

Cultural entrepreneurship at grassroots level needed



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A visit to Khandesh cultural festival organised by a young collector, Kunal in Jalgaon, Maharashtra, helped me in touching base with many of the grassroots innovators besides meeting a variety of cultural innovators and entrepreneurs.

The festival was spread over several locations in the city having a variety of cultural entrepreneurs and innovators displaying their creativity in various fields ranging from culinary traditions, art, painting, photography, driftwood sculptures, performance to collections of old coins, traditional designs, artifacts and what not. Imagine the enrichment of our mind, heart and perspectives, if in different cities of the country, people come out for a few days every year, facilitated by the administration, to showcase their rare collections, art, and cultural distinctions besides other form of

creativity as we try at Satwik at IIMA every year, or Khandesh festival has tried.

This will deepen the societal understanding of traditions helping a modernising society without cutting itself away from its roots. Culture of innovation in education, food, architecture, photography, painting, sculptors, technology, agriculture etc, needs to become the new hub of knowledge, skill and culture based entrepreneurial revolution in the country. Renaissance will not be too far away then.

Eventually, the goal should be to completely recast the employment and poverty alleviation programs. It makes no sense to ask a rural artist or performer or sculptors to dig earth, and break stones because the myopia of the central planners cannot think of other ways of knowledge-based employment.

We should create an e-commerce enabled platform so that street art and culture can become the basis for conserving creative cultural traditions and also for stirring the inclusive creative consciousness.

I met Sheikh Jahangir of '3 Idiots' fame, designer of scooter-based grinder, washing machine and spray machine. He has no shack (removed during cleaning drive in the city), no shop and no workshop either. Getting such people a foothold in municipal or village panchayat space so that they can train many more people is the need of the hour. After all, there is a continuing tradition of invention and creativity in the country.

Be it Tarnetar, Wauntha, Thrad pashu mela, Bhadro mein ponam ka mela in Ambaji, or other melas, each one of these can become a hub of expressing rich cultural diversity including opportunity for rejuvenating the threatened traditions. SRISTI is trying to create a portal of such street art and folkloric traditions with contact information of artist wherever possible (sristi.org/cultural). Idea is that people can download video or photos or audios, free to begin with and then if they like it, they should pay for the same so that money goes in the pocket of these artists. When we have marriages, birthday parties and other functions, we should invite these grassroots creative artists for enriching the life of the guests.



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