



POSITIONING THE BIG IDEA

Creative and Cultural Industries as a Lead Sector

01

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Krishen Khanna & Montek Singh Ahluwalia
YOUR TURN NEXT
Acrylic on canvas
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Overview

Sbri Montek Singh Ahluwalia took a pioneering step by setting up the Taskforce for Creative and Cultural Industries within the Planning Commission. In his introduction he outlines why positioning this sector in the lead is a big idea.

Creative and Cultural Industries as a Lead Sector



By Dr Montek Singh Ahluwalia

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Draft

Buying a papier-mache box from a Kashmere crafts person while walking around the Silk Route Festival in Washington with my wife, provided a brief but talismanic experience of global trade in culture specific goods. Traditional Arts and Crafts have built fortunes for many countries over many centuries and have helped define their uniqueness. As a precursor to the Internet and now the ubiquitous e-commerce, these ancient networks of trade routes and the evolved sharing of artistic sensibilities through import and export have united a large part of the world in its pursuit to become rich.

Amongst the many challenges I accepted while taking charge of the Planning Commission was to look for contemporary ways of transforming *'unorganized'* economic talent and aspirations with sustainable revenue models with cross-cultural modern enterprises.

This last decade has seen India buzzing with the energy of new money mantras in the backroom of IT corporations ... in the labs of bio-genetics R&D cells in the open fields of agro industries; this entrepreneurial energy must now reach the threshold and transform our deprived neighborhoods, especially in the villages, filled with abundantly skilled people.

*“Culture springs from the roots
and seeping through to all the shoots
To leaf and flower and bud
From cell to cell, like green blood,
Is released by rain showers,
As fragrance from the wet flowers
To fill the air.
But culture that is poured on men
From up above, congeals there
Like damp sugar, so they become
Like sugar-dolls, and when some
Life-Giving shower wets them through
They disappear and melt into
A sticky mess”.*

Hassan Fathy, Egyptian Architect

The phenomenon of a dynamic global business using creativity, traditional knowledge and intellectual property to produce products and services with social and cultural meaning, points to the next Big Idea.

India, I feel is in a particularly advantageous position to lead this fast growing sector of Cultural and Creative Industries with imagination and original thinking. This is one field where we don't have to necessarily do other's home work to become wealthy. We don't have to move to crowded cities or work in cramped factories under one roof. What's more, the innovative action and positioning of facilities with a blue print for this sector, will not only help us save scarce resources, do more with less, but also involve the largest number of economically vulnerable people all over the country, in the efforts to make India shine.

The Task Force on Creative and Cultural Industries was set up under the Planning Commission to give us an out of the box game plan on how to get there. The question that rose first to my mind was - who would be empowered to elucidate upon the needs of the sector as a unified whole? I was relieved to read that amongst the Task Force recommendations they have suggested a more tentative 'mission' mode composed and managed by private public partnership. I was a bit weary of yet another official department and more white elephants; so what the Mission could do instead, in a specific time frame, would be to help instill a culture of synergy and interaction required between different departments of the government, NGOs and other stakeholders.

It is no easy task- this collaboration between diverse bodies, through multifarious activities, addressing the needs of a vast and varied multitude- yet, with the parameters clearly enunciated and understood, there is a chance that this sector may actually prove it's potential-hitherto unaccounted for.

A lot more than is easily apparent needs to be assessed and taken into account ... how, for instance, would the fields that are recipients of subsidies already, prove their capacity to survive without the props? What indeed needs support to survive? How would the diverse requirements of different fields be reflected in policy changes? How would the gargantuan task of exhaustive mapping as a start to the recommended actions, be completed in the time period of the mission? The questions are many, but as with every new initiative-all answers may not be immediately apparent, yet the step must be taken. Most of all, let's see some tangible results in the field and as soon as possible.

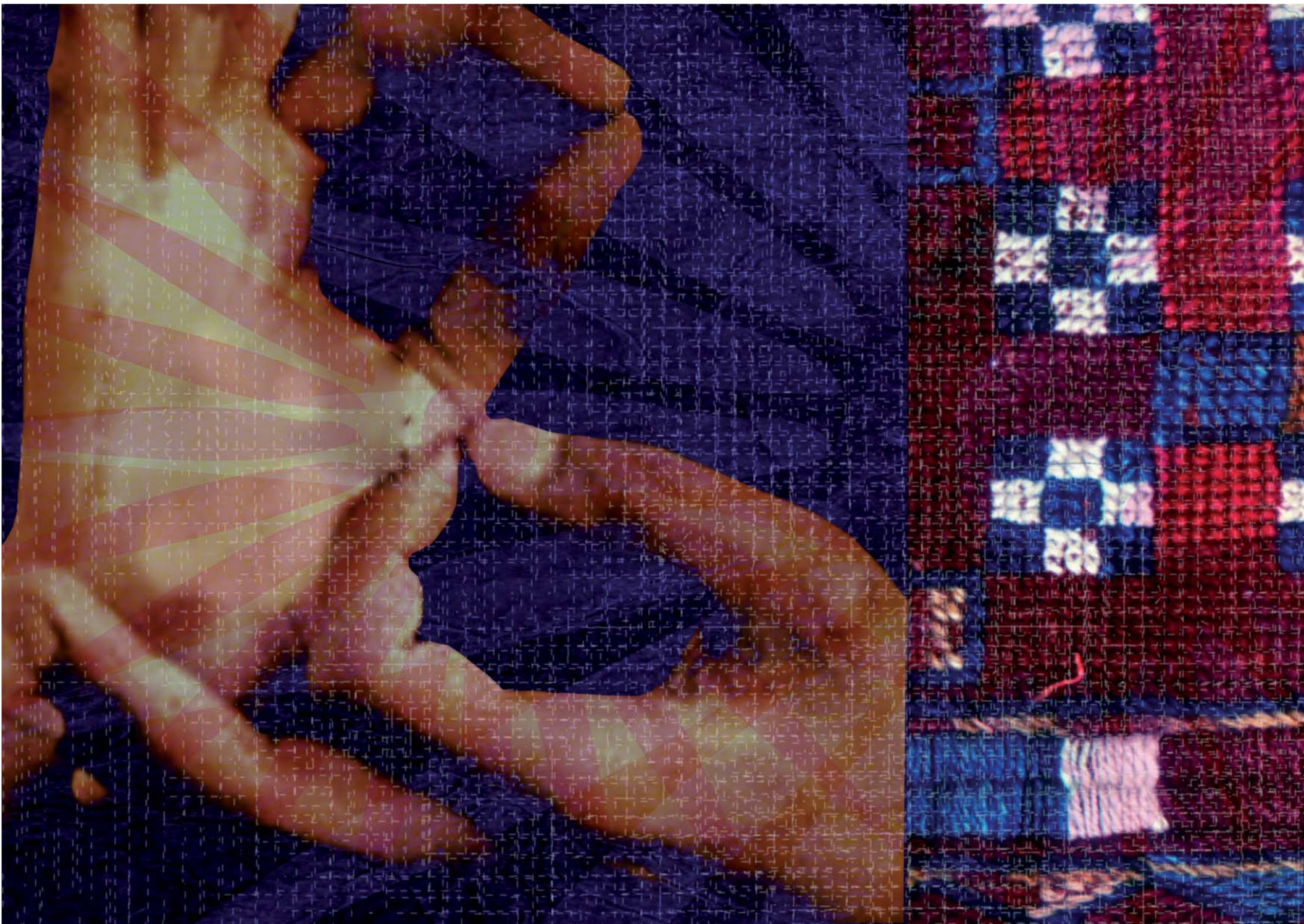
A cohesive strategy necessitates action at all levels, hope in the heart of millions who are skilled and a sense of a mission amongst its organizers, even as the resources for their implementation of projects and programmes suggested by them are assessed, raised and collated.

I feel this book is only the first step, helping us understand the background of a complex global phenomenon. It also provides us the blue print for a delivery mechanism that requires specific pilots to be supported by private public partnership for a critically important sector that has suffered enough with sentimental subsidy, little coordination, unfortunate apathy and delayed intervention.

Finally, I hope this effort of 'dressing' this report so as NOT to look or read like other government reports, will help take it beyond the shelf, to a broader public and kick start a dialogue for immediate action in the field.

*“Culture blooms as naturally as mother earth.
In one earth grow many trees— mangoes and guavas,
limes and oranges, flowers and herbs.
Culture blooms as naturally as a flower.
If it takes the crutch of a wall it dies.
It has to be below the sky, rooted to the earth.
Roots lie in darkness.
When nourished they shoot up and gain luminosity.
A seed should not be shy of germination.
A bird in flight, anonymous, picks a seed and when it
drops it becomes a plant, then a tree.
Cultur'e like a seed has an organic growth.
Sanskriti ek shehed ki nadi hai jo chup chaap behti hai.
Water makes sound not honey.
Mun ki pehchaan jis se hai woh hi sanskriti hai.*

BABA AMTE, Anandwan, Nagpui



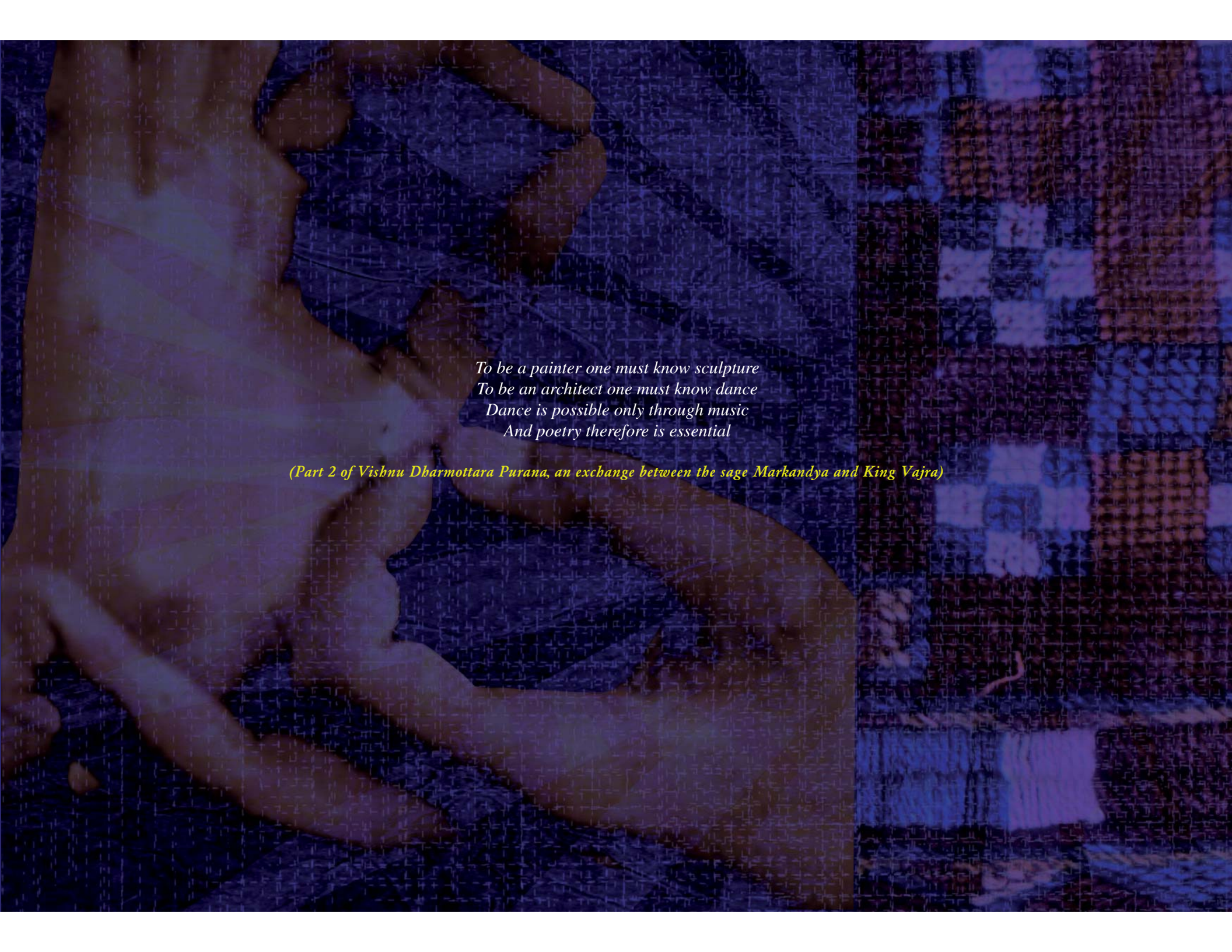
MAKING, DOING, BEING

02

A Time for Joined-up Thinking


BY RAJEEV SETHI-

CHAIRMAN AND FOUNDER TRUSTEE OF THE ASIAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION, ADVISOR TO THE
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON OF THE TASKFORCE ON CULTURAL AND
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, PLANNING COMMISSION.

A photograph of a person's hands and arms, with one hand holding a small object, set against a background of a patterned fabric. The image is dimly lit, with a blue and purple color cast. The hands are positioned in the center, with the right hand holding a small, dark object. The background features a complex, woven pattern in shades of blue, purple, and brown.

*To be a painter one must know sculpture
To be an architect one must know dance
Dance is possible only through music
And poetry therefore is essential*

(Part 2 of Vishnu Dharmottara Purana, an exchange between the sage Markandya and King Vajra)



Making... Doing... Being...

Occasionally rebuked since childhood as a 'jack of all trades' I was mostly at a loss in describing what I did in life. With the overarching umbrella offered by the new nomenclature of "cultural and creative industries", I now have reason to feel comfortable. Being labeled "designer", "theatre scenographers", "artist", "activist", even "policy planner" or "impresario", I know that making things happen in today's world requires more muscle than one's core-competency. Being a designer itself places one on the larger canvas of what a mentor in youth, Romesh Thapar called, 'Design for Life'. Charles Earns used to say, "Everything Connects". My Gurus, Smt. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay and Smt. Pupul Jayakar held a seed and sourced the sap, Gira Sarabhai offered talismanic views, while charismatic leaders like Smt. Indira Gandhi and Shri Rajiv Gandhi showed how fluid energy carves connected pathways.

This publication is also a tribute to the indomitable courage of India's extraordinarily gifted people who's 'never-say-die', tenacious identities, coupled with their skills to make or to do, allows them to be special. We marvel at India's legacy of cultural industries seamlessly infusing tradition with new vitality. We bow to India's vision of remaining still and centered, while surging ahead to the strength of our roots that go deeper even as our spirits continue to soar.

PART I

In a presentation I made to the Planning Commission last year, I stressed on the need to establish a dialogue with related governmental initiatives running in parallel and sometimes opposite directions with little coordination. The newly formed Knowledge Commission was an ideal platform for us to share our concern for the future of our traditional and contemporary knowledge systems, creative indices and cultural assets.

Consider this. More money is made by more Indians in doing what they do without ubiquitous trade leaders or politicians, dedicated ministries or planners to help them. They survive in a system some have termed as a functioning anarchy.

Meeting, as we did in the Mecca of cash rich IT companies I spoke for the small and marginalized.... For too long India has had Commissions to look into the needs of its so called unorganized sector and not take stock of its scale and strength as a self-organizing mechanism. Yet given an inch this sector has the capacity to go a mile! On the other hand, the far more visible large industry and high-tech service sectors grab all the goodies, adding negligibly to the pool of gainful employment that remains India's priority. Nor do their redoubtable achievements help much to position India as an innovative laboratory of dynamic and innovative ideas. Most take the pink page celebrities more seriously because they have created a recognizable entity of new India and are seen to be modern. If the part of India we celebrate was to get the same attention, it would make the whole system yield much more, making everyone shine.

With the inevitability of our future being so heavily informed and shaped by the forces of globalisation I felt the need to inform the new Captains of our new economy about India's first globalisation long before any other.



Look at these two colours on this Banjara Embroidery from a tanda not far from Bungalow. The Red will take you back to the Indus Valley, a civilization more than 4000 years old...



Where a small fragment of coarse cotton, dyed Aal and Manjitha or madder Red was found wrapped around a metal vase in Mohenjodaro.



This is 'Aal', made from drying the roots of *Rubia tinctorum*, the madder plant evoking sakthi, the chance discovery of which marks the beginnings of our incredible story as a nation that clothed the world. India's textiles could well be the story of India's wealth.



Till 1979, when the Indian billionaires of IT earned monthly salaries in four figures... think, who but the textile barons were the richest men in India?



The second colour in this embroidery... 'Nila', was dyed from indigo.

Replete with dark magical nuances, this colour takes us into the gardens of ancient alchemy.... laboratories where the search for the elixir of life, the freeing of the body and mind from the onslaught of time, was the main pursuit. Like indigo, even today many plants used in natural dying processes are found listed and described in Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia.



Much else can be read in the balanced play of madder and indigo Aal the color of Ox blood, of life-giving eternal forces . And Neel deep, elusive evoking primordial memories
 together Neil and Aal formed the two ends of our basic colour palette and with that, a new plant chemistry was introduced to the master dyers of India.
 our tryst with the Rainbow dyed in the sap of nature



Now look at these specimens found in Lower Egypt. Made much later in the period from the 13th to 16th century, and known as the 'Fustat' fragments these are composed largely of printed cottons crudely dyed but fixed magically with India's first discovery of fastening colour with the myriad myrioblam.



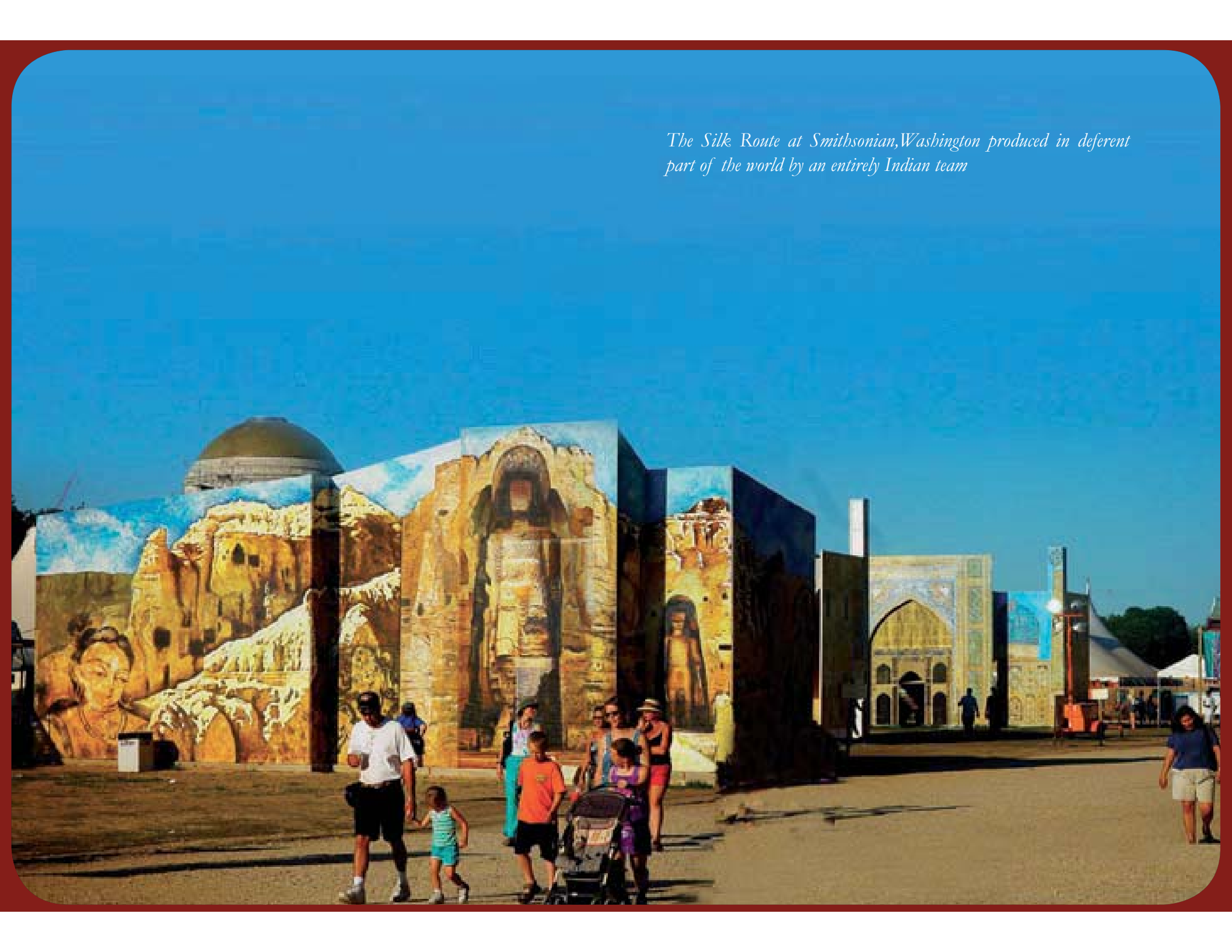
The look of these early specimens is so similar to what we find even today, for example, in the Ajrak Prints of Sindh and Kuch.



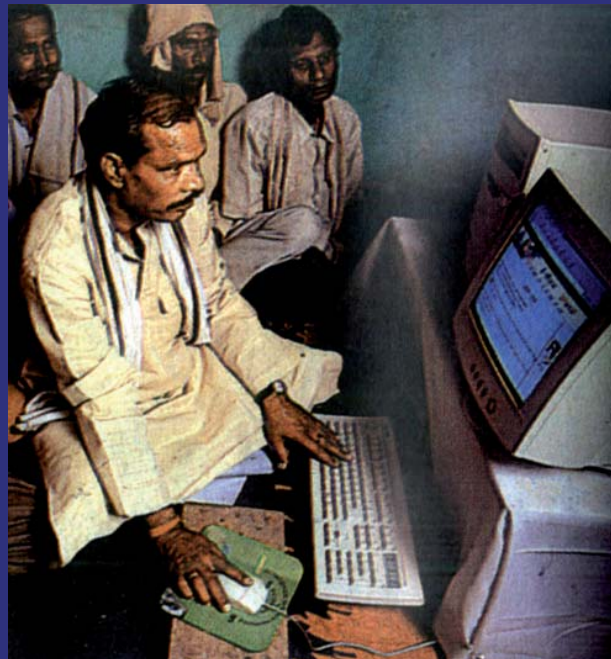
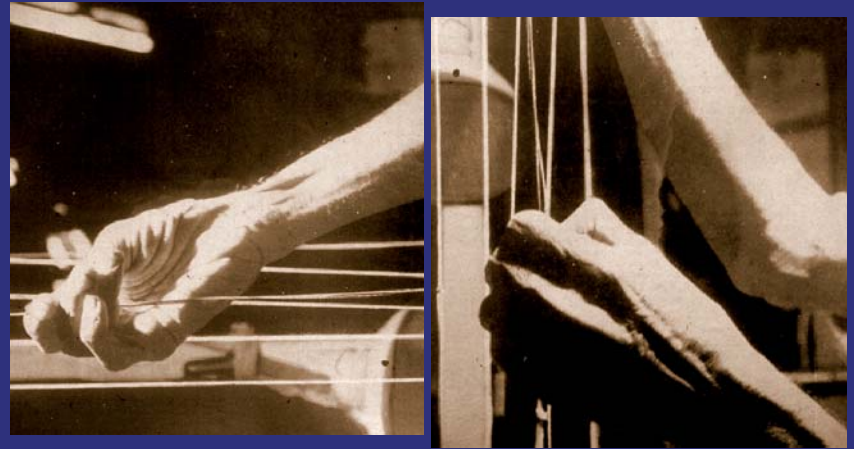
Used probably as tomb coverings, India's fabrics - then famous for their quality - were carried by Arab Traders across the seas and used in barter between Egypt and Sudan.

The Silk Route entrepreneurs to Asia and medieval Europe were also a part of this intercontinental trade that was a precursor to the internet.

The Silk Route at Smithsonian, Washington produced in deferent part of the world by an entirely Indian team



What am I saying? Firstly, India's Traditional Knowledge, as a subtle warp.....
.....and its Hand Skills as its deft weft... gave India its first global brand.



Secondly, India's never say die capacity, has helped it live in many centuries rolled into one.



A past that has crumbled can only be revitalized for the present if it has relevance for the people who are living it.



Old is recycled into new. Mrs Pupul Jayakar, used to say *“negating the linear movement of history; the tradition develops like a spiral that re-coils and un-coils. Within this movement, nothing is totally rejected.”*



Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan describes this issue very poetically. She says, *“The flow of a tradition may be compared to a double-reed flute. One reed is a perennial strain, a tonal consistency, immutable across space and time; the other reed plays the tune of immediate time and space. One then is repetitive but stable; the other changing. The two together create the music that sounds different at different times.”*

In an era when tradition and modernity are seen as two polar realms, devoid of any mutual interaction, we have much to learn from these two wise women.

And this is where the Task Force on Creative and Cultural Industries takes its cue.

While staggering statistics are being widely acknowledged in the developed countries in this field, their focus has been the ‘creative sector’, the same advancement has not occurred in developing countries which draw more on tradition, heritage and knowledge shared by communities. One must remember however, that this imbalance is due to the fact that most developed nations that have put in place mechanisms for cultural industries are bereft of traditional skills, and are now attempting to nurture what is left as ‘heritage’. They are now capitalising on the creative design-led industries where they have a qualitative edge.

India is in the enviable position of having a large variety of living, skill-based traditions and a number of highly versatile creative people capable of carrying this unique legacy further (approximately 225-255 million skilled/potential practitioners).

How is this sector perceived in India today? Let’s open up the Big devide.....



MODERN INDIA

TRADITIONAL INDIA

• Science	• Culture
• Large Industry = IT Telecom	• Cottage Industries & household manufg
• Textiles = Techno mechanized multi-fiber	• Handlooms & Khadi ...
• Energy = Nuclear, hydel power	• Water mills, manual labour
• Irrigation=Big Dams, Canals	• Kunds, Kollams, Cheras, Baolis, Vaavs, Acqueducts
• Agriculture = Green Revolution	• Organic farming, indigenous seeds, fertilizers..
• Health = Allopathic Medicine	• Indigenous Systems of health & healing
• Media = Electronic broadcast, cinema	• Live & itinerant performance
• Education = English, IITs, IIMs etc. Fine Arts	• Popular theatre, dance, music ..
• Travel = Tourism, hotels, resorts	• Vernacular dialects ..Gurukuls, Madarsas ..
• Transportation = ships, highways, aircraft	• Crafts
• Heritage = Commerce	• Pilgrimages, <i>dharamsalas</i> ..
	• Boats, bullock-carts, bridges
	• Identity, memory ..

Why is this subsidy ridden 'minus', potentially a 'plus'?

By acknowledging its character and maximizing on the potential it offers instead of dismissing it as a defect.

Using cultural potential with creativity leads to more meaningful employment and larger human capital than Agriculture, IT or Large Industries.

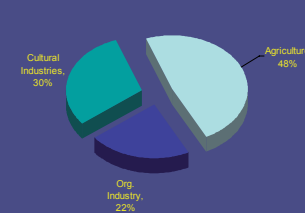
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decentralized production practices.. Largely self-organized... Micro capital & services... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad-based employment Especially in rural areas Greater empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skill-based value addition .. Community Knowledge " Transmission through caste kinship or family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harnessing unlettered experience Incorporating wisdom of practice Sustainable training systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anonymous innovations (whether individual or community).. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can absorb contemporaneity Patenting and IPR potential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mind-body-spirit linkage in creating, doing, being. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pride, identity A quality of life & occupation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local raw material & production .. Local consumption & markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doing more with less Sustainable contexts of use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threatened by uneven playing field, by modern production & values .. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenacious functioning anarchy More self organised than unorganised
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economically marginalised Socially vulnerable (women, scheduled caste etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for targeted affirmative action Global good will
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecologically sound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future bright

Why do cultural and creative industries spell the future of work?

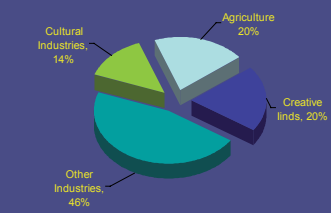
Employment Scenario

	% of Workforce	No. of people	% share in GDP	Amt. (Rs.) GDP	Growth Rate %
Population of India (2005 E)		110 Crores			
Employed (Workforce)		50 Crores			
Agriculture (Cultivators & Agri Labour)	48%	24 Crores	20%	6,00,000 Cr.	2-3%
Organised Industry & Services	22%	11 Crores	66%	20,00,000 Cr.	10-12%
"Self-organised"/ Household /Artesanal/ Legacy Industries	30%	15 Crores	14%	4,00,000 Cr.	12-15%

EMPLOYMENT



SHARE IN GDP



Yet, in India's effort to modernize, society has relegated traditional knowledge to a sunset sector – ridden with lip service and made sick with sentimental subsidy, inefficiently doled out.

We must look at the "traditional sector" as self-organized and not as an un-organized sector. Their elusive efforts may not yet reflect in national income accounts but they nonetheless remain a critical human resource component. We must acknowledge that people still have skills to meet their own needs and recognize the survival of such resources as a tenacious symbol of enterprise which needs ground level support, similar to that given for IT and other empowered initiatives — not handouts.

India's contemporary but nascent design and media industry can help us reposition our traditional knowledge and thereby create original inroads into the global market...

Clubbing them both together would not just bring us at par with international strategy but influence the conversion of a "sunset" sector with an edge of the "sunrise".

We must exploit this edge to our best advantage ... to create distinctively Indian products and services – our heritage and the advances made in technology – our own original contribution that can hold its own against the best the world has to offer. Village painters and animation ... folk media and electronic media ... crafts and contemporary architecture ... ancient pharmacopia in interactive medium ... traditional foods and contemporary packaging.

- Rate of Employment is 45% of population and 35% of the population is un-employable (i.e. under 18 years/over 65 years/physically handicapped). There is a potential to gainfully employ 20% of the 110 Cr. population i.e. 22 Crores (mainly in rural areas - 10Cr. Literates & 12 Crore illiterates)
- Surveys prove that there is an excess capacity of 20-22% in the population employed by agriculture which translates into 5 Crores of people unemployed/underemployed in this sector. (2 Cr. Literates & 3 Cr. Illiterates)
- The Agriculture sector growing at approx 2-3% p.a. cannot absorb this potential workforce.
- Organised manufacturing, mining & services can absorb a maximum of 2 Crores (~20% of their present employment potential i.e. 11 cr) especially in urban and suburban areas. This still leaves a large employable workforce of 13 crores literate and 15 Crores illiterates)
- Creative, cultural and Traditional/legacy industries is the only key to gainfully employ this potential work force especially in the rural areas which attract very little industrial investment/interest. This workforce (at least the literate population) can be absorbed in the industry if an enabling environment is created within next 6 to 8 years.
- Additional contribution to GDP created by the potential employment in this sector even at one-half the per-capita income (Rs.18,000 pa) is to the tune of Rs. 216,000 Crores (6% of GDP at current prices)

PART II

Finally, the most important issue we must raise is the state of the skilled person behind these legacy industries. What are they thinking? How are they relating to the tremendous developments taking place...many of which have a direct impact on them? What are their aspirations for their children and themselves? Working out ways of addressing the concerns of skilled craftspeople is meaningless if their own voices are not articulated. We bandy them about the world as the repository of our heritage, but never recognize their needs as people, when we bring them back to dump them in inhospitable slums. Do we know what miserable conditions many of our artisans and artists live and work in today? Do we feel for the gloom they face and indeed, the doom that India will face, if we allow them to disappear? Let me give you an example...



Here is the threshold of a weaver's hut in Chinalampathi....

Once a thriving centre for handlooms. Now a thriving power mill, selling its merchandise to big banners. This is a weaver's hut in the same village – hut after hut is abandoned. There is nothing but a graveyard of silent looms all around, dismantled to be sold as firewood.

3,500 weavers from Chinalampathi now live in Delhi in slums by the sewage drains of Karol Bagh, Janakpuri, Inderpuri...



Gopal, well versed in the art of weaving, sells balloons and his mother Muthama and wife Radha all experienced weavers work as house maids.



Who has the time today to pause and think—could this man pulling a rickshaw, selling balloons and vegetables, or sifting through garbage be a man with agile senses and a finely tuned mind? ...Capable of exploring infinite possibilities of one plus one minus one. These are the same weavers that made India famous ...strong and synonymous with quality. Unprecedented and unchecked growth of power looms in 1989 with no meaningful incentive



In Chirala, after the agreement of textile policies in 1985, when balances of growth was lifted in favour of powerloom, put 900,000 weavers of handloom out of work in 3 years. 80 committed suicide . There were 240 starvation deaths.

The poor do not know who to turn to any longer. There is no Sunwai -no one is listening. So, who in this scenario where few survive, is going to bother about the hundreds of thousands displaced from traditional vocations.



Nathilal is a displaced weaver from UP selling ice lollies in Delhi. He sings about his 'hunar'— his honourable vocation as a lover... longing an embrace, life is uncertain! Nathilal sings 'Mere Mehboob aaja laga loon gale, zindigi ka koi bharsa nahi' As living repositories of our heritage, our traditional artists are a threatened species.

We have raised a cry about disappearing tigers and birds. Just how are skills of the hand, the voice, the body and the senses—nurtured by lifetimes and generations of dedication—any less important? What will happen to the children of those who were once skilled... now bonded, growing rootless in our backyards ...seething with frustration ...and perhaps violence.

It is against this dark background that I choose to define the conditions of the numerous craftspeople and performing artists. Numbering in millions, particularly around South Asia seen as a vestige of the past, they draw feebly on the minimal resources of our Governments.

In India this surviving group constitutes the second largest workforce after agriculture. What happens to them, and to us? To the depth of our ancient culture? There is no census or statistical analysis: Who do we consider skilled? What is their role in the economy of any South Asian country? What can't be measured can't be managed... we have no road maps – just promises of a culture shining. There are no connected movements linking NGOs, producing artisans or performers...no dedicated ministries or departments orchestrating a synergy for cultural industries and micro-enterprises... At a moment where everything big is beautiful, it is depressing that not one great Centre of Learning is committed to evolving a blueprint for the marginalized majority of the small producers and cultural entrepreneurs. The future of their skills is more vulnerable than ever before.

As unemployment ravages the countryside, the struggle of the families working in their scattered cottages migrating in search of work, is not perceived as heroic revenue models by file-pushing functionaries... Why blame official bodies, when as educationists we have ourselves devalued the concept of Mahatma Gandhis Buniyadi Shiksha of learning through labour with ones hand. As professionals, e.g. we as architects have never learnt to use traditional skills as a relevant part of our building activities around the world.

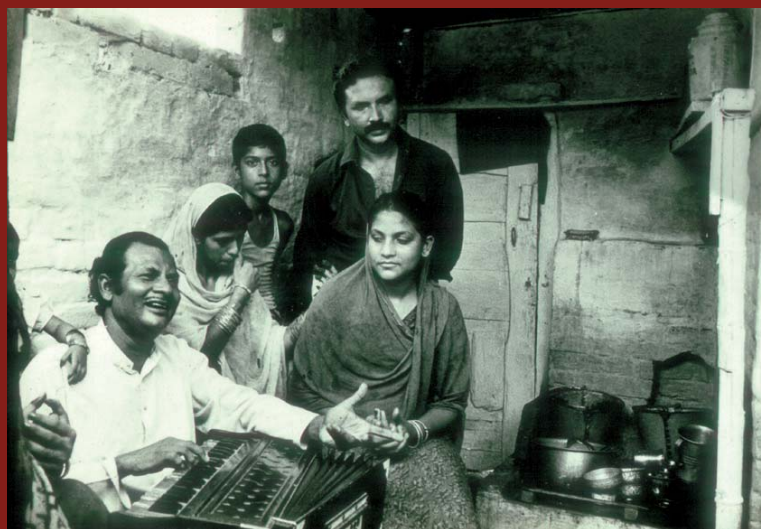
Who then can employ the incredible science and art known to the communities of the Sthapthies, Maharanas, Mahapatras Sompuras, Charis, Moosari – all castes of traditional builders?

Can we afford to deskill society any longer?

Halfway through the first decade of a new millennium, nearly sixty years after independence, these venerable traditions... stand vulnerably at the edge of a precipice... Challenged to fly as never before...



Zabira Begum, zari embroiderer of floor coverings for palaces, lives here with her family of eight, three members, 3 cats and a fat goat.



The late Zameer Khan, equally starred, stayed with his family in a house nearby.

CONCLUSION

My generation must ask... as have those before us, "Do we leave our country as a better place or do we accept this tag as an also ran, in a race seething with borrowed synthetic aspirations?"

If all services were automated and available at the press of a button – the interpersonal language of sharing will be lost and if all the modern methods of production points only to the machine, then the honourable skills of the hand will survive only as in gene banks.... For the few, by the few, of the few.

The once solid and expansive base of the pyramid where culture seeks to measure itself would erode and its peak will be entombed in the silent graveyard of museums.

You will remember the beginning, the inter-play of madder --- evoking shakti – the force of life and repository of memory An indigo resonant with Rasayana and the eternal chemistry of change.

Where did it all go wrong?

At one micro level let's take the case of Ramaswami .. a master dyer living in a small village, near Salem in Tamil Nadu – amongst the few crafts people who know the process of making natural die. The colonial invention of Alizarin and substitute for indigo changed the natural scale of our vocabulary and palette forests forbid him entry to get the raw material he needs and few, including Ramaswami, are aware of the economic value of natural dies or the buzz around it in world markets.

To conclude, let me go back to textiles, may I translate a mubavara.....

It is said that colour is the king, the fabric the subject and the motif the maid:

Let us for a moment, see the colour Neel and Aal, as a metaphor for India's balanced spirit,

.... the tenacious fabric, as the indomitable skill of its people,

.....the unique design or motif as the unbridled imagination of our culture,

... At another level, making, doing and being become one...

.... There is Creativity in culture, there is future for skilled work and the ethos of our nation is defined by its eyes, hands and spirit.

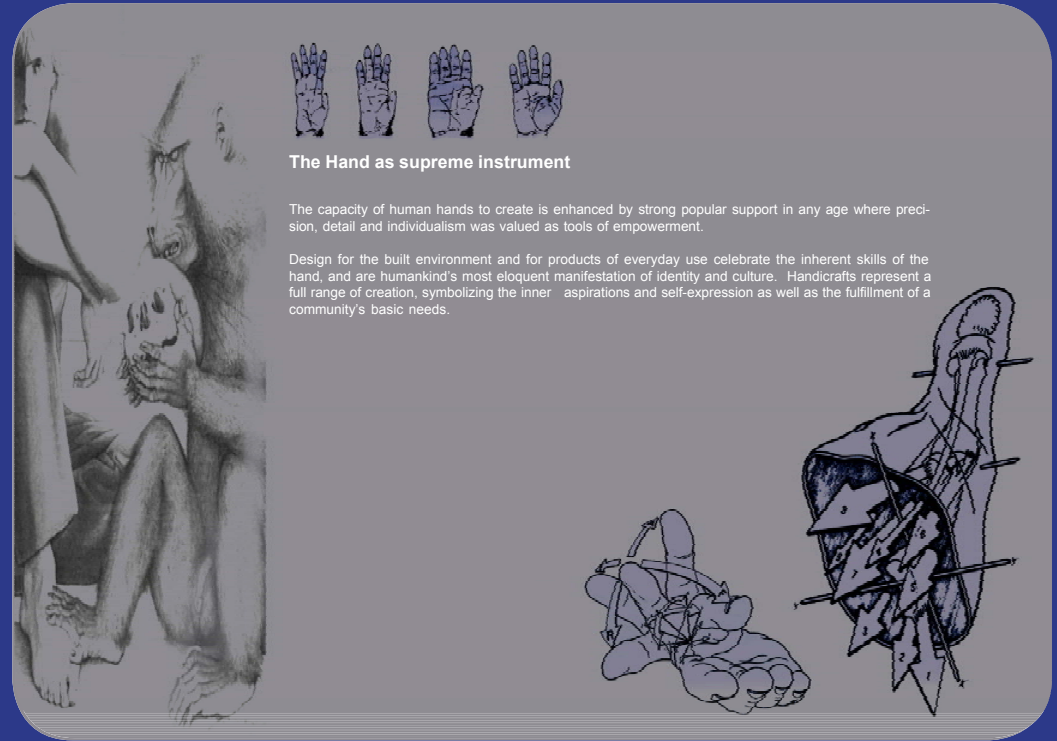


Hello, Handover



BIG HAND TO MANMOHAN: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh shakes hands with a robot during an opening walk across the industrial fair "Hannover Messe" on Monday. German Chancellor Angela Merkel is beside him.

If there is to be a roadmap including a knowledge base, positioning as in the 20th century the Planning Commission, an august body seeking to bolster our economy, would have to lay the path that charters an unprecedented journey.



The Hand as supreme instrument

The capacity of human hands to create is enhanced by strong popular support in any age where precision, detail and individualism was valued as tools of empowerment.

Design for the built environment and for products of everyday use celebrate the inherent skills of the hand, and are humankind's most eloquent manifestation of identity and culture. Handicrafts represent a full range of creation, symbolizing the inner aspirations and self-expression as well as the fulfillment of a community's basic needs.

Dangers of Corporate Involvement:

Can the Dharma of Profit find a Balance with Cultural Initiatives that are not necessarily about profit?

Culture and industry? While romantics have always lived by the notion that the two don't go together, that to be "industrious" is to be non-creative and that creative people need only fresh air and water for survival, the reality is different. Vibrant cultures are those that guarantee a full stomach, a roof, however leaky, and a reasonable future to the children of every cultural worker. This, besides of course, teaching them to be industrious. The most committed Chhau performer can be forgiven if he would rather watch his son pedal a cycle rickshaw on the streets of Ranchi than starve as an unemployed dancer. And were data to be compiled on the number of hereditary performers of music and dance who have had to take to blue collar and even menial jobs or become petty traders in post-Independent India in order to just survive, it would shock the chattering classes.

Shanta Serbjeet Singh, Dec 18, 2005, The Hindu

SOLILOQOY RAJEEV SETHI

Of culture, Mao and dusty files



Alas! The word 'Sanskriti' — like 'Paryavaran' — is only pronounced with priest like perfection, or in anglicized accents, in and around the India International Centre. Either way, it makes little sense to the man on the street. I don't believe we have the vaguest idea of what a cultural policy really means.

On the one hand you have those son-of-the-soil types who dismiss it as merely a leisure time activity. The song-and dance routine on the other hand is relegated to the confines of hot houses — under the guise of documentation and preservation.

Then, we have many who talk of poverty and expect culture to take a back seat. True, large manifestations is how the concept translated in the 1980s and that perhaps can be only a small part of what we ought to be doing, but to say that the country is poor, and culture must unfortunately be treated as a luxury is like requesting someone to stop breathing because the air is polluted. I, for one, have no doubt that the nations much prioritized economic programme is intrinsically dependent on the cultural awakening and pride of its people.

Culture as a word has lost its medieval connotation - to do with mere agricultural productivity. Our equivalent - 'Sanskriti', suggests the ac-

tion of doing and creating. Gandhi (the Mahatma) preferred the word 'Sabhyatha' - civilization instead of 'Sanskriti'. The word expresses how we produce and use what we need and what we don't...it reflects on what constitutes our habitat and the shape, size and materials of our shelter...It shows how we grow, cook, serve, eat, amid drink... how we adorn and dress and even undress It explains the way we speak, think and act... the manner in which we gesticulate, connect, greet or abuse...the way we cure and heal.., the manner in which we control rebel and organize and much, much more.

Lately, much is being made of an exercise that will place a holistic cultural policy on the anvil. The Haksar Committee Report they say has provided the main salvo. Despite the dust it has raised I believe that like all the earlier policy reports before, the dust will soon settle on it! Despite all the fizz and the shoulds, it is going to end up being

just another olive in the cocktail. The report was primarily concerned with the reports of the Akademies. Amid anyone who thinks that a national culture policy can be equated to the functioning of the Akademies is plain ignorant.

On the other hand, Mao thought it of his great revolution as cultural. And look where it got him! In my next column I will outline why culture needs more teeth and how it should set about acquiring real influence.

Working experiences

Seven generations of my family have been carving stone. From my father, I came to understand the beauty that lies in cleanliness and clarity. Just see the exquisiteness of the jali; it gives you a feeling of air and light. I like doing complicated designs that take a long time. They stay in my hands longer. Jobs don't come all the time. Work doesn't depend on me. I depend on work.

Soni Ram

Stone Carving, Inlay and Trellis, Uttar Pradesh

SOLILOQUY RAJEEV SETHI

Teeth for Culture

The word culture made Field Marshal Goering reach for his gun. Chairman Mao thought of his great revolution as cultural. Gandhiji preferred to use the word *sabhyata* or "civilization." A Sufi poet is said to have described culture as the fragrance that is left behind after the incense stick of life is burnt.

There are no barriers to fragrance; boundaries created fifty years ago in a fractured South Asia cannot change the essence of shared experiences, history and geography. Evanescent, it permeates the being of the subcontinent - as much a part of its wilderness, as in its villages or cities.

Unfortunately, since culture defies a definition, it has no single face for the common man and therefore no ballot value, no official programme or policy - or appropriate budgets.

On the one hand you have those 'sons of the soil' types who dismiss it as merely a leisure time activity... the song and dance routine. On the other hand, it is relegated to the confines of hot houses - under the guise of documentation, preservation and silk lined museum shelves.

Then we have many philistines who talk of poverty and expect culture to take a back seat. True, official patronage, setting up academies, development boards, holding large manifestations, pumping in sentimental subsidies and stipends, is a small part of what was required but to say that the country is poor and culture must be treated as a luxury is like requesting someone to stop breathing because the air is polluted.

Conventional economic indices may rate us as poor but our wealth of heritage could make us

a forerunner in an alternative developmental paradigm. I believe sustainable economic growth is a cultural process.

Therefore, I see red, whenever I hear dilettante's whisper. "Let culture be! The people will decide". Sure! But look which people? Look around at the greed and chaos around you and see who's winning and at what cost?

The mandarins in the finance and planning '*mehakmas*' have to first understand what promotes productivity, what leads to intolerance and contempt, breeding new insecurities and uncontrolled pollution. What we spend on the entire department of culture is a tiny fraction of what we spend for VIP security... Could there a connection?

In this age of liberalization, I am all for the middle path with defined measures of control and a social contract with the money tigers, that can check the abuse of culture in the name of so called development. What we now require is parliamentary intervention and appropriate legislations that will give more teeth to the Department of Culture. I feel the Ministry of Human Resources must feel compelled to draft or seek approach-papers from all other ministries on connected issues that alter time honoured cultural perceptions and set up inter-ministerial task forces required to make culture less cosmetic.

The country went up in flames over the reservation of 80,000 jobs for backward classes. Yet many times that number of the so called OBCs was displaced by unfeeling governments that did little to ensure proper support and imaginative promotion of marginalized sectors of cottage industries handloom etc. Did anyone from culture

speak up? Today 4,000 Chenalamapatti weavers from Tamil Nadu live in the squalor of Delhi slums - some selling balloons while their wives work as housemaids. An entire tradition is being lost and a culture is being altered to a point where it loses its center. Does then a cultural statement amount to precious little textile exhibitions mounted neatly in the crafts museums and festivals of India?

The shift of production and greater automation in agriculture should mean keener concern for systems that ensure decentralized and self-employed sectors. But no, these are further marginalized and the



lifestyles of a people are being drastically altered. Urban migration and the great shift of people from one region into another in search of work is creating its own social and cultural conflicts.

The Ministry of Health needs desperately to evolve a new strategy of unitary care for preventive and curative medicine, the alternative small stream systems have to be integrated with the mainstream to convince

us that care is not just a privilege of the rich. Visiting a hospital's OPD for even one hour will convince anyone that we have very little of culture or civilization.

Our own indigenous systems of medicine are receiving more attention outside the country while thousands of un-translated manuscripts gather dust in forgotten libraries all over India. Some of these are rotting under the various State Departments of Culture!

When the Ministry of Steel sets up a factory in a tribal belt, does someone in tribal welfare have a greater say in the matter? Does the Industrialist give thought about its impact on

heritage becomes a mediocre copy of a copy in the name of modernity?

Who protests when pesticides poison our foods, or preservatives debase our cooking and eating styles and who has studied how fertilizers and hybrids have changed the perception of season and our varied eco-agri-cycles. When a river is poisoned, all the culture that it supports also dies. Shouldn't the Dept. of Culture think about all this as being of cultural concern as much as an environmental one?

Should the Ministry of Urban Development get away without building codes that allow cities and towns to flout local climate, aesthetics, materials and skills? Does not cultural identity suffer when the built environment envelops us in a homogenized spiritless landscape? Does the Dept. of Culture challenge its own sister Department of Education when curricula for higher education to point only to the west, and when teachers would rather have us toe the line than find time for questions. And what of us, as parents, preferring that our children learn Jack and Jill and not some 'exotic' vernacular rhyme?

Rampant consumption breeds its own insecurities - it thrives on it. In this age, consumer is king and culture its handmaiden.

Indian TV is a medium that sought heavy public investments on the ground that it will serve rural needs. Today instead, it is mostly subservient to gross urban demands manipulated through consumer plugs by a growing, articulate and a very resourceful creed of white-collared communicators. Their attitudes and official resources profoundly convert culture into an entertainment activity with programmes that take away even the little leisure in which we entertain ourselves. TV today caters to a plethora of urban neuroses. This, more than any other medium, is affecting the way people in rural areas have begun to perceive

and express themselves through gross imitation, intimidation and identification.

How many hours of software is commissioned for rural viewers? Has anyone put the Panchayat on TV or catered in a robust creative manner to real rural issues without talking down?

If all this is not meant to be the Department of Culture's concern, I feel it will have very little left to sing or dance about! I want more teeth for culture and for it a finger in every pie.

The loss of a custom or a ritual from memory or practice has not been my enduring concern. The potter has stopped making some beautiful votive offerings. Well too bad but so what!! There is no longer a felt need to propitiate certain deities linked with fatal diseases that are now extinct. For example, the worship of Shitala Mata, the goddess of smallpox will perhaps have to change as she takes on different functions within the reality of modern medicine.

A man driving a tractor does not need the same footwear and plow as his forebears. The village shoemaker and carpenter can therefore, not expect the customary exchange of grain for their efforts. New varieties of seeds, methods of irrigation, and of factory-made fertilizers, have changed man's perception of the season and the harvest. The balladeer, called in to invoke the blessings of the gods and to lift evil spirits that cause the illness of a patron's camel, has now to compete with the veterinarian.

Women who sang the most telling songs on the way to the well, sharing the day's happening with each other, have now merely to open a faucet in their homes. Good! No doubt the water pot – however superbly designed to be carried on the waist and on the head would now require to be changed. The songs, invented by the women to lessen drudgery, will fade away. What should concern us more is how the need and energy

— so delicately expressed and enshrined in the communication of the women — now finds a new vehicle for expression?

1. What is replacing that which must go?

2. What do we want to preserve and how do we proceed to preserve and for whom?

3. The concern then, is to constantly and persistently ask, from here to where? Can people participate and relate creatively to the pace of development and absorb its consequences with any sense of quality?

Lately, much is being made of an exercise that will place a holistic cultural policy on the anvil. I don't believe even in another 50 years we will have the vaguest idea of what a cultural policy really means. Various Committee Reports they say have provided the main salvo. Despite the dust these reports have raised, I believe that like all policy papers, the dust will soon settle on them. Despite all the fizz and the 'should be's' and 'shouldn't be's' they are like olive's in a cocktail. Most reports concern themselves with the official programmes and the functioning of Academies. And anyone who thinks that a national culture policy can be equated to the functioning of august bodies is plain ignorant. What is needed is a pragmatic and a very common sense approach to the way cultural policy is being administered or even the fact that there was a lack of culture policy.

At 50 if I was to take stock of what hasn't been done and what requires immediate attention, I would point out the critical lack of comprehensive schemes for the welfare of artists and artisans, the people behind all the art - the repository of our heritage - bandied about the world as our ambassadors and brought home to live in squalid slums.

We need a methodology for a census on the arts to evolve a system that helps to classify cultural expression in its varied contexts;

then we need to set up neighbourhood and voluntary infrastructures that can support and generate its own cultural programming. We need to redress the hazards in the arts, and evolve a less officious and more inspiring system of rewarding excellence, offering privileges and infusing pride amongst skilled people who feel vulnerable in this age of flux. We need to detail the composition of curricula for cultural education and administration and insure autonomy and networking between institutions.

We need better designs, wider - much wider access to documentation and a re-definition of the scale and nature of cultural dissemination not just for the sake of the few, for the few. More interdisciplinary interaction is required in the arts and the brilliantly conceived Zonal Cultural centers have to become more focused on revitalizing their devised agenda. Training in the arts has to become more realistic and market oriented and presentation format for the arts has to take on the bull TV- horn by horn, z channel by channel.

No one can have a final say in matters related to culture. Culture, like breath is to life, will always be an inseparable part of our existence, the fragrance of our civilization. The air we breathe is polluted because we have not invented new systems to check the decay. How to restore to a society its self-purifying mechanism? How to prevent our senses from shrinking further? How to celebrate innovation and decry the mediocrity of imitation? There are many questions and answers will come from those who don't take freedom for granted.

In my future columns I will be writing about the methodology for a census for the arts, on the need for evolving a system that helps to classify cultural expression in various contexts, on the setting up of neighborhood and voluntary infrastructures to support cultural programming, on issues related to the hazards in the arts and the critical lack of schemes for artistic welfare, on the pros

and cons of awards and on the issue of pride and privileges.

I would like to explore the composition of a curriculum for cultural administration and offer my views on autonomy and networking between institutions, on the design and access to documentation and on the scale and nature of dissemination. Also, on inter-disciplinary interaction and innovation, on marketing and presentational formats and on the theme of continuity and training in the arts. I want more teeth for culture and for it - a finger in every pie. "But the pie is becoming smaller for the want of resources"; they say, "and culture is not a basic."...Really? Perhaps, because the entire Dept. of Culture gets only Rs. 80 crores and Rs.200 crores a year for VVIP security becomes a necessity. Should we 'let the people decide'?

Seeing the whole

I am a Muslim and I make Hindu, Christian and Islamic themes. We assume each consumer respects the spirit. Yes, we do create table tops with these sacred figures on it but we hope that people do not put an insulting object by its side. While making it, I don't touch it with my feet. There is "kadar and ibadat" (respect and devotion). Then there is "kala and hunar" (art and pride) and finally there is "karigari" (skill). Without one the other does not come.

Shaukat Ali

Figure cutting and joinery

*Ankhen do, drishti ek, honth do, lafaz ek
Pair do, raftaar ek, Haath do, taali ek
Bhed phiryeh aisa kyon?"*

BABA AMTE, Anandwan, Nagpui

SOLILOQY RAJEEV SETHI

Of Tourist Interest Only



A NATION in which a leader can seriously ask "Do you think an artist is a special person?" is a nation in jeopardy.

The other day I tried to explain this in chaste Hindi to our new minister for textiles. He yawned. Our delegation of master craftspersons and weavers tried telling him about specific projects related to housing, occupational diseases, product reservations and other things. His political producer was more voluble; he warned us about this nation of thieves, chastised us for our servility, and told us to take what we need with the force of a 'danda'. We reminded him that the fate of ten million weavers and several million craftspersons was clubbed with his own ministry and unless they took precedence, the 'danda' will continue to be wielded by the textile barons.

Yet, I must agree that political rhetoric has some effect. After all didn't Shri Datta Samant make a lot of noises and hasn't the government been dishing out more than 200 crores annually to maintain the sick textile units, employing only a 100,000 workers. The silent handlooms with a hundred times that number get only a piffling fraction of that figure.

Preferential treatment based on hierarchies exists amongst government machinery associated with the performing arts as well. Without going into the arts versus craft, folk versus classical debate, I would like to point out another case of faulty perspectives. Nine months ago the then Prime Minister magnanimously announced registration of all slum dwellers in Delhi and the giving of ration cards. So far so good. But implementation was characteristically short sighted as targets had to be immediately achieved.

The population in Delhi slums and squatter colonies doubled overnight. The increased density and close proximity of jhuggies, improvised with waste plastics and wood crates, made them more vulnerable. To top it



all zealous legislators encouraged everyone to tap the "electric poles feeding rich mans homes" without permission. Working for the last fifteen years in one slum, housing more than six hundred puppeteers, balladeers, acrobats etc., we were alarmed and warned the concerned authorities about the implication of such actions.

The slums in Delhi burnt last summer as never before. In the fires, along with all others, about hundred artists also lost all they had. Since we were more organised, we got some relief from the hotels where the artists had performed on various occasions. The five star kitchens of the 'Taj' catered to the slum dwellers of Shadipur for 15 days

We also made the Sangeet Natak Akademi promise them that they would sponsor some programmes to help them purchase new instruments.

The slum dwellers have never heard from them after their empty assurances, inspite of repeated requests and reminders for action.

There is a feeling that these poor folk artists only make a noise with their drums. And, yes of course we have the Utsavs and Festivals, tomtomming the nation's pride in its cultural heritage. The artists are bandied about as the fast depleting repository of this wealth.

No doubt, while the various festivals have made people more aware of the variety of art forms, I have somewhat naively harboured the illusion that this increased exposure will help us hasten a better deal for the well-being of artists or in meeting their needs.

Since Independence, India has seen rapid industrial growth and consequent urbanisation. Migration from rural India to the burgeoning metropolis has fractured ancient links and channels of interpersonal communication. The principles of philosophy of inter-dependence required to nurture production systems and community-life are gradually lost, being perceived as irrelevant or unscientific. This alienation has been felt more than ever before and with much greater intensity in the last few decades. Unprecedented changes

For every known artist there are hundreds today, who for want of basic amenities and support never see the light of day

have reflected on the patronage conditions and environments of traditional performers and artisans, challenging the survival of their time-honoured skills. It is time that we recognised that the responsibility of society does not end with the sponsoring of a project here and a bit there, or by conferring titles and awards that offer the artist little more than a once in a lifetime stint with status.

For every known artist they are hundred today who, for want of basic amenities and support, never see the light of day. If the base of the pyramid erodes, the top will be of little consequence. Even successful artists should realise that their pursuit of excellence implies a shared concern and responsibility for those who are less fortunate.

I know of a few musicians who think nothing of charging thousands but who profess ignorance about the monthly emoluments of their accompanists.

Once an accompanist tabla player from Shahdara told me, "The emptiness of my stomach resounds with the encores. I hardly have enough for a scooter fare back home from the concert. After spending about 12 years in rigorous rehearsals, I used to get Rs. 450/- per month, which is less than the lowest of the low government scale. I am 50 now...not more than 15-20 people know me... I remain only a part of the show and after show time... with the applause, we exit 'Raat Khatam-Bat Khatam.'

Carrying their heritage, Miras (from which is derived the degenerated title of Mirasis) artistes move in consonance with their own rhythm and harmony. From the courts of kings and tawaifs, they today find themselves confronted with the three Ts of Time, Technology and Targets on the one hand and a culture of paper weights on the other. Talent, like a soap, has to be packaged, and officially graded or it slips into a gutter. Tan Ras of Delhi Gharana in Bahadur Shah Zafar's court was given Chandini Mahal as a 'jagir'. Today Chandini Mahal has scores of musician families living with many others in cramped one room tenements. Facelessness stalks everywhere as the city reeks of apathy.

Thousands, of weavers, craftspersons, 'folk' and 'classical' artists who carry the rich millennial heritage of our culture now live on the peripheries of urban areas under squalid and destitute conditions. There is a complete absence of National Institution or Bodies that address themselves, in any significant manner, to the artists' medical, education, environment and social needs – although these are interlinked to the quality and often the probability of their performance and occupation.

There is unemployment and underemployment, exploitation and an age old indifference; there is self-deprecatory alienation that devalues their art; and most of all there is a debilitating sense the traditional artists feel today – that they may be of interest to tourists but of little use any longer to their own society.

On cooperative action

Our workshop has all young people. Hindus and Muslim- where is religion in a round chapati? We recognize each other's skill as well as the spiritual motivation. There have never been conflicts amongst our workers. Yes, we don't always agree about money. People cut rates and try to defeat cooperative action to control pieces. Quality suffers in the bargain and then even the chapattis disappear.

**Nur Ahmed Sayyid
Hamanulla Khan, Siddh Rama, Sidh Dayyia**



On his work

I like designs that challenge the mind to invent a treatment. Today's repetition tires the heart. It would be alright with a machine, but with hands it is bothersome. There is not enough mind-work in it. If we did not use our brain - food would reach our ears, or our nose, or eyes – not our mouth. I want to see progress and fill my stomach by my own work. I cannot change my profession. I have to fit into the modern world with the skills I have. Trading my freedom for anything like an office job under some boss is unthinkable, even if it means more money. The office boss will become the master of my time. If I stop doing work with my hands, my mind will lose its ability to play as well.

**Afzal Khan
Crewel and Staple Stitch, Kashmir**

SOLILOQUY RAJEEV SETHI

The art is alive as long as the artist is !



Artists of all calibers and in every age, have allowed their arts - once in a while to be pandered for commerce. This would even be acceptable if they could find the time and space to return to themselves and to each other for rejuvenation and renewal.

It would now seem that the majority of artists are even more socially isolated than before and are increasingly dependent on the curiosities and goodwill of the 'upper' classes and file pushing 'connoisseurs'. The rural and 'folk' artists are particularly bonded to the whims of their new patrons. Even people studying their art forms or working with the artists seem to get more recognition and economic benefit than those practicing it. Deterioration of tradition comes from such economic disparity of professional pursuit. The sense of achievement influenced by ma-

terial gains becomes critical.

Today, most people on the arts bandwagon are more concerned with personal ambitions and reaping dissensions. A great part of their lives is spent in cornering key positions, and ubiquitous roles allowing for only a few to come up. Such people exist for years on a running relay of ongoing projects that guarantee a steady flow of official resources and high level of contact. Their programmes are designed more for personal aggrandizement and less for ameliorating the suffering of the artists or celebrating their genius. Very few people are really concerned about the disappearance of time honoured skills as living components of our traditions.

I have had enough of grandiose official efforts to preserve the vestiges of our glorious

past and the mute relics of our threatened present for so called 'posterity'. Glitzy exhibits silk lined show cases, leather bound documentation and bulky project reports are not even the beginning of preservation and are marginal as exercises for creating public awareness. When will these programmes and records become accessible to those who need them most as ready reference? I refer in particular to those artists who belong to the oral traditions and need more than their vulnerable memory to keep their art alive.

Aren't most artistic manifestations held today becoming increasingly an end in themselves, to be celebrated as annual events on the manicured lawns of the arts academies and international centres? Is the amount being spent on exposure and preservation, generating some returns whereby the repository of rich traditions can get a new lease of life where ever they belong?

If you go around eastern Rajasthan you will be hardpressed to find even a few women on the roadside wearing traditional prints on their skirts or blouses. What the mills of Manchester were unable to do in a hundred years, has now been achieved by the mills of the brown sahibs in less than two decades. Yet, funds have been allocated for a forthcoming exhibition for the Festival of India in Germany, extolling the textiles of the Thar desert.

Although I am weary of seeing the same team do all the major exhibition of the Festival of India for the last 8 years what concerns me more is whether they are capable of raising even a fraction of the budget that will help make the women of Rajasthan more aware. How many know today how their traditional apparel evokes their own landscape, how it suits their climate and how it helps to keep their own village folk employed? How many of those who talk of conservation or make be nurtured and stored in weather proof museums and electronic hardware or in official hot houses from 10 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. with salaried master craftspersons or media Us-tads ?

The real reason we spend such a great deal of our energy seeking to define our connec-

tions with the past - or preserving the past for what its worth, is because we are so unsure of our future.

While change scares some of us, a climate of innovations will require a broader base of involvement from those numerous artists who's daily struggle leaves them no space or time for creative thinking; it will require greater participation of the everyman - from the millions out there, who have skills to make things, to express themselves and to communicate with those around them. It is from this extended and humble base of creative activity that any culture has to measure and sustain its growth.

Re-established *mohallas* of artists and artists in every mohalla is what will finally determine the health of our heritage as a nation. Just before his death, Bade Gulam Ali Khan had said that if only each family could have just one member trained in music there would be an end to communal hatred. I have written, my earlier columns, about the cost society has to pay for undervaluing the importance of culture. Now to round up this piece I will highlight the problems faced by those most easily identified as culture's chief protagonists the professional artists and artisans themselves.

Who is this artist in NEED ?

It could be a performer too old to work or a community of leather workers with a skin condition that deteriorates with their livelihood; or a metal caster or stone carver fighting for a whole generation inflicted with disease due to unscientific and exploitative conditions of work.

Visit Moradabad and you will find that communal hatred is not just about severed heads of cows or chasing pigs into some neighbourhood. Or breathe in the silica-laden air of Kambhat to find out the T.B. rampant in this filthy town is not just because the artisans have an unbalanced diet. Have the official bodies in charge of arts and crafts ever looked comprehensively into issues related to health matters, occupationed diseases, insurance and environmental degradation ? Most organizations are only concerned with the packaging of the product or arranging a performance. They feel better means of marketing will alone provide the artists the wherewithal to look after themselves; they will then be able to move out of a slum and buy a roof over their heads, find a place to work and see their children through a life furthering their skills. Really ?



Some of us have been going from pillar to post for the last 15 years now to get some land for the creation of a pilot habitat for the several hundred families of artists living in the slums of Delhi, Jaipur, and Bombay. We are constantly told to wait because we are in the queue and land prices are prohibitive; yet we see doctors, lawyers, journalists, officers, and 700 others co-op's of middle and upper income groups get the land they need at concessional rates. The economically vulnerable are suspect – even if they have organized themselves into cooperatives to avail the same facility.

We are told we cannot ask for a work-cum-dwelling space because the zoning laws of the city do not permit the same. Cities are made keeping commercial, industrial and residential areas as rigidly separate. Who asked traditional craftsmen whether they can travel with their families to a workshop everyday or whether a musician can rehearse in one place and stay in another? Jaipur's *gunijan khanas* and artisans' *mohallas* are an indication of how cities were planned earlier.

A catalytic environment for nurturing the skills of traditional artists and artisans is the critical need of the day. A musician's child who rarely sees a tree living in the squalor of a tin shed cannot be taught the nuances of Raag Basant.

So, Hon. Ministers of Textiles and Culture, don't just tell us to go to the Department of Urban Development or Ministry of Health. The artisans and artists are seen like files that never move. Instead you liaise with your colleagues from the different departments or go back to the Planning Commission and fight hard to make them give you the appropriate allocations that will enable you to serve your constituents better.

Creative artists have also a growing need for legal advice and action. Artists, writers, scholars barely know how to draft a contract document to protect their interests and I know many performing artists who should sue several agencies and individuals for misusing their work. The disparity of payments in the official mass media – between south-north,

men-women, dance- music; disparity of payments between different agencies, their dubious grading systems, the multiple usage of programme's through electronic extensions, are all issues ready for some legal prodding.

Likewise the issue of reservations for handlooms, stayed in the court by a vested powerloom lobby, has stood unchallenged and unheard in the Judiciary in the absence of public interest.

There are child artists whose skills are often abused, like in the carpet trade, and women artists whose problems of status, space, time and resources require special attention. Artists need management skills to run their co-ops, set up thrift and credit societies, arrange loans and combat indebtedness.

They need marketing skills to deal with specialists, critics, media, buyers, exporters etc. These are problems that many do not even perceive as problems in the present scenario.

Some artists also need help to readjust with contemporary values where their ethnic group traditions dictate an antisocial life style. The rather robust attitude towards sex of a Kanjri dancer and a Nat from Maharashtra had me thinking about parallel morality in variance with what's around.

That is till I saw them buckle under the abuse of demonic lust. I also remember an alcoholic poet who no one wanted to help and a sensitive painter who left everything because he could not see the debasement of art.

Then someone also has to think about recreational activities for the artists – the interpersonal and interdisciplinary contacts required for growth; about a creative *halwai* wanting to experiment with regional foods and new recipes. There may be a traditional painter wanting to know about computer graphics or a goldsmith wishing to learn about watch assembly.

I have always wanted to arrange a national workshop of tribal painters and dancers in a

tribal area so that they could meet and share each other's joys, aspiration and apprehensions.

Some of the most poignant moments in the arts for me have been my meetings with 'small' artists wanting to raise collective social consciousness on vital issues. A magician wanting to be a part of the of the mainstream has evolved ingenious acts to express his concern for national integration. An acrobat wanting to train in gymnastics wishes to bring in an Olympic gold for her country. A Hindu mat-weaver from Bengal creates a long roll weaving a series of *mehrab*s in a prayer rug for the Jama Masjid of Delhi. These are people out to save the world and may their tribe increase!

Society owes to these artists and artisans a special debt. Their contribution is irreplaceable. Likewise the environment they need for their work is particular. What needs to be strengthened is their inherent capacity to create wealth for themselves and their community

*My voice, while it lasted
My feet, while they danced
My fingers, while they played
My hands, while they worked
My senses while they prevailed
Have asked you so many questions.....?*

On the quality of life

I am a very poor man, and I have infinite tolerance. If my hunger is for two chapattis and I can only mange one, it is alright. I mange, but with honesty and fairness because lies have short lives. Where is the need for me to lie to you any way? When I say I need your help to make my living, you will see that I am genuine, and you will help me. If you saw that I was a liar or a cheat, with what eyes would you look at me. Tell me? Does anybody look with friendly eyes at a liar?

Ali Osad Urf Sadiak
Leather worker

PART III

SYNOPSIS of the Report /Publication on the Cultural and Creative Industries of India

Reports are the inevitable endproduct of a Task Force. This one, clearly, is more voluminous than others and does not pretend to be a mere report. Other than the overviews that precede each chapter, we give a synopsis of what this whole publication is meant to be. How and why the Task Force for Creative and Cultural Industries in the Planning Commission was set up is taken up in **Chapter 6** and in the introduction given by Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia in **Chapter 1**. The remaining chapters of this omnibus report, anthology or publication ... whatever one chooses to call it, are as follows:

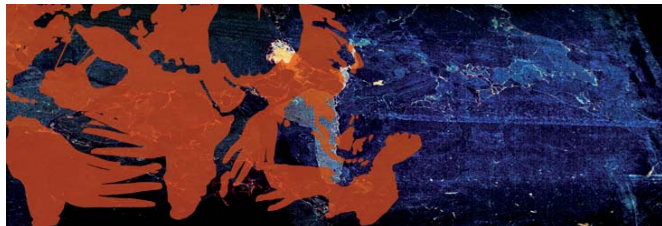
Chapter 3 traces the evolution of the concept of cultural industries and its transformation into a **GLOBAL PHENOMENON**, fueled by State policy intervention and the positioning of private-public initiatives in different countries where it is acknowledged as the fastest growing sector generating considerable employment and revenue. Compilations from reams of reports and references from all over the globe have been presented for the first time by the Asian Heritage Foundation to elaborate the role of the creative and the cultural industries in contemporary nation states and multinational economies.

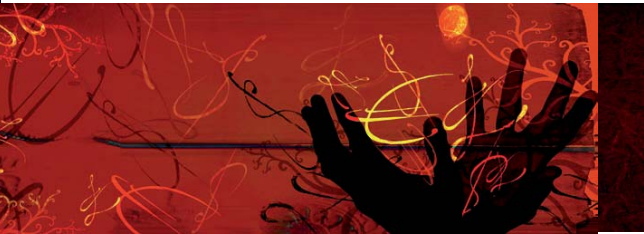
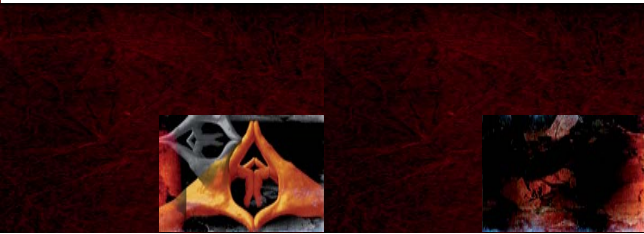
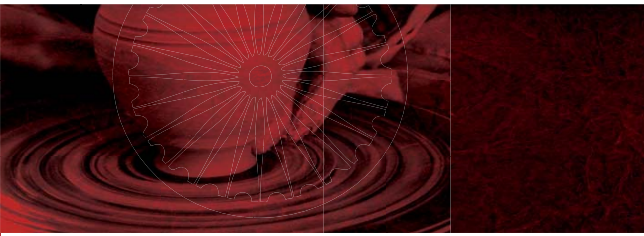
Chapter 4 brings us home with **THE INDIAN SCENARIO** with eminent personalities throwing light on where we stand today, poised to take on the future. We have attempted a comprehensive classification system of what cultural industries constitute in the Indian context. Even an overview for each of the sub-sectors requires more work and space than provided here; this gargantuan effort will continue with the development of a web portal for this sector. For now, we have had to divide the overwhelming response we have received from authors as material on each sub-sector and extended the rest into **Chapter 5** and **Chapter 7** as well.

Are we biting off more than what one can chew by clubbing these many sectors together?

In **Chapter 5** titled a **INDIA'S EDGE** we argue otherwise and show how 'the traditional' and 'the modern' can help each other to create a USP for India. So a Pochampalli weaver in a village of Andhra shares the same space in our project mission as a computer game designer in the city of Mumbai. Do the factors that connect their varied skills get linked in complementary programmes that improve India's creative expression? Will the priorities and varying aspirations of the modern disciplines dilute the developmental agenda for the more traditional and vulnerable sector? Will the creamy layer of creative and cultural industries grab the benefits of schemes meant for the more deprived and marginalised? Ideas and thoughts on an appropriately layered strategy of public private intervention are presented in this chapter. Dovetailing international norms, our intentions are to harness synergies implicit in dynamic couplings of the old and the new, *margi* and *deshi*, east and west, between different disciplines etc.

Chapter 6 THE WHEEL MOVES describes the one year I spent at the Yojana Bhavan in the Planning Commission, trying to negotiate the juggernaut through narrow lanes. The monogrammed calling card helped; access to those





in power became easier and the learning curve steep as challenges became more formidable. After much discussion, we felt the concept for a single Ministry grouping all connected departments from other ministries to form a whole was too premature; Even an established Council or Commission ran the risk of becoming hierarchical and driven by administrators. Instead, an autonomous, market driven body in a Mission Mode would offer a time-bound agenda for action. This would also facilitate a more public-private initiative, critical for implementing interdisciplinary as well as inter-ministerial projects and programmes in the field. A single window orchestration implementing such a cross - sectoral agenda puts us in a better position to articulate a meaningful infrastructure sustaining a movement.

Chapter 7 points to **THE WAY AHEAD..** outlining the five kinds of services proposed for the National Mission for Cultural Industries – Policy & Planning Services; Credit and Financial Services; Capacity Building Services; Legal Services and Promotion and Marketing Services. An attempt has been made to illustrate each of these through illuminating case studies and informed opinion.

Chapter 8 celebrates the making of **BRAND INDIA** by dwelling on specific delivery mechanisms. The five years suggested as a tenure for the Mission would help it devise and implement the mixed media programme outlined in this chapter. Public-private partnership with concrete action in the field would help determine the contour of an unprecedented policy intervention for the future.

Chapter 9 A funding mechanism to support this future is crucial for putting the whole task on track. We have, rather optimistically, called it the **PURNA KUMBHA**, *‘the pot of plenty,’* providing a blue print for sourcing resource would make the NMCI self sustaining, initiating all supporting revenue models across diverse sectors.

The concluding **Chapter 10**, brimming with hope, is titled **SHAJAR-E-HAYAT**, *‘the tree of life’*. We have here collated over 250 letters, articles and interviews outlining a coherent sectoral framework and a gameplan based on which the government and NGOs may take action. The appendices carry a miscellany of details and reference matter including a draft copy of the now approved Cultural Policy document from the Government of Goa, showing one model that other states of India could emulate.

PAST FORWARD is a timely reminder of what we need to do before it is too late and loosing our legecy and being overtaken by others even in our neighbourhood. This publication is an ambitious but passionate offering celebrating the future of India’s creativity in sectors that have so far lacked cohesive official support.

Rajeev Sethi