



ESTIMATING EMPLOYMENT IN INDIA'S CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ECONOMY: EVIDENCE FROM THE PERIODIC LABOUR FORCE SURVEY

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Abstract

Despite its scale and cultural significance, India's cultural and creative economy has not been systematically measured. This paper presents an empirical estimate of its contribution to employment, adapting the international classification frameworks used by UNESCO and the European Union (EU) to the Indian context through a mapping of cultural domains and value chain stages to the National Industrial Classification (NIC-2008). Applying this framework to unit-level data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for 2017-18 and 2025, the paper estimates that approximately 57 million workers, amounting to nearly 9 per cent of India's total workforce, are engaged in cultural and creative activities. Moreover, there has been a 40 per cent increase in the culture-creative workforce over seven years and female employment has doubled. Yet, at present, there is concentration of employment in low-value manufacturing and real wages for women have stagnated. There are other institutional and policy challenges that need to be addressed. Addressing these requires a coherent national strategy spanning institutional reform, gender-targeted interventions and strengthened geographical indication protections. These findings are offered as a methodological primer towards building a more robust, recurring measurement of India's cultural economy, including value-added estimation through a dedicated Cultural Satellite Account.

Keywords: *Cultural economy; Cultural and creative industries; Employment estimation; Wage levels; Wage differentials; India.*

JEL Classification: *C81, J21, J24, J31, O10, Z10, Z11*

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Estimating Employment in India's Cultural and Creative Economy: Evidence from the Periodic Labour Force Survey

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1. Introduction

India's cultural and creative industries are among the country's most underestimated economic activities. According to a 2023 estimate of the United Nations (UN), the global worth of the culture sector is about USD 4.3 trillion per year, which accounts for 6.1 per cent of the global economy.³ The sector generates an annual revenue of USD 2.25 trillion and employs nearly 6.2 per cent of the global workforce, particularly employing the young (aged 15 to 29) in larger numbers than any other sector (UNESCO, 2023). About half of these are women.⁴ Yet in India, one of the world's most culturally diverse and ancient civilisations, no systematic effort has been made to measure the size or the contribution to employment of this sector. This paper is a first attempt to do so.

Our estimates reveal a sector far larger than commonly recognised. In 2025, approximately 57 million workers – nearly 9 per cent of India's total workforce – were engaged in cultural and creative activities.⁵ In urban areas alone, cultural industries account for about 16-17 per cent of all

employment, exceeding the combined contribution of financial services, IT and other professional services. Women are central to this story, with female employment in the sector more than doubling from 9.21 million to 18.84 million between 2017-18 and 2025. However, despite the sector's significant economic potential, the fact that workers in the sector, particularly women, continue to earn less than the average national wage underscores the structural constraints that continue to hamper the sector's development.

India is one of the world's most culturally diverse countries, making culture an intrinsic component of its sub-national identity. As one of the oldest civilisations, India's cultural heritage is both an asset as well as a driver of its creative economy. These largely labour-intensive sectors hold tremendous employment generating potential owing to the country's cultural plurality. Yet, the sector suffers from bottlenecks arising from, among other factors, a high degree of informality, the dominance of micro and own account enterprises, lack of global recognition and knowledge, and the consequent lack of

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³ UNESCO (2023).

⁴ For details see <https://aninver.com/blog/creative-industries-in-developing-economies-catalysts-for-jobs-exports-and-pps#:~:text=In%20fact%2C%20the%20global%20creative,than%20in%20any%20other%20sector>. (accessed on June 16, 2026).

⁵ Authors' calculations, detailed in subsequent sections of the paper.

market access, limited financial inclusion, and vulnerability to intellectual property misappropriation. All of these have resulted in undermining and undervaluing India's cultural goods and services, relative to other countries, particularly developed nations.

The stakes of this undervaluation are not abstract. In recent years, India's cultural goods have increasingly attracted global commercial interest but the benefits have rarely flowed back to the communities that created them. This represents a direct economic loss to millions of Indian artisans, weavers and craftspeople, many of them women, whose livelihoods depend on the distinctiveness and authenticity of what they make. Quantifying the size of this economy and understanding who works within it, therefore, is not simply a technical exercise to map the sector; it lays the foundation for strengthening the policy space.

Measuring this economy is not straightforward. Cultural and creative industries cut horizontally across multiple sectors rather than forming a distinct vertical in national accounts. Countries have adopted divergent approaches to classification, shaped by national priorities and data availability. In India, the challenge is compounded by the highly aggregated nature of input-output tables, making standard international approaches difficult to apply directly. While some estimates exist for India's broader creative economy (Kukreja et al., 2022), estimates specific to the *culture-creative* economy, which is anchored in symbolic meaning, heritage and intellectual property, remain absent.

This paper seeks to fill this gap in measurement. Drawing on a framework adapted from UNESCO (2009) and ESSnet (2012), and developed in consultation with the relevant line ministry in the Indian government, we map India's cultural and creative economy across eight domains and six stages of the cultural value chain. We then use unit-level data from India's Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) to estimate employment for 2017-18 and 2025, and analyse the sector's labour market characteristics including gender composition, age profile, educational attainment, wage levels and geographic distribution. This employment mapping serves as an important foundation for understanding how technological change, including artificial intelligence, is reshaping livelihoods across India's cultural industry, and for designing the targeted policy interventions this sector urgently needs.

Section 2 reviews existing frameworks and establishes the classification used in this paper. Section 3 describes the data. Section 4 presents employment estimates and labour market analysis. Section 5 examines structural challenges and Section 6 offers policy recommendations. Section 7 concludes the discussion and sets the tone for future work.

2. Conceptual Framework and Methodology

While the cultural industry is difficult to measure, it carries immense value because of its inherent characteristics. The term 'cultural industry' was coined in the works of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno of the Frankfurt school in 1947 (taken from Adorno

& Horkheimer, 2019). It discusses the nature of the culture economy, the processes of which are very closely knit and hence, difficult to measure. Measurement, and by extension the impetus to classify activities as cultural, stems from a demand to formalise the processes involved, spanning intellectual design, rights and the reproducibility of cultural goods (O'Connor, 2000). The cultural industry captures expressions that are specific to a particular geography, community or individual, making them inherently rare, distinctive and, therefore, valuable (Throsby, 2001). The value proposition is embedded in the nature of the industry.

There is a close relation between the cultural industry and the creative sphere, as the former can be viewed as an extension of the latter that encompasses sociological, anthropological and artistic dimensions. Generally, the industry has three characteristics that classify the economic activities undertaken as cultural. First, the activities involve some sort of creativity in their production. Second, they are undertaken for the purpose of generating and communicating symbolic meaning. Finally, the output created by the industry embodies some form of intellectual property (ESSnet, 2012; Throsby, 2001).

There is no unified definition of the culture-creative industry; however, frameworks exist, which are adapted to build the estimates presented in this paper. The UNESCO framework, which is also the closest to the approach used by the European Union (EU), separately defines culture cycle and cultural domains, with the cultural economy being at the intersection of these two facets.

Thus, in these two frameworks, no specific definition is outlined for the cultural/creative economy. The cultural cycle represents the sequence through which creative ideas are transformed into goods and services, comprising five interrelated stages, i.e., creation, production, dissemination, exhibition/reception and consumption/participation (UNESCO, 2009). For example, in the case of a traditional handicraft, artisans first create and design the product; producers manufacture these products based on the design created; wholesalers and retailers distribute it; museums, exhibitions or online marketplaces showcase it to consumers; and households ultimately purchase and use it. Intersecting this cycle are the cultural domains, which represent broad fields of cultural activity.

Globally, there are ten broad domains through which cultural activities in an economy are observed. These include (i) heritage, (ii) archives (iii) libraries (iv) books and press, (v) visual arts, (vi) architecture, (vii) performing arts, (viii) audio/audio-visual and multimedia, (ix) crafts trade in general, and (x) creative service activities such as advertising. Furthermore, sports and tourism activities, are also included but their adherence to the characteristics mentioned above are ambiguous (UNESCO FCS, 2009; ESSnet, 2012).

Moreover, cultural and creative activities are not confined to standalone industries within these domains; they are deeply embedded within broader economic processes. While these operational processes are often fluid and difficult to isolate, they become visible and measurable

when mapped onto distinct economic functions. These functions act as a structural framework, categorising creative activities into specific, trackable stages of the economic value chain. These stages include creation and production, manufacturing, dissemination and distribution, promotion and regulation, and education and training. Beyond these core functional stages, we need to also account for auxiliary activities, i.e., goods and services that do not constitute cultural outputs themselves but indirectly influence the value chain's operation. Appendix Table A1 provides a detailed breakdown of the stages comprising this framework, hereafter referred to as the culture-creative cycle.

Most countries have adopted different approaches towards estimating the value of the cultural economy. While the United States and Australia use the bottom-up approach of first identifying the cultural-creative products and services and then mapping them at the industry level, the cultural economy value for the Cardiff region in the United Kingdom used a top-down approach of first identifying creative industries. Most existing studies make use of supply-use and input-output tables, along with labour force surveys and business surveys, to get estimates on employment

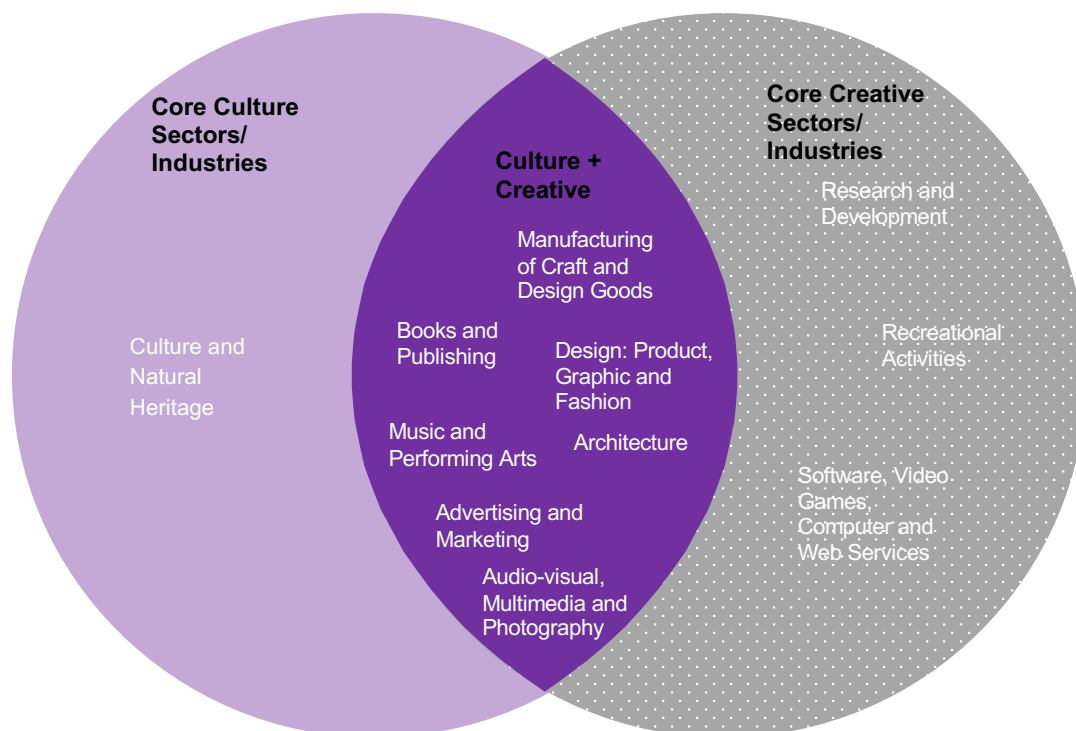
and output. The contribution of the cultural economy to GDP is estimated at 4.3 per cent in United States, 2.2 per cent in Canada, and 6.2 per cent in Australia.⁶ A few of the existing approaches are not suitable for India, given the highly aggregated nature of India's input-output tables, as well as the supply and use tables prepared by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO).

As a result, in India, while there are some estimates on the creative economy, the estimates on the culture-creative economy are missing.⁷ The creative economy actually includes other sectors, which may not be directly associated with culture, for instance, the gaming industry, or mass media tools, which do not necessarily carry symbolic meaning but embody intellectual property. In a culturally rich country like India, the culture economy itself holds immense potential to drive inclusive growth and large-scale employment generation by transforming the nation's cultural and creative heritage into an engine of entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihoods. Figure 1 provides a graphical illustration on the probable sectors within the cultural-creative economy and their position within the creative economy.

⁶ For details see: [https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/arts-and-culture#:~:text=Arts%20and%20cultural%20economic%20activity%20accounted%20for%204.3%20percent%20of,or%20\\$1.10%20trillion,%20in%202022.](https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/arts-and-culture#:~:text=Arts%20and%20cultural%20economic%20activity%20accounted%20for%204.3%20percent%20of,or%20$1.10%20trillion,%20in%202022.;); <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240603/dq240603a-eng.htm>; <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/bcarr-cultural-and-creative-activity-in-australia-at-a-glance-october2022.pdf> (accessed on November 14, 2025).

⁷ For estimates on the creative economy of India, refer to Kukreja et al. (2022).

Figure 1: Proposed Framework of Culture and Creative Sectors



Note: The sectors in the grey dotted part of the Venn are excluded from the culture and creative framework used in the paper.

To estimate employment across the culture-creative economy, we first develop a framework to identify the industries that constitute this economy. To ensure relevance to the Indian context, the conceptual frameworks proposed by UNESCO (2009), ESSnet (2012) and Eustat (2022) are adapted and refined. Drawing on international frameworks while accounting for India's institutional and cultural context, this paper identifies eight domains: heritage, architecture, design, audio-visual and multimedia, music and performing arts, books and publishing, craft goods, and advertising. Each domain encompasses several industries that contribute to the culture-creative economy. While these domains broadly align with those identified in international studies (ESSnet, 2012; UNESCO FCS, 2009), they incorporate sector-specific adaptations relevant to India. These adaptations include industries within the heritage domain, including traditional food and beverages,

traditional medical practices, custom tailoring, etc.

To operationalise this framework, industries within each domain-cycle intersection are identified using a mixed-method approach that combines standard industrial classifications along with inputs from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. The resulting framework, presented in Table 1, maps each cultural domain across the stages of the cultural cycle, with each cell representing the corresponding industries and illustrative examples. To enable empirical estimation, all identified industries are mapped to the National Industrial Classification (NIC-2008). The complete list of industries assigned to each domain-stage cell, developed in consultation with the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, is provided in Table A1 in the Appendix.

Table 1: Framework for estimating the culture economy by culture domains and stages in the culture cycle

Culture Cycle		Cultural Domains							
		Heritage	Architecture	Design: product, graphic and fashion	Audio-visual, multimedia and photography	Music and performing arts	Books and publishing	Craft goods	Advertising and marketing
Characteristic Activities	Creation & Production	Sports activities, health and wellness, theatre and festivals	Architectural and engineering design of temples, cultural hubs, etc.	Publishing of a photograph	Production of motion pictures, television and commercial content, animation	Stage production activities, composing songs and musicals	Authoring of books and articles		Publishing of advertising materials
	Manufacturing	Handloom textiles, pickles & chutneys, perfumes			Reproduction of recorded media	Manufacture of musical instruments	Printing of books, newspapers, periodicals, etc.	Manufacture of jewellery, handicrafts	
	Dissemination and distribution	Museum exhibitions, art gallery activities	Culture based, religious and historical tourism	Commercial and consumer photographic production	Radio and TV broadcasting	Operation of concert and theatre halls	Bookstores, news agencies	Sale of precious metals, handicrafts, and jewellery	Direct mailing of flyers
	Promotion and Regulation	Archiving and documentation of records, manuscripts, traditional recipes	Operation of historical sites and buildings			Activities of artistic agencies	Supporting activities for managing rights and royalties		
	Educational Activities	Cultural education, skilling				Higher education in fine arts	Artistic cultural teaching activities		
Auxiliary Activities	Manufacturing			Manufacture of photographic film				Manufacture of sewing machines	
	Trade and Repairs	Repair and maintenance of food processing machinery		Wholesale of photographic equipment	Wholesale of radio, TV, etc.	Repair of musical instruments			
	Others								

Source: Authors' adaptation from UNESCO (2009), Eustat (2022) and discussions with the relevant line Ministry in India.

For this paper, the analysis is limited to estimating employment and related indicators within India's cultural-creative economy. This focus is guided by the fact that while disaggregated national accounts data are unavailable for India, disaggregated employment data is accessible. Establishing employment estimates serves as an important first step to understanding and unpacking the effects of technology, including artificial intelligence, on the cultural and creative economy, given that each sector and process may experience these impacts differently. Technology functions as a double-edged instrument, offering powerful opportunities to unlock the potential in some sectors while simultaneously presenting new risks in others, requiring careful policymaking.⁸

3. Data Sources

This study primarily utilises unit-level individual and household data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey of India (PLFS). This survey has been regularly conducted in India since April 2017 by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). The survey is usually conducted between July and June of every year and covers the entirety of India, including its rural and urban areas.

The survey primarily collects data on key labour market indicators in India. This includes information regarding sampled individuals' demographic characteristics, their employment status and their wages. The demographic characteristics collected in the survey include the individual's gender, age, highest level of education, marital status and different household characteristics like

monthly consumption expenditure, social group (caste) and religion. This paper analyses the culture creative economy using this classification.

To estimate employment, the PLFS uses three approaches. These are the Usual Principal Status (UPS) approach, the Usual Principal and Subsidiary Status (UPSS) approach, and the Current Weekly Status (CWS) approach. Under the UPS approach, an individual is considered employed if they were engaged in economic activities for the largest proportion of time in the reference year. The UPSS approach classifies individuals as employed if they were either classified as employed in the UPS approach or they participated in economic activities in a subsidiary capacity, i.e., for at least 30 days during the reference year. In the CWS approach, employment is recorded if the person was involved in any economic activity for at least one hour during the reference week (National Statistical Office, 2019). After classifying people as employed, the PLFS divides workers into three broad categories, i.e., self-employed, salaried employees and casual labour. The PLFS also collects disaggregated information regarding the occupational and industrial distribution of the workers surveyed. The survey categorises each worker into a particular occupation and industry using the three-digit National Classification of Occupation 2015 (NCO-2015) and the five-digit National Industrial Classification 2008 (NIC-2008) codes respectively. For our study, we primarily rely on the UPSS criteria. Our sample of interest contains working individuals above the age of 15. Table 2 illustrates the sampling distribution of workers in 2017-18 and 2025,⁹ the two years analysed.

⁸ MONDIACULT (2025).

⁹ The PLFS went through some significant changes in the 2025 round, including a change in the sampling strategy and a considerable increase in the sample size to better reflect district level estimates.

Table 2: Sample distribution of workers (15 & above) in the PLFS

Year	Rural			Urban			Overall		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2017-18	66,240	21,742	87,982	49,486	12,288	61,774	1,15,726	34,030	1,49,756
2025	1,90,268	1,15,071	3,05,339	1,41,040	48,266	1,89,306	3,31,308	1,63,337	4,94,645

Source: Authors' computation of unit-level data from the PLFS

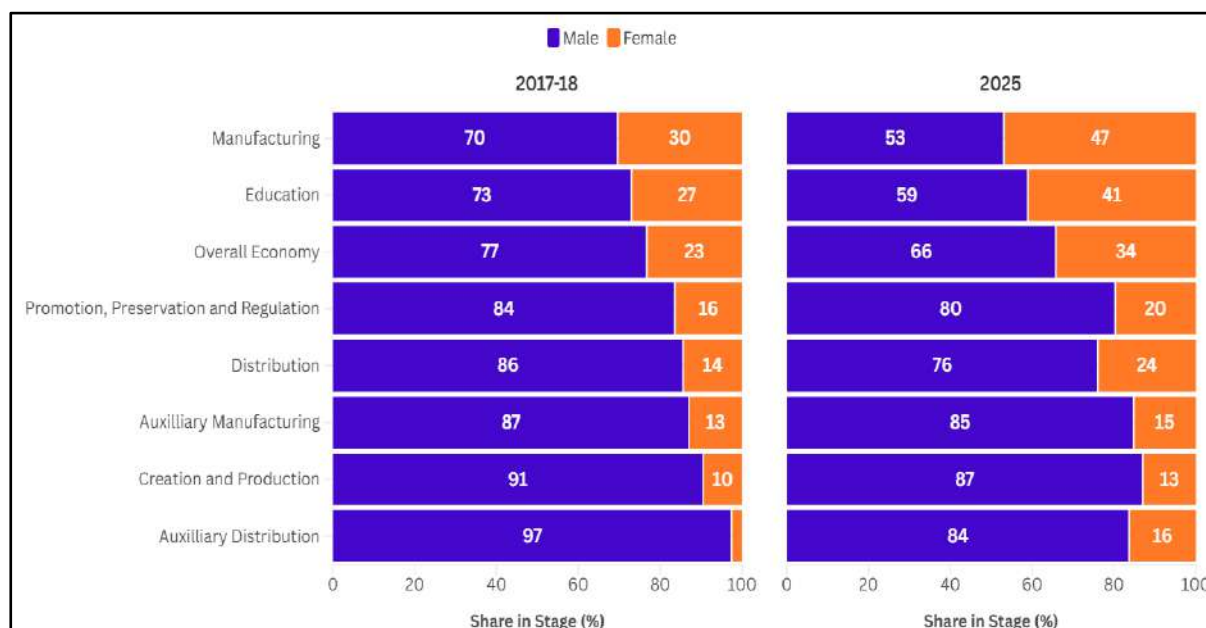
4. Results

Our estimates show that the culture-creative sector employs 9 per cent of all workers (above 15 years) in India, with this sector growing by 40 per cent since 2017-18. In 2025, approximately 57 million workers were engaged in creative and cultural sector activities.¹⁰ This absolute number represents a substantial increase from 40.6 million workers in 2017-18, underscoring the expanding economic significance of culture-related industries in India's labour market. It also makes the culture-creative sector among the top employers in the Indian economy, particularly in urban areas. For instance, in urban areas alone, the cultural sector employs 16.7 per cent of all workers. This exceeds the combined employment in the construction (12 per cent of the workforce) and in highly skilled services such as financial services, information technology (IT) services and other professional services (2.74 per cent). This implies that the culture-creative sector is one of the largest employers in the Indian economy.

Although employment increased for both men and women in the sector, female employment expanded at a considerably higher rate, resulting in a higher women's share in employment across all stages of the culture-creative economy. In absolute terms, the number of women employed more than doubled over this period, rising from 9.2 million in 2017-18 to 18.8 million in 2025. This growth translated to women improving their share in total cultural workers from 23 per cent in 2017-18 to 34 per cent in 2025. This increase in women's employment share was observed across every stage of the culture-creative economy (see Figure 2), indicating broad-based employment growth for women throughout the sector. Male employment in the culture-creative sector increased from 31.4 million workers in 2017-18 to 38.2 million in 2025, representing a net addition of 6.8 million workers over the study period. While this growth was substantial, it was outpaced by the much faster expansion in female employment, leading to a decline in the share of men in employment in the sector from 77 per cent in 2017-18 to 66 per cent in 2025.

¹⁰ Authors' calculation using PLFS data for 2025, following the framework laid out in Table 1. The figure is census adjusted.

Figure 2: Gender Share within Workforce for Each Stage of the Culture-Creative Economy



Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18 and 2025

The manufacturing stage, particularly custom tailoring, emerged as an important source of female employment growth within the culture-creative sector. As noted earlier, the number of women employed in the cultural and creative sector has roughly doubled over the past five years, with much of this increase stemming from the rise in women engaged in tailoring. The custom tailoring industry, which employs around 11 million people across full-time and part-time roles, emerged as a major source of employment growth, contributing to 49.3 per cent of the employment increase among women between 2017-18 and 2025. Many women pursue tailoring as subsidiary work alongside household responsibilities, and

this trend has strengthened in recent years.¹¹ Beyond its economic relevance, tailoring also embodies India's cultural heritage, as most women tailors specialise in traditional Indian wear.

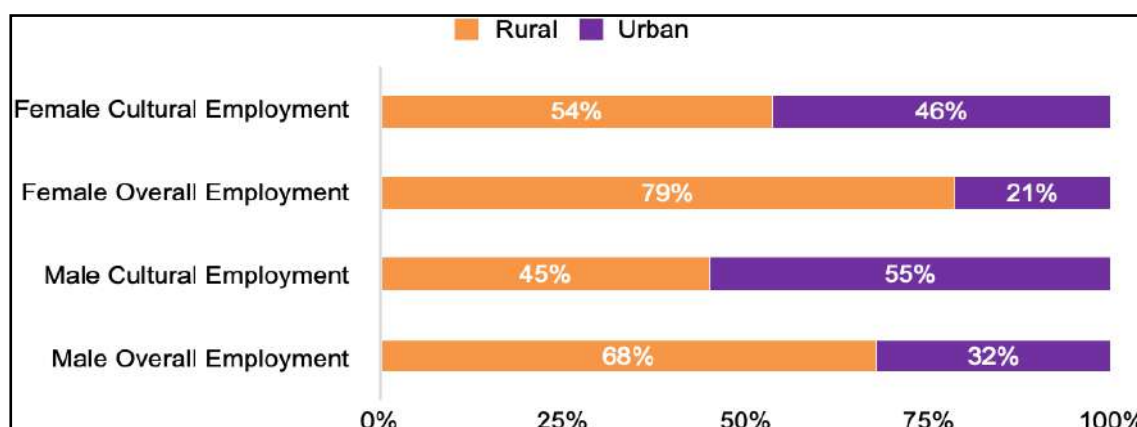
Unlike in many developed economies, where tailoring occupies a relatively small place within the cultural economy, it remains a significant cultural and economic activity in developing countries, particularly India. A substantial body of literature conceptualises garment-making as a form of cultural production, although it rarely treats tailoring as a distinct analytical category. The literature from developing countries engages more directly with tailoring as a

¹¹ An alternative source that also points to the growing adoption of custom tailoring is the sharp increase in India's imports of sewing machines (across all types). Between 2018–19 and 2025–26, India imported nearly 9.3 million sewing machines, with annual imports rising more than threefold, i.e., from 0.6 million units in 2018–19 to 2.1 million units in 2025–26. While these imports may also reflect demand from industrial manufacturing, the magnitude of the increase is broadly consistent with the expanding use of sewing equipment for tailoring. Evidence from the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), the Government of India's flagship skill development programme, further corroborates this trend. Even if treated with caution, PMKVY indicates strong demand for tailoring-related skills. Between 2015 and 2026, nearly 0.5 million individuals completed training as sewing machine operators, making it one of the most widely enrolled job roles under the scheme.

cultural and creative occupation. Anthropological research from Zambia portrays tailors and seamstresses as agents of stylistic innovation, who adapt garments to local cultural norms rather than merely produce standardised clothing (Hansen, 2022). Studies of creative-economy value chains similarly position tailors alongside designers and artisans as creative and supporting professions (England et al., 2021), while analyses of Global South fashion production describe garment producers as creators of economic, cultural and social value whose contributions are often overlooked in North-centric value-chain frameworks (Ikpe et al., 2024). In a context particularly relevant to this study, the ILO & UNESCO (2024) classify tailors as creative-sector professionals operating within an informal cultural economy dominated by own-account workers. Thus, tailoring can be seen as a cultural-creative activity as it involves customisation, embodied craftsmanship, the transmission of specialised skills and the creation of symbolic or identity-related value.

While the growth rate of female workers has been higher, the culture economy has a larger proportion of men, concentrated in urban areas, leading to an overall urban concentration. Men account for about 66 per cent of the culture-creative workforce, distributed across different cultural activities. Urban areas host about 52 per cent of culture-creative workers that points to the sector's dependence on agglomeration economies, consumer markets and infrastructure that remain disproportionately concentrated in cities. This urban bias is also evident across gender groups with 55 per cent of male and 46 per cent of female cultural workers being located in urban areas. Notwithstanding this pattern, cultural employment retains considerable significance as a livelihood source for rural women, suggesting that craft-based and heritage activities continue to provide an economic foothold in non-urban contexts where alternative employment opportunities for women remain limited (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Proportion of Male and Female Employment in Urban and Rural Areas in 2025

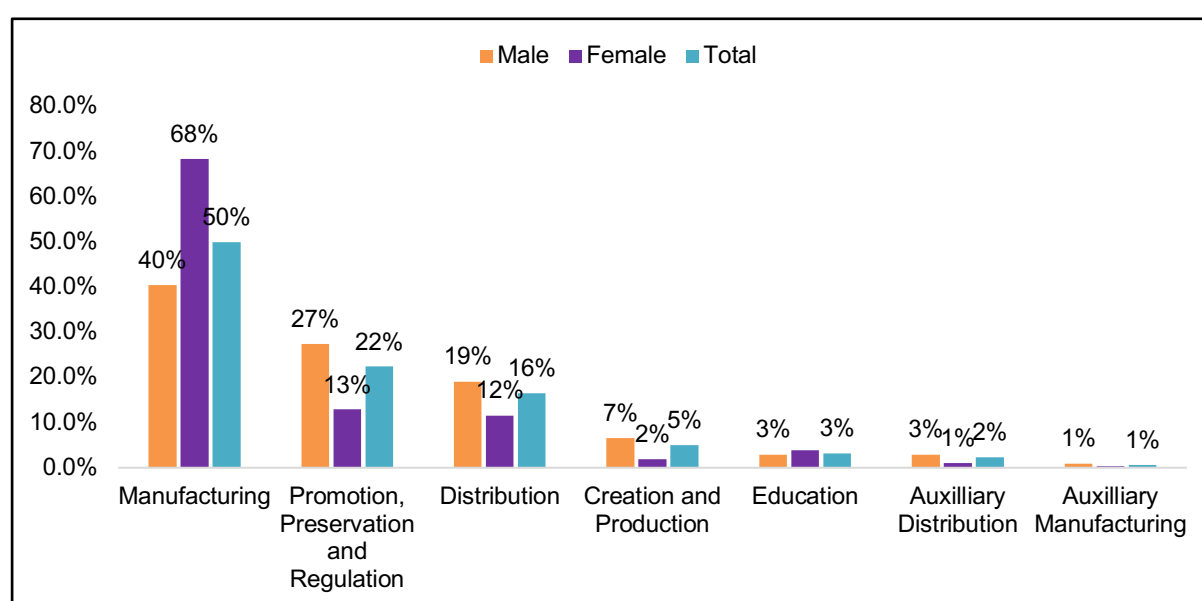


Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025

While manufacturing constitutes a major source of cultural employment, specifically for women, male employment in the sector is relatively diversified. Over half of all cultural and creative workers are engaged in the manufacture of culture-related goods, with women showing a notably higher concentration in this segment at around 68 per cent, compared to 40 per cent among men. While the breakdown of

manufacturing sub-sectors is discussed later, this finding is significant, as manufacturing serves as a key driver of employment and a catalyst for India's structural transformation. Male employment in the sector is distributed across several stages of the cultural economy, with notable representation in the promotion, preservation and regulation, distribution, and creation and production stages (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Proportion of Workers in Different Stages of the Creative Economy, 2025

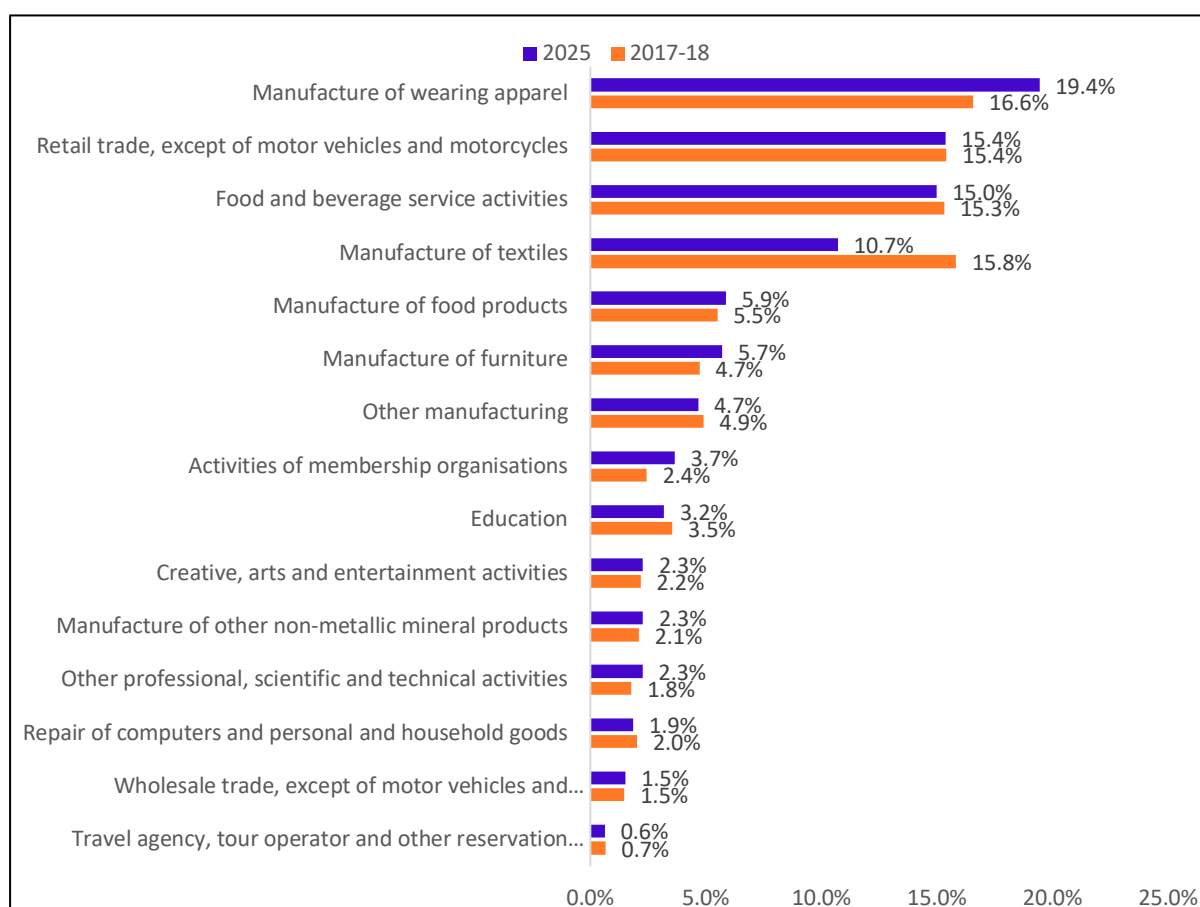


Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025

Within manufacturing, broad sectors include apparel, textiles, food products and services, and furniture. The top industries constituting the cultural workforce are the following: wearing apparel manufacturing, particularly tailoring (19.4 per cent); retailing of cultural goods like food products and sweets (15.4 per cent); food and beverage services, such as tea shops and ethnic restaurants (15 per cent); and textile

manufacturing, including carpets and embroidered fabrics (10.7 per cent). Among top industries, the sharpest increase is seen in the manufacturing of wearing apparel-tailoring (2.8 percentage points), activities of religious membership organisations (1.3 percentage points) and manufacturing of furniture (1 percentage point) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Change in Industry-wise Proportion of the Top 15 Industries in Culture Employment



Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18 and 2025

India's cultural economy continues to rely on traditional production models with limited diversification into higher-value creative services. Manufacturing remains the dominant stage of the cultural value chain, accounting for half of all cultural employment (50.02 per cent), driven almost entirely by the manufacturing of crafts and design goods (43.19 per cent). Culture and natural heritage is the second largest sector overall (40.73 per cent), spread primarily across promotion, preservation and regulation (20.70 per cent) and dissemination and distribution (9.67 per cent). All other sectors, namely, architecture, design, audio-visuals, music,

books, and advertising, together account for less than 9 per cent of total cultural employment, underscoring the limited diversification of India's cultural economy into knowledge-intensive creative services (Table 3). Some key highlights of the changing sectoral patterns are given below:

- Compared to 2017-18, there has been a modest decline of 0.92 percentage points in manufacturing's share in 2025, driven by a contraction in the crafts and design goods sub-sector (by 1.26 percentage points), partially offset by growth in culture and natural heritage manufacturing (0.39 percentage points). This suggests some, albeit limited,

structural rebalancing away from the most concentrated segment of cultural production.

- Between 2017-18 and 2025, promotion, preservation and regulation has recorded the largest absolute increase of any stage (1.25 percentage points), driven primarily by growth in culture and natural heritage activities (0.97 percentage points) and music, performing and visual arts (0.35 percentage points). This points to expanding public and institutional investment in heritage management, cultural administration and the performing arts, a positive development, though one that reflects institutional employment growth rather than market-driven creative activity.
- Creation and production, which encompasses the most intellectually and artistically intensive activities, has grown modestly (0.22 percentage points), with gains recorded in audio-visual, multimedia and photography (0.29 percentage points), design (0.20 percentage points), and culture and natural heritage (0.10 percentage points). These are encouraging directional signals, but the absolute shares involved of total cultural employment remain very small.

- The most notable contractions are in books and publishing (0.72 percentage points overall), music, performing and visual arts (0.25 percentage points in creation and production specifically), and educational activities (0.36 percentage points), suggesting that some traditional cultural sectors are losing employment share, possibly under pressure from digital substitution and changing consumption patterns.

It becomes clear that there is structural concentration of the culture-creative economy in manufacturing and heritage administration and that has not materially changed over seven years. Knowledge-intensive and market-oriented segments such as design, audio-visual, advertising and architecture collectively employ less than 7 per cent of cultural workers. The pace of structural transformation remains slow relative to the scale of the opportunity, and targeted policy intervention to accelerate the shift up the value chain remains warranted. Table A2 further provides absolute estimates of the number of workers in the cultural and creative economy by stage and sector for 2025, together with the change over the period 2017-18 to 2025.

Table 3: Proportion of Workers in Each Culture-Creative Sector and Stage in 2025 and Change in the Proportion from 2017-18

Culture-Creative Stage	Culture - Creative Sector								
	Culture and Natural heritage	Architecture	Design: product, graphic and fashion	Audio-visual, multimedia and photography	Music, performing and visual arts	Books and publishing	Manufacturing of crafts and design goods	Advertising and marketing	Total
Creation and Production	0.11%	0.61%	0.90%	1.73%	1.01%	0.30%	NA	0.31%	4.95%
	(0.10)	(0.04)	(0.20)	(0.29)	(-0.25)	(-0.28)	NA	(0.11)	(0.22)
Manufacturing	6.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.03%	0.02%	0.00%	43.19%	0.00%	50.02%
	(0.39)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(-0.02)	(-0.03)	(0.00)	(-1.26)	(0.00)	(-0.92)
Dissemination and Distribution	9.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.04%	0.01%	0.40%	6.34%	0.00%	16.47%
	(0.38)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(-0.08)	(-0.07)	(-0.31)	(0.08)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Promotion, Preservation and Regulation	20.70%	0.00%	0.00%	0.36%	1.17%	0.08%	0.10%	0.00%	22.41%
	(0.97)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(-0.03)	(0.35)	(-0.11)	(0.06)	(0.00)	(1.25)
Educational Activities	3.22%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	NA	0.00%	3.22%
	(-0.36)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	NA	(0.00)	(-0.36)
Manufacturing Auxiliary	0.15%	0.00%	0.00%	0.30%	0.00%	0.02%	0.19%	0.00%	0.65%
	(-0.05)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(-0.03)	(0.00)	(-0.02)	(0.08)	(0.00)	(-0.03)
Trade and Repair Auxiliary	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	1.52%	0.03%	0.00%	0.63%	0.00%	2.27%
	(-0.02)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(-0.21)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.07)	(0.00)	(-0.16)
Total	40.73%	0.61%	0.90%	3.97%	2.24%	0.80%	50.44%	0.31%	100.00%
	(1.41)	(0.04)	(0.20)	(-0.08)	(0.00)	(-0.72)	(-0.97)	(0.11)	NA

Note: Change in proportion from the year 2017-18 is reported in parenthesis

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025 and 2017-18

The cultural and creative industries tend to employ a more educated workforce, particularly among women. A significantly smaller share of workers in this sector lacks formal education compared to the overall labour force (Figure 6A). A fairly significant proportion of workers in the cultural and creative fields have completed higher secondary education or above. This probably reflects the strong and mutually reinforcing relationship between culture and education,¹² a trend that is even more pronounced among women workers. This is also aligned with global trends. According to the OECD, cultural and creative workers tend to be highly educated and skilled compared to the overall workforce. On average, across OECD countries, 62 per cent of cultural and creative employees hold a tertiary degree, compared to 40 per cent of the workforce more generally.¹³

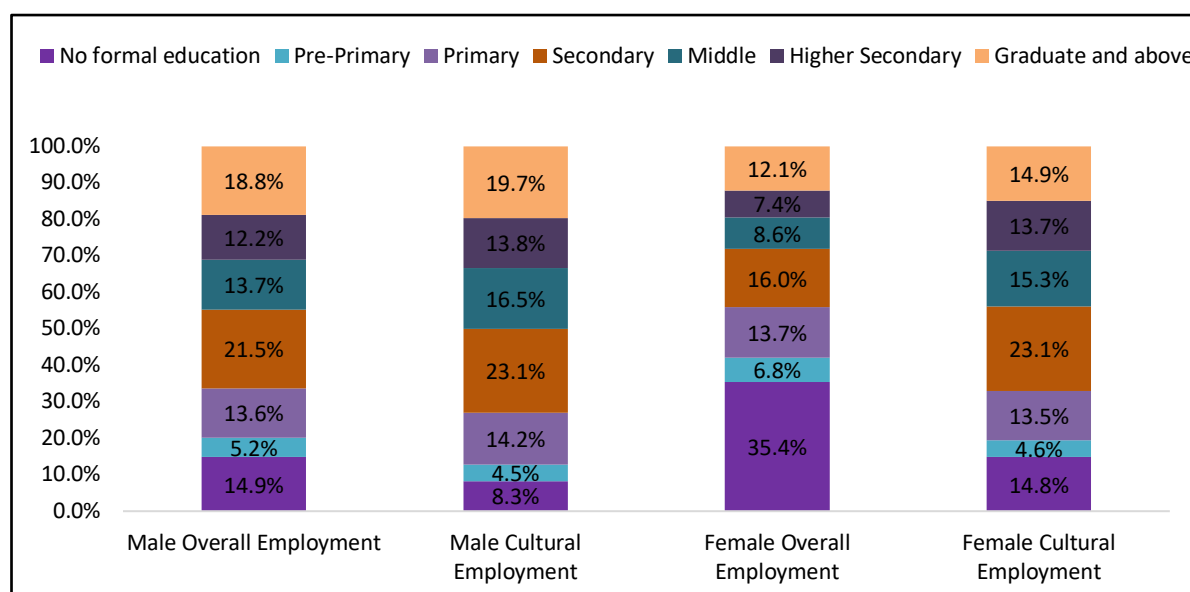
Interestingly, it is observed that relatively younger cohorts are absorbed in the cultural-creative industries as compared to the overall labour force. Overall, 28 per cent of all cultural workers were young (15-29 age group) as compared to 25 per cent in the country. This divergence is more pronounced for women as compared to men, indicating the greater participation of young women in the cultural economy (Figure 6B). Conversely, the proportion of workers aged 60 and above is lower in this sector compared to the overall economy. This is contrary to the belief that engagement in the culture-creative industries, particularly crafts-based fields, is waning amongst young people. Data shows that younger people, particularly women, are opting for these fields in varied capacities, making it an important field from the perspective of the future of work.

¹² UNESCO. For details see <https://www.unesco.org/en/about-culture-education#:~:text=Through%20its%20standard%2Dsetting%20instruments,there%20an%20urgent%20need%20now?>

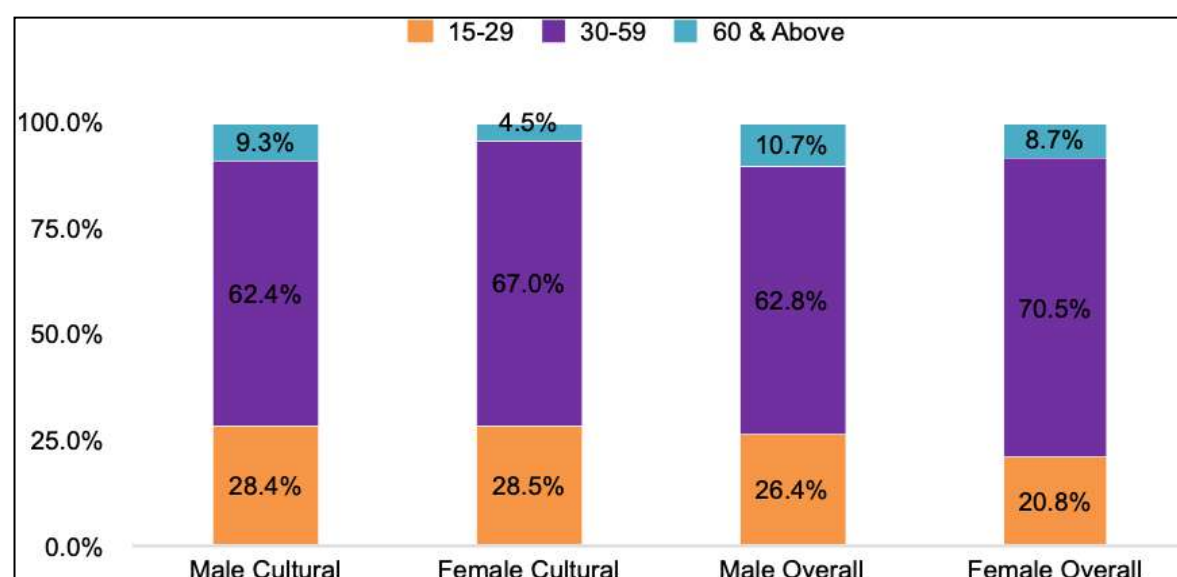
¹³ OECD (2022).

Figure 6A & B: Proportion of Workers in the Culture-Creative Economy by Education and Age in 2025

A. Educational distribution for male and female workers



B. Age distribution of male and female workers



Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025

The sector also remains geographically concentrated. Nearly half the workforce is located in five states, namely, Uttar Pradesh (12 per cent), West Bengal (9.8 per cent), Maharashtra (9.2 per cent), Tamil Nadu (9 per cent), and Gujarat (8.3 per cent).

However, in the past six years, the fastest expansion in employment has been in emerging growth centres such as Assam (1.25 percentage points), Kerala (0.99 percentage points), Odisha (0.73 percentage points), and Jharkhand (0.69 percentage

points). This trend signals a gradual but meaningful geographical diversification of the cultural and creative economy, highlighting the need for targeted policy support to strengthen regional ecosystems and promote balanced sectoral development across states.

Low and medium skilled manufacturing and sales workers constitute the backbone of the cultural economy in India.¹⁴ Nearly half

(45 per cent) of the cultural economy is constituted by low and medium skilled workers in manufacturing and sales. Women are heavily concentrated in manufacturing, particularly as food processing, garment, craft goods and handicraft workers. Men are more evenly distributed across the cultural economy, with high representation across low and medium skilled occupations (see Table 4).

Table 4: Distribution of Cultural Workers by Top Occupations (%)

Occupation	Male	Female	Total
Workers in Food Processing, Woodworking, Garment and Other Craft and Related Trades	15.80%	47.50%	26.70%
Sales Workers	21.00%	12.70%	18.20%
Handicraft and Printing Workers	7.90%	11.10%	9.00%
Personal Service Workers	9.30%	5.70%	8.10%
Stationary Plant and Machine Operators	5.60%	3.60%	4.90%
Legal, Social and Cultural Professionals	6.30%	1.50%	4.60%
Labourers in Mining, Construction, Manufacturing and Transport	4.50%	3.80%	4.30%
Building and Related Trade Workers (Excluding Electricians)	5.80%	0.50%	4.00%
Chief Executives, Senior Officials and Legislators	3.50%	1.40%	2.80%
Legal, Social, Cultural and Related Associate Professionals	2.50%	0.50%	1.80%

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025

For any economic activity to be sustainable, it must ensure adequate livelihood opportunities. In 2025, the average real daily wage¹⁵ of workers in the cultural and creative economy was slightly above the national average, maintaining the trend observed seven years earlier. The sector also saw a slight increase of 5.6 per cent in the overall real wages paid per day between 2017-18 and 2025. This increase was

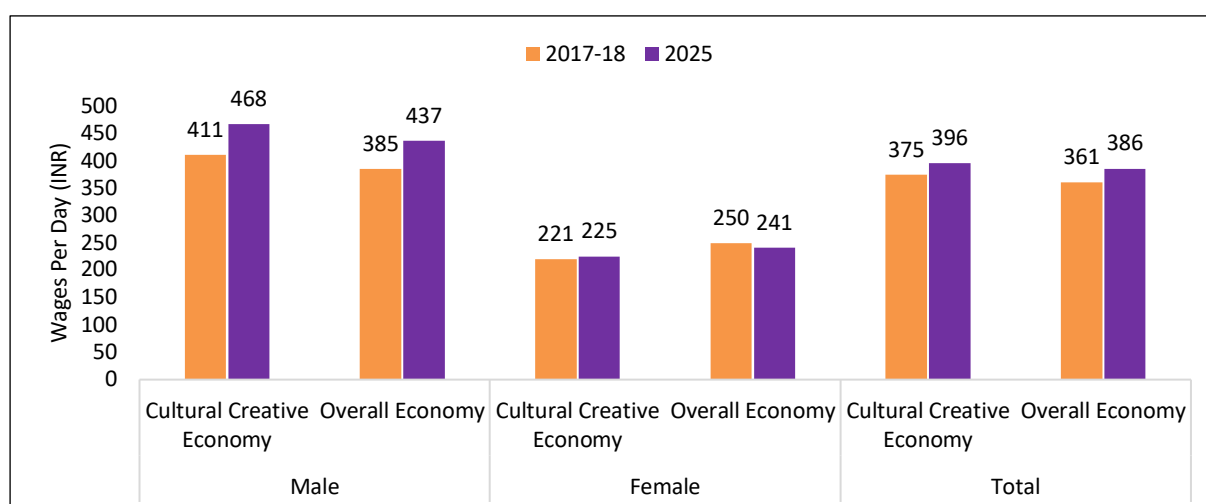
primarily driven by an increase in the real daily wages of men in the cultural-creative sector, whereas the real wages for women were largely stagnant. This change exacerbated the already substantial gender gap in the sector, underscoring the need for targeted policy measures to address wage disparities and promote equitable income growth within the sector (Figure 7).

¹⁴ The occupation codes and their respective skill levels are taken as per the [NCO-2015 Occupations](#). They are classified as follows:

1. Highly Skilled - Legislators, Senior Officials, Managers, Professionals and Associate Professionals.
2. Medium Skilled – Clerks, Service Workers, Shop & Market Sales Workers, Skilled Agricultural & Fishery Workers, Craft & Related Trades Workers and Plant, Machine Operators & Assemblers.
3. Low Skilled – Elementary Occupations.

¹⁵ We take 2017-18 as the base year to estimate real wages with the [CPI-Combined](#) index being used as the deflator. We further match the wages being estimated within two-digit NIC-2008 codes within the CWS schedule of the PLFS to five-digit NIC-2008 codes within the PS+SS schedule, on the assumption that if a two-digit NIC-2008 code is similar in both the schedules, then the wages can be matched across the two schedules. The match rate was 90.26 per cent in 2025 and 94.8 per cent in 2017-18.

Figure 7: Distribution of Real Wages by Gender over Time



Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18 and 2025

Taken together, the findings from this section reveal that while employment in India's culture and creative economy is large and growing, it is structurally constrained. With 57 million workers, nearly 9 per cent of India's total workforce, the sector is among the country's most significant employers and its expansion over the past five years has been substantial. The rising participation of women is particularly notable, with female employment more than doubling over this period. Yet the picture that emerges is one of growth concentrated at the bottom of the value chain.

The sector also exhibits pronounced sectoral and geographical concentration, accompanied by significant gender wage disparities that need to be addressed. Over half the sector's workforce is engaged in manufacturing, dominated by traditional, low-skill activities such as tailoring, food processing and handicraft production.¹⁶

Knowledge-intensive segments such as design, multimedia, architecture, and audio-visual production together account for less than 6 per cent of employment. Wages in the sector have slipped below the national average, driven by declining earnings among women. And geographic concentration persists, with nearly half the workforce located in just five states. While the sector employs millions, it does not yet reward them adequately or deploy the workforce across the full creative value chain. Understanding why requires looking beyond labour market data to the structural and systemic challenges that shape the conditions under which these workers operate, which are examined in detail in the next section.

5. Challenges Faced by India's Culture-Creative Industries

The culture-creative economy in India struggles with certain deep rooted systemic challenges, which not only undermine the

¹⁶ <https://www.councilonsustainabledevelopment.org/post/india-s-creative-economy-why-india-needs-to-focus-on-the-handicrafts-sector> (last accessed on 20 August, 2026).

economic potential of the sector but also contribute to the marginalisation of artists and the erosion of traditional art forms.^{17,18} Some of these are as follows.

- **Insufficient Funding and Limited Financial Access** – Livelihood generation in the sector continues to be challenging due to chronic underfunding, irregular public investment and risk-averse private financing. Micro-enterprises, artists and traditional artisans often struggle to access formal credit due to a lack of collateral, minimal financial literacy and lack of options tailored to creative livelihoods.
- **Market Access and Commercialisation Constraints** – Artisans and small creators often face barriers in accessing profitable markets, leaving them dependent on intermediaries who capture a disproportionate share of value. To meet mass-market or tourist-driven demand, many traditional art forms are simplified or homogenised,

leading to the dilution of their cultural integrity and authenticity.

- **Infrastructure Deficiencies** – Inadequate physical and digital infrastructure continues to impede sectoral growth. Poor transportation connectivity, unreliable power supply and uneven internet access disrupt both the production and distribution of cultural goods and services. These deficits are especially acute in rural and artisanal clusters, hampering access to markets and audiences.
- **Intellectual Property (IP) Vulnerability** – Piracy, counterfeiting and unauthorised reproduction remain pervasive. Weak enforcement of IP laws, outdated legal frameworks and limited awareness of IP rights, particularly among rural and small-scale creators, diminish the commercial value of original works and deprive artists of fair compensation (see Box 1 for Prada-Kolhapuri case).

¹⁷ <https://www.councilonsustainabledevelopment.org/post/india-s-creative-economy-why-india-needs-to-focus-on-the-handicrafts-sector>

¹⁸ https://www.orfonline.org/research/catalysing-cultural-entrepreneurship-in-india#_edn21

Box 1: The Prada Paradox: Cultural Misappropriation and Intellectual Property Challenges of India's Kolhapuri Chappals

A recent controversy illustrates how India's rich crafts, despite global appeal, remain vulnerable to commercial exploitation due to gaps in IP laws, undervaluation in global value chains and inadequate recognition for artisans.

Kolhapuri chappals are handcrafted in Kolhapur and nearby districts in the Indian State of Maharashtra, with origins tracing back to the 12th-13th century, when they were produced for royalty. They were granted Geographical Indication (GI) status in 2019.

At Milan Fashion Week 2025, Prada unveiled leather sandals bearing a striking resemblance to *Kolhapuri chappals*. The brand acknowledged the design inspiration, prompting widespread criticism in India over cultural appropriation and insufficient credit to artisans who have perfected this craft over centuries.

- **Price and Value Distortions:** While genuine Kolhapuri chappals retail between ₹400–₹4,000 (~ US\$5 - US\$45), Prada's version was priced at ~ US\$1,350, spotlighting the disproportionate value captured by global luxury brands versus local artisans. The controversy amplified India's longstanding challenge of under-pricing its cultural and craft-based products in international markets.
- **IP and GI Protection Gaps:** Kolhapuri chappals carry a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in India, safeguarding their name and heritage. However, India's GI regime primarily protects the *name*, not the *design aesthetic*. Since Prada avoided using the GI-tagged name, legal recourse was limited. This exposed gaps in India's IP and GI frameworks in protecting cultural expressions, traditional designs and artisanal knowledge from unauthorised commercial use.
- **Loss of value:** The episode triggered debates on cultural misappropriation, lack of benefit-sharing with traditional artisans, weak legal protection for traditional designs and cultural aesthetics, and the need for stronger global frameworks to safeguard intangible cultural heritage.

Imitation may initially appear to be a form of praise, but for traditional artisans and local craft economies, it often results in subtle yet significant economic marginalisation. The conflict between Prada and the artisans who create genuine Kolhapuri chappals highlights the gaps in India's legal framework for protecting traditional cultural goods and knowledge. Despite India's active advocacy for stronger safeguards at international platforms, its domestic legislation remains inadequate.

Following public backlash, Maharashtra has begun exploring enhanced GI protection and support mechanisms for artisans, including expanding GI coverage, strengthening enforcement and promoting authentic Kolhapuri products in global markets.

- **Skill Gaps and Limited Formal Training** – There is a persistent mismatch between the evolving needs of the culture-creative economy and the skills available among traditional artisans and smaller enterprises, such as the need for digital literacy, design innovation, marketing and business management. Many lack support systems to adapt their products for contemporary markets or effectively leverage digital tools for promotion and sales.
- **Technology-Driven Challenges** – Rapid technological change has brought new threats, such as mass-produced replicas, cheaper machine-made alternatives and increased piracy. These undermine the uniqueness and market value of handmade and original creative works. Creative and content-producing occupations are among the most exposed to generative AI. Early evidence suggests that AI is already reducing demand for some forms of illustration, translation, editing and routine content creation, although current research indicates that job transformation and income pressure are more widespread than outright job displacement (Gmyrek et al., 2025).

Despite longstanding challenges, the past decade has seen significant momentum across government, private sector and civil society towards strengthening India's creative and cultural economy. An emerging multi-layered policy approach now integrates heritage preservation, market access, digital adoption, export promotion and legal protection. These efforts have helped unlock opportunities for artisans,

designers and creative entrepreneurs, particularly in the handloom and handicrafts sectors.

6. Policy Recommendations for Enhancing India's Cultural and Creative Economic Potential

The empirical analysis in Section 4 reveals that while there has been rapid employment growth in the culture-creative economy, structural constraints persist that limit the quality, equity and economic value of that employment. The above discussion highlights a series of inter-related challenges – the sector's limited progression up the cultural value chain, the inequitable distribution of gains, particularly for women, and the vulnerability of its underlying assets to misappropriation. The policy recommendations below are organised accordingly.

I. Institutional, Data and Governance

Foundations: The absence of a coherent institutional framework is itself a structural constraint. Culture-creative activities are currently distributed across multiple ministerial mandates without a co-ordinating mechanism for strategy, data or monitoring. A foundational challenge underlying this is the horizontal nature of the sector. Because cultural and creative activities span several NIC divisions rather than forming a distinct sector in India's national accounts, standard statistical systems do not readily yield an aggregate measure of the sector's economic contribution. This paper addresses part of this challenge through an employment-based NIC mapping methodology, but

value-added estimation remains constrained by the unavailability of disaggregated data at the five-digit NIC level. Developing a dedicated Cultural Satellite Account, analogous to the Tourism Satellite Account that India already maintains, would provide the institutional and statistical infrastructure to measure the sector's full economic contribution systematically and on a recurring basis. This should be treated as a priority data investment, given that the absence of credible aggregate figures weakens the sector's claim to policy attention and public resources. Beyond measurement, formally recognising cultural enterprises as a distinct industrial and startup classification, separate from generic MSME frameworks, would enable targeted credit, incentives and regulatory instruments calibrated to their specific characteristics.

II. Value Chain Development: The concentration of cultural employment in low-value manufacturing, particularly wearing apparel, food and beverage services, and textiles reflects a broader failure to capture higher-value stages of the creative value chain. Product design, audio-visual production and multimedia together account for a smaller share of total cultural employment and have seen only marginal growth since 2017-18. Shifting this balance requires a national creative workforce skilling programme distinct from existing generic skilling initiatives, fiscal incentives for enterprises in design, animation and audio-visual production, and simplified formalisation procedures that do not

penalise smaller units. Mobilising private and philanthropic investment through regulatory streamlining would complement public expenditure.

III. A Gender-Specific Policy Agenda:

Female employment in the sector more than doubled between 2017-18 and 2023-24, yet a majority of women cultural workers remain in manufacturing, primarily tailoring and food processing, and women's real wages have declined relative to the national average. This is feminisation of the lower end of the value chain and not equitable inclusion. Effective policy responses require, first, a strengthened evidence base that distinguishes principal from subsidiary employment among women, tracks wage trends by segment and examines occupational mobility over time. Second, upward mobility pathways, integrating design, digital marketing and entrepreneurship training into existing schemes such as PM Vishwakarma and SHG-linked programmes, are needed to move women from production into higher-value roles. Third, dedicated credit instruments and collateral-free lending for women-led cultural enterprises would address the financial exclusion that generic MSME windows do not adequately reach. Fourth, where culture-creative industry clusters are established, their design should account for childcare, transportation and workspace constraints that disproportionately limit women's access, particularly in rural areas. Finally, formal representation for women artisans in any inter-ministerial governance

structure should be treated as a design requirement, not an afterthought.

IV. Intellectual Property Protection. The Prada-Kolhapuri case illustrates a structural gap in India's IP framework with direct economic consequences for artisans. India's GI regime protects product names but not design aesthetics or artisanal techniques. Consequently, traditional designs and techniques, such as Kolhapuri forms, Warli and Madhubani motifs, Banarasi and Chanderi weave structures, can be appropriated without legal liability or any obligation to share benefits with the communities that created them. Closing this gap requires extending GI protection to cover design aesthetics and traditional techniques, establishing a specialised IP cell with accessible legal support for rural and informal producers, and building IP literacy systematically into artisan skilling programmes. Community-level IP registers documenting traditional designs at the district level would provide both preventive and legal recourse mechanisms. India's established position at WIPO should be reinforced by domestic legislative reform – the emerging use of generative AI to replicate traditional motifs without attribution warrants specific attention in both domestic regulation and international engagement.

V. Market Access, Digital Infrastructure and Data: The marginal decline in employment in dissemination and distribution between 2017-18 and 2023-24 points to persistent barriers in logistics, digital outreach and market

connectivity. Improving market access requires investment in supply chain infrastructure, quality certification and branding support for culturally significant products, with targeted outreach to ensure that platforms such as ODOP and GeM reach small and women-led cultural enterprises. A government-backed digital platform providing affordable access to design software, cloud infrastructure and e-commerce connectivity would reduce barriers for audio-visual and design enterprises that show growth potential in the data but remain underdeveloped.

VI. Ensure a Smooth Transition for Creative Workers in the AI Economy: As generative AI transforms creative industries, the government should adopt a comprehensive strategy to protect livelihoods, safeguard creators' rights and enable workers to benefit from technological change. This should include strengthening copyright and intellectual property frameworks to ensure transparency, consent, attribution and fair compensation when creative works are used to train AI systems; investing in large-scale reskilling and AI literacy programmes that help creative professionals adapt and move into higher-value roles; expanding social protection and income-support mechanisms for freelance and self-employed creators affected by technological disruption; and establishing transition funds, grants and public procurement programmes that sustain demand for human creativity. Policy makers should also support the development of new markets and

certification systems for human-created content, promote fair competition in digital markets, and invest in public digital infrastructure that allows creators to access AI tools and benefit from productivity gains. Particular attention should be paid to women and other groups concentrated in creative and knowledge-intensive occupations that face higher exposure to AI-driven labour market disruption.

The areas of intervention outlined above are mutually reinforcing. A co-ordinated strategy addressing them together offers the most credible pathway to converting India's cultural economy from a large but structurally constrained employer into a dynamic, equitable and globally competitive sector that generates sustainable livelihoods, protects India's cultural heritage and contributes meaningfully to the country's broader development trajectory.

7. Conclusion

Employment calculations made in this paper show that India's culture-creative economy is considerably larger than existing policy frameworks and national accounting systems have recognised. The empirical estimates presented in this paper indicate that nearly 9 per cent of India's total workforce are engaged in cultural and creative activities, placing the sector among the country's most significant sources of employment. The growth recorded over the seven-year reference period is substantial, and the more than doubling of female employment points to the sector's increasing importance as a livelihood source, particularly in rural and informal labour

markets where alternative opportunities remain limited. The disaggregated analysis attempted in this paper also reveals that employment growth is concentrated in low-value manufacturing; knowledge-intensive segments account for a disproportionately small share of the workforce; real wages for women have stagnated and the sector's underlying cultural assets remain vulnerable to commercial misappropriation. This reflects the absence of a coherent institutional and statistical framework within which the cultural economy can be measured, governed and systematically invested in.

This paper is, by design, a primer. The employment estimates developed here, derived by mapping NIC codes to a culturally adapted classification framework and applied to PLFS unit-level data, constitute a necessary first step, but not a sufficient one. A fuller accounting of the sector's economic contribution requires disaggregated value-added data at the five-digit NIC level that are not currently available, and the development of a dedicated Cultural Satellite Account analogous to India's existing Tourism Satellite Account. Future work will extend this framework to output and value-added estimation using the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE), the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), and National Accounts Statistics (NAS). The ambition is to make India's cultural economy sufficiently visible in national accounts and policy frameworks to be protected, equitably developed and positioned as a genuine driver of inclusive growth.

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Appendix

Table A1: Stages of Economic Value Chains, Their Scope and Detailed NIC Industries Codes Mapped for India

Stages	Scope	NIC 2008 Industries
Creation and Production	It includes all activities relating to the elaboration of artistic ideas by authors of literary and musical or scenography works, plastic artists and craftsmen, and performers, as well as activities aimed at defining cultural products or services.	NIC 3-digit: 581, 592 NIC 4-digit: 5911, 7110, 7310, 7410, 9311 NIC 5-digit: 58203, 74201, 74202, 74203, 74209, 90001, 90003, 90004, 90005
Manufacturing	It includes activities of reproduction of cultural property (records, videos, etc.).	NIC 3-digit: 321, 322 NIC 4-digit: 1102, 1311, 1312, 1313, 1393, 1820 NIC 5-digit: 10201, 10301, 10304, 10305, 10306, 10401, 10504, 10505, 10618, 10712, 10719, 10722, 10723, 10724, 10725, 10726, 10727, 10732, 10733, 10734, 10739, 10791, 10792, 10793, 10795, 10796, 10797, 11012, 11042, 13991, 13992, 14105, 14202, 14309, 15116, 16294, 16296, 20234, 20236, 20237, 20238, 20239, 20293, 21003, 21004, 21009, 23106, 23107, 23931, 23933, 23960, 31001, 31002, 32401, 32402, 32405, 32409
Dissemination and distribution	It includes activities necessary for cultural products to be consumed by end-users, such as the marketing and distribution of books and magazines or music media.	NIC 4-digit: 4742, 4751, 4762, 4764, 4774 NIC 5-digit: 46304, 46306, 46308, 46491, 46492, 46493, 46498, 46695, 46697, 47214, 47215, 47221, 47412, 47531, 47591, 47592, 47611, 47612, 47722, 47733, 47735, 47738, 47810, 47890
Promotion and regulation	These are the activities carried out by public administrations to promote culture and regulate the sector, and cultural activities.	NIC 3-digit: 932 NIC 4-digit: 5913, 5914, 6020, 6391, 7721, 7722, 7911, 7912, 7990, 8130, 9101, 9102, 9103, 9312, 9319, 9412, 9491, 9499, 9524 NIC 5-digit: 56101, 56103, 56104, 56210, 56292, 56302, 56303, 56304, 74204, 77292, 77293, 86901, 86902, 86903, 90002, 90006, 90009, 96906
Educational and Training	They are educational activities linked to culture, such as teaching music and dance, for example.	NIC 4-digit: 7220, 8541, 8542 NIC 5-digit: 85301, 85499
Auxiliary activities	They are activities that do not produce cultural property in the strict sense, but have a cultural connotation, and include activities that enable and facilitate cultural activities (manufacture and marketing of musical instruments, for example), or the use and enjoyment of cultural property (manufacture and marketing of photographic equipment or video and sound players, for example).	NIC 3-digit: 267, 268, 323 NIC 4-digit: 4763, 9512, 9521 NIC 5-digit: 26104, 26105, 26202, 26204, 26301, 26304, 26401, 26402, 26403, 26404, 26405, 26406, 26409, 28253, 28254, 28259, 28261, 28262, 28263, 28265, 28293, 33126, 46495, 46522, 46523, 46595, 46599, 47595, 47731, 95240, 95292, 95293, 95295

Source: Eustat (2022) and NIC 2008.

Table A2: No. of Workers in Each Culture-Creative Sector and Stage in 2025 and Change in the Number of Workers from 2017-18

Culture-Creative Stage	Culture-Creative Domain/Sector								Total
	Culture and Natural Heritage	Architecture	Design: Product, Graphic and Fashion	Audio-visual, Multimedia and Photography	Music, Performing and Visual Arts	Books and Publishing	Manufacturing of Crafts and Design Goods	Advertising and Marketing	
Creation and Production	61,193	3,46,168	5,10,511	9,86,451	5,73,189	1,70,614	-	1,76,913	28,25,038
	58,417	1,16,022	2,27,402	4,02,712	65,118	-63,307		95,871	9,02,234
Manufacturing	38,65,996	-	-	16,850	14,099	-	2,46,28,653	-	2,85,25,598
	12,69,173	-	-	-2,360	-7,356	-	65,73,048	-	78,32,503
Distribution	55,15,908	-	-	25,061	4,168	2,30,337	36,15,500	-	93,90,975
	17,41,078	-	-	-26,502	-26,468	-60,017	10,72,023	-	27,00,117
Promotion, Preservation and Regulation	1,18,03,512	-	-	2,03,668	6,67,689	44,891	57,409	-	1,27,77,171
	37,90,848	-	-	48,042	3,32,334	-30,373	42,722	-	41,83,574
Education	18,36,399	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18,36,399
	3,81,688	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,81,688
Auxiliary Manufacturing	85,860	-	-	1,70,127	-	9,607	1,07,435	-	3,73,029
	3,907	-	-	35,163	-	-6,187	62,987	-	95,870
Auxiliary Distribution	60,162	-	-	8,64,491	15,533	-	3,56,643	-	12,96,828
	8,570	-	-	1,63,838	4,326	-	1,29,408	-	3,06,143
Total	2,32,29,029	3,46,168	5,10,511	22,66,647	12,74,678	4,55,450	2,87,65,640	1,76,913	5,70,25,037
	72,53,682	1,16,022	2,27,402	6,20,893	3,67,954	-1,59,884	78,80,186	95,871	1,64,02,130

Note: Change in Number of workers from the year 2017-18 is reported in the second row of each cell

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025 and 2017-18

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