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Mapping the Impact of Covid-19 on Creative Economy and why it needs more access to rights than charity?

The first edition of 'Taking the Temperature Report', which is presented by (FICCI), the Art X Company, and The British Council, records the impact of the pandemic on the creative economy in India.



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The creative economy of India is reeling under the impact of Covid 19 and is bound to encounter some long term implications too. Creative individuals and professionals are contending to survive and are dealing with decisions of whether they can afford to continue to work in the creative sector or not.

The first edition of 'Taking the Temperature Report' records the impact of the pandemic on the creative economy in India. It is presented by The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Art X Company, and The British Council.

According to the report, 53 per cent of the events and entertainment management sector witnessed 90 per cent of their business getting cancelled between March-July 2020. The MSMEs, freelance workforce and the large companies have been worst hit by the pandemic.

Speaking at the launch of the report Jonathan Kennedy, Director Arts India, British Council said, "Our ambition for art and culture program in India is to be a catalyst for creative expressions, international exchange and to strengthen the enterprise economy."

To support the creative sector state interventions such as Kerala Government and creative sector self-help programmes like StayIn Alive provide powerful examples of what is possible with collective action and strategic support.

Rashmi Dhanwani, Founder Director, The Art X Company, further elaborated how the arts sector is currently threatened by the pandemic. She said, "We should care for the ability of arts to keep us sane and make us acknowledge our identity and see sense in the world. The Indian culture sector can be best looked at as an informal sector. There is no coherent policy or central ownership when it comes to the cultural sector which renders it vulnerable."

The creative sector is made of innovators who are resilient, adaptable and inventive. Many organisations have pivoted online such as India Craft Week, JLF Brave New World and the NH7 Weekender to continue to show the spirit of solidarity between artists and their audiences. However, the short term impact of Covid 19 on the creative economy globally and in India cannot be underestimated and looks extremely bleak.

Dilip Chenoy, Secretary General, FICCI stated, "It is extremely difficult to reach the unorganized and widely dispersed sector of creative arts. Local communities can come together and support this to widely disseminate the initiative in different languages across sectors. FICCI will always contribute to this cause."

Chenoy revealed that many organisations have come forward to support the initiative of the report like The Crafts Revival Trust, EEMA, The Crafts Council, Japan Council and few more.

Sanjoy K Roy, Managing Director, Teamwork Arts and Co-Chair, FICCI Art and Culture Committee rightly mentioned that the sector is vast and it is not given the credibility that it requires. He said, "Unless and until money is put in, the sector will die. It is very important for organisations to come forward and support the creative sector. This will enable it to create jobs in larger numbers which will in turn help the economy of the nation."

Speaking about the artist community, Roy said, "We need to keep encouraging the artist community because they bring about innovation. They are inspired not only to think out of the box but to actually move the box. And in this manner they are able to create new opportunities. We need to drive this economy of the cultural sector because that is where the tomorrow's jobs are. The art sector is not interested in charity, it only needs access to its rights."

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