



A New Creative Economy

There was a time when creativity was seen as something separate from the economy – treated as culture, not capital; expression, not infrastructure. That distinction is now changing.

Creative industries today sit at the center of how societies communicate, consume, work, learn and imagine the future. Creators, intellectual property, digital culture, artificial intelligence, gaming, film, design, music and storytelling are no longer peripheral sectors. They are increasingly shaping markets, livelihoods, public discourse, technological development and national identity.

Across the world, countries are beginning to recognize that culture is not only a source of soft power, but also a driver of economic growth, innovation and global influence. Algorithms now shape visibility. Platforms shape incomes. Artificial intelligence is changing how creative work is produced, distributed and valued. In this moment of transition, the future of creativity cannot be left only to market forces, platform decisions or rapid technological change. It needs thoughtful frameworks, stronger dialogue and institutions that can support creators, consumers and creative businesses alike.

This is where iOrange begins.

“Because the future of creativity will not be built accidentally. It must be shaped with intention.”

iOrange, an Indicc Initiative, is a platform dedicated to strengthening India’s orange economy through conversations around creator welfare, consumer welfare, responsible AI, intellectual property, investment and trade promotion, cultural innovation, and knowledge dissemination. Our objective is not only to observe the transformation of creative industries, but to actively contribute to the frameworks that will support their future.



AI Music Fraud: When Fake Artists Hijack Real Voices

AI-generated tracks are increasingly being uploaded under the names of real musicians, exploiting their identity, audience reach, and platform credibility for illicit monetization. The issue points to a growing vulnerability in the digital music economy: weak artist verification, high-volume AI music generation, and fragmented distribution systems are allowing impersonators to attach synthetic content to established artist profiles. For creators, the harm goes beyond lost royalties – it affects reputation, algorithmic visibility, listener trust, and control over artistic identity. As platforms introduce artist protection tools and transparency tags, the case highlights the urgent need for stronger verification, faster takedowns, and clearer accountability across AI companies, distributors, and streaming platforms.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

From Cultural Asset to Economic Infrastructure: India's **Creative** Economy Gets Institutional Recognition

Speaking at the CII Annual Business Summit 2026, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) Secretary Dr. Saurabh Garg highlighted how creative and digital industries are now among the fastest-growing segments of India's economy. From intellectual property and gaming to influencer-led businesses, digital content, film, music and design, the country is beginning to formally acknowledge creativity as measurable economic infrastructure rather than informal cultural activity.

The government is now working toward new frameworks to better measure and formalize the "knowledge economy," including the introduction of an Index of Services Production – similar to the Index of Industrial Production used for manufacturing. Updated industrial classifications have also begun recognizing emerging sectors such as video game publishing, influencer businesses and blogging.

The shift signals something larger: India is entering an institutional phase for the orange economy.

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- India is witnessing the transition of creativity from a "soft sector" to a strategic economic sector.
- Formal recognition of creators, gaming, digital content and cultural IP indicates a major policy shift.
- Measurement frameworks matter – what governments measure eventually receives investment and institutional support.
- The future of the orange economy will likely revolve around:
 - Responsible AI
 - Creator rights
 - Platform governance
 - IP monetization
 - Cultural exports
 - Digital labour protections

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Policy Watch



The Era of Casual Influence Is Ending – India’s **Creator** Economy Is Becoming an Industry

According to Kofluence’s *Decoding Influence: Annual Research Report 2026*, India’s influencer marketing sector – currently valued between ₹3,000–3,500 crore – is projected to grow to nearly ₹5,000 crore by 2027, sustaining a strong 22% CAGR.

Reports suggest that the creator economy has crossed a structural threshold.

Brands are no longer treating influencer campaigns as “soft branding exercises.” Instead, creators are increasingly being integrated into measurable business operations tied directly to ROI, revenue targets and long-term marketing strategies. Around 15% of India’s active creators are now registered as formal business entities or GST individuals – signaling the rise of creators as organized economic actors rather than informal internet personalities.

The numbers reflect the scale of this transformation:

- India now has an estimated 4–4.4 million active creators.
- Instagram continues to dominate as the primary creator infrastructure.
- Nano creators (1K–10K followers) constitute the largest creator segment.
- Tier 2, Tier 3 and Tier 4 cities are emerging as the next major growth engines for creator-led commerce and regional storytelling.

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The Oscars define what counts as human creativity

Oscars tighten AI rules for actors and writers

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has introduced new eligibility rules for the 99th Academy Awards, drawing a clearer boundary around the use of artificial intelligence in filmmaking. Under the revised rules, screenplays must be **human-authored** to qualify, while acting awards will only recognize performances “demonstrably performed by humans with their consent.” The Academy may also ask filmmakers to disclose how AI tools were used and how much human involvement shaped the final work. The move builds on earlier guidance that AI use would neither help nor harm a film’s Oscar chances, but that voters should consider whether human creativity remained central to the work. The changes reflect Hollywood’s growing concern over AI-assisted writing, voice cloning, digital doubles and synthetic performers, while signaling that major cultural institutions are beginning to institutionalize norms around creative labour, consent and authorship in the age of AI.

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U.S. lawmakers move to protect creators from AI “style theft”

A bipartisan group of U.S. lawmakers has introduced the CREATOR Act, a proposed federal law aimed at protecting visual artists from unauthorized AI-generated imitations of their distinctive style. The bill would allow creators to sue platforms or individuals who knowingly use AI to copy their artistic style for commercial gain. It seeks to fill a major gap in existing copyright law, which protects specific works but does not clearly protect an artist’s broader visual identity or signature style. The proposal also includes safe-harbour provisions for AI platforms that comply with notice-and-takedown requirements. Backed by Adobe, the bill attempts to draw a legal line between artistic inspiration and AI-enabled impersonation. For the creator economy, the development signals a growing institutional shift: style, authorship and creative identity are increasingly being treated not just as cultural expression, but as protectable economic assets.

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Zee sues Nykaa over music use on Instagram Reels

Zee Entertainment has filed a copyright lawsuit against beauty and fashion retailer Nykaa in the Delhi High Court, alleging that Nykaa used Zee-owned songs in Instagram reels to promote its products without securing proper commercial permissions. Zee argued that while its licensing arrangement with Meta allows individuals to use the music for non-commercial Instagram posts, brands cannot automatically use the same songs for advertising or product promotion. The lawsuit reportedly flags 12 reels and seeks ₹2 crore, around \$210,000, in damages; Nykaa's lawyer told the court that the flagged links had been taken down. The case could become important for India's creator and brand economy because short-form video marketing often relies on popular music libraries, but the legal distinction between platform-enabled use and commercial brand use remains unclear. For creators, agencies and brands, the dispute is a reminder that viral audio is not always free commercial infrastructure.

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- The Zee-Nykaa case shows that **platform availability is not the same as commercial permission**.
- It highlights a major gap in **IP literacy among brands, creators and agencies**, especially in short-form video marketing where trending audio is often treated as freely usable.
- The dispute brings attention to the difference between **individual creative expression** and **brand-led commercial exploitation**.
- It signals that India's creator-commerce ecosystem needs clearer rules around **music licensing, advertising content and platform-enabled usage**.
- Platforms like Instagram may need to provide more visible disclosures on whether specific audio can be used for **personal, creator, influencer or brand promotion purposes**.
- For creators and brands, the case is a reminder that virality cannot replace **contracts, permissions and licensing discipline**.
- For the orange economy, this reflects a larger transition: creative assets are becoming central to commerce, but they also require stronger systems of **rights management and fair compensation**.
- The case could push Indian brands to build more responsible content workflows, including **music clearance checks, IP audits and safer campaign approvals** before publishing reels.

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From influencer to showrunner: creators enter formal entertainment pipelines

Indian streaming platforms are moving beyond a small set of established production houses and turning to newer creators, writers, filmmakers and digital-first talent to build fresher, more diverse content slates. According to the report, platforms such as Netflix India, ZEE5, SonyLIV and JioHotstar are experimenting with writers' rooms, contests, incubation programmes and regional talent pipelines to discover emerging voices. The shift is being driven by intense competition, fragmented audiences and the need for stories that better reflect India's cultural diversity. Examples include Netflix working with Bhuvan Bam for Dhindora season two, ZEE5 expanding its writer-discovery initiatives, and JioHotstar relying heavily on upcoming talent for South Indian shows. The trend signals a broader opening up of India's OTT ecosystem, where digital creators and regional storytellers are becoming central to the future of streaming content.

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India's new drama is about the fight for your 1-minute attention

Indian streaming platforms are rapidly betting on **micro dramas**: short, vertical, mobile-first fiction formats with episodes often lasting just one to three minutes. What began as scroll-friendly entertainment is now being treated as a serious strategy for audience discovery, IP testing and future franchise-building. JioStar launched **Tadka** on JioHotstar with over 100 titles, Amazon introduced **Fatafat** on MX Player, and players like Kuku TV, Double Tap Films, Pratilipi, Meta, Yash Raj Films and Red Chillies are also exploring the format. The trend is being driven by India's smartphone-first entertainment economy, where users increasingly consume content in short bursts across social media, OTT, gaming and live streaming. According to the report, platforms see micro dramas as a low-cost way to test genres, characters and storylines before scaling successful ideas into larger formats.

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Micro dramas mark the **platformisation of storytelling**, where narratives are increasingly designed for algorithmic discovery, vertical screens and habit-based consumption.

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Tencent bets on India's creator economy with ₹10 crore gaming and animation push

Tencent has announced a multi-year push of over ₹10 crore to support India's **Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics/Extended Reality** ecosystem. The initiative includes partnerships with the **Services Export Promotion Council** and the **Game Developers Association of India**, with a focus on skill development, mentorship, grassroots engagement and support for Indian gaming talent. The move aligns with India's broader ambition to build a strong AVGC-XR workforce and position itself as a global creative-technology hub. For Tencent, the investment signals confidence in India's fast-growing creator economy, particularly gaming, animation and digital entertainment, where young creators, developers and studios are increasingly becoming part of global content and IP pipelines.



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