCA brochure and website: http://ignca.nic.in/
allied training activities.103 The Sangeet Natak Academy preserves a gallery of musical instruments (‘Asavari’).104 Non state actors such as Intach work in the intangibles space, including in its mission, subjects as wide ranging and universal as ‘Oral Traditions, including Language Performing Arts, Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events, Knowledge and Practices Concerning Nature and The Universe and Traditional Craftsmanship.’105 The Dastkari Haat Samiti, a nationwide organisation of over 1200 crafts persons/organisations, documents crafts and handloom textiles.106 There are reports that the Ministry of Culture has proposed to set up a new National Institute of Manuscripts and Manuscriptology (NIMM) to document Indian manuscripts and generate research capacity.107 These initiatives seek to commemorate, preserve, keep together, protect.

Parallel to the ICH agenda is the TK digitisation agenda, largely through the TKDL, is a collaborative project between Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Ministry of Science and Technology and Department of AYUSH, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and is being implemented at CSIR.108 The TKDL is clearly driven by the need to classify TK into identifiable systems so that such TK serves as proof of existence as ‘prior art’ and does not thereby succumb to unscrupulous patent seekers who would otherwise deny its very legitimacy. The TKDL is therefore clearly meant for use as prior art searches by international patent examiners in various patent offices through classification systems which are discernible and in multiple languages, on subjects related to Ayurveda, Unani, Siddhi and Yoga knowledge and practice. The National Innovation Foundation’s Sristi-Honeybee network is an attempt

103 Centre for Cultural Resources and Training : http://ccrtindia.gov.in/aboutus.htm
104 Museum and Gallery of Musical Instruments, SangeetNatakAkademihttp://sangeetnatak.gov.in/sna/museum.htm
105 INTACH’s areas of work within the field of Intangible Cultural Heritage-http://www.intach.org/divi-ic-heritage-workareas.asp?links=dich4
106 DastkariHaatSamiti: http://www.indiancraftsjourney.in/membership.htm
107 The Ministry of Culture has proposed to set up the National Institute of Manuscripts and Manuscriptology (NIMM) on the lines of the National Archives of India to document Indian manuscripts, prepare their database, facilitate its conservation and create a national digital manuscripts library. http://newindianexpress.com/nation/article1488611.ece
to classify and document ‘grassroots’ innovations, aimed at marketing and generating commercial value.\textsuperscript{109} It is clear that the TK and innovation drivers are different from those in the ICH space. It is still possible though that the documentation efforts in the current ICH space, could themselves morph into protection/classification measures, for protection of IPR in the face of newer global threats. \textsuperscript{110}

Both these endeavours, however disparate in their aims, share a common dilemma of how to render such cultural artifacts more accessible to the common citizen and in an everyday language of use, which is not cast in stereotypes of preservation in State-run museums. This aims to bring culture back to where it belongs and where it is generated and reproduced: the people. To make culture come alive, and in the everyday, would require popularising the discourse, celebrating the ordinary, the mundane, the near. People who are the bearers of folk would acknowledge folk’s contemporaneity, if there is a shared resonance of its particular role in the everyday. \textsuperscript{111} The impulse for democratisation needs to stem from, and be rooted in, a shared respect for freedom, including artistic freedom, so that totalising experiments are avoided in the name of the people.

Typical examples of this ‘inversion’ could be seen in recent endeavours such as the ‘Shadi Khampur Neighbourhood Museum’, a temporary initiative organised as a collaborative project by the Jana Natya Manch and Ambedkar University of Delhi, where everyday objects, audio and visual recordings, narratives brought to life the layered trajectories of local residents in Khampur in Delhi.\textsuperscript{112} Citizen’s memory initiatives, oral histories of displaced and largely invisibilised populations, conversation snatches and footage with artisans of the everyday (the domestic help, the plumber, the carpenter, the

\textsuperscript{109}http://www.sristi.org/cms/
\textsuperscript{110}See for example, http://www.hindu.com/mp/2003/10/06/stories/2003100601840100.htm which reported on the controversy involving the song ‘Nimbuda Nimbuda’ which was part of a popular Bollywood film, and claims of Gazi Khan, a Manganiar artist and the original creator go unheard as Ismail Durbar (from the Bollywood music industry) has obtained the registered copyright.
\textsuperscript{112}http://www.indiawaterportal.org/post/37445
electrician) are innovative ways of understanding, commemorating and celebrating the cultural everyday-ness, in its various shades of grey, in our common lives.

Taking Gandhi’s dictum of the broom as artistry, the Arna Jharna museum in Jaipur, celebrates the broom as ‘the laboratory of the ordinary’ and becomes a testament to the local knowledge of survival in the harsh desert. The broom is both spectacle and context: while hundreds of varieties of brooms are displayed, ‘the focus is on the interrelationships of the broom to a wide variety of contexts: natural resources, local modes of broom-making, the lives of broom-makers from marginalized caste groups, the myths, beliefs, and symbols surrounding the broom, the economy of the broom’. The Museum of Everyday Objects in Sanskriti Anandagram in Delhi similarly covers various objects, used ‘throughout the cycle of life - from childhood to old age’. The Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum in Pune is a treasure trove of the everyday, 21,000 artifacts, collected by one man- Dr. D. G. Kelkar- who travelled across the country looking for the exotic in the familiar, in folk arts and crafts, welded in stone, wood, metal, ivory, fabric and clay.

Similarly the National Consortium of Tribal Arts and Culture seeks to weave in films, photographs, songs and stories that depict the varieties of tribal lives. Bhasha Research and Publication Centre has engaged in efforts to create systematic documentation of everyday tribal artefacts, including musical instruments and the process of carving such instruments. The People’s Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI) initiated by Prof GN Devy, seeks to bring together a linguistic survey based on rooted experiences of people’s perceptions of language and their relationships through language with themselves and other

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113 ArnaJharna- The Desert Museum, Rajasthan: http://www.arnajharna.org/English/Museum_Concept.aspx
114 ArnaJharna- The Desert Museum, Rajasthan: http://www.arnajharna.org/English/Museum_Concept.aspx
115 Sanskriti Foundation, Museums: http://www.sanskritifoundation.org/museums-everyday-art.htm
117 National Consortium of Tribal Arts and Culture is a collective effort by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, Bhasha Research and Publication Centre and Museum of the TRTI's. http://www.tribalartsmuseums.org/nctac.html
cultures. Remarkably, the survey includes not just written languages but also practitioners of oral arts. The Akshara Project led by the Dastkari Haat Samiti was a remarkable confluence of a ‘design sensibility weaving India’s regional scripts into a crafts vocabulary, that aims at ‘evolving a new design language, that would provide craftspersons with a new repertoire of designs for their economic benefit...that to demonstrate how the marvels of computer and principles of graphic design can combine with indigenous alphabets...to incorporate the traditional with the contemporary.’ Covering sixteen states of India, the Akshara Project includes 21 scripts in 14 languages and 2 different hand-skills. The Amarrass Records ‘At Home’ Sessions are unplugged musical experiences with Manganiyar artists in the familiar comforts of their homes, which are perhaps impossible to replicate in urban settings.

Each of these experiences indulges in a gaze inward, de-othering the exotic and looking at the familiar with new eye. The traditional Orientalism of the aesthetic experience, a legacy of the colonial experience, is somehow turned on its head, by these new forms of commemoration and celebration. These are tactile imaginations of the everyday, where the task of preservation is at once rendered contemporary, and rooted in folk idiom, where the folk is not someone ‘out there’ but each and every one of us. Such an aesthetic is also a deliberate negotiation of the citizen in public spaces, and asks significant questions of the meaning, location and dimension of the commons as lived experiences.

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118 Peoples Linguistic Survey of India: http://peopleslinguisticsurvey.org/
119 “The Akshara Story of Crafts, Scripts and Calligraphy”, Crafting India Scripts, Jaya Jaitly and Subrata Bhowmick, Dastkari Haat Samiti, pp.47
120 Amarrass Records has conducted ‘At home’ Sessions with artists like Sakar Khan and Lakha Khan: http://www.amarrass.com/