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THE ORANGE ECONOMY: INDIA'S REVOLUTIONIZING STEP

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The concept of the orange economy was formally recognized as a financial instrument during the Indian Parliamentary Budget Session of 2026-27, which sparked varied interpretations among citizens. Despite the prior existence of similar terms, it has sometimes been perceived as a distraction, akin to the discourse surrounding artificial intelligence (AI). The term "orange economy" was introduced by the INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (IDB) in the book "The Orange Economy: An Infinite Opportunity," and was initially adopted by Colombia. It refers to a creativity-driven economy that promotes cultural, entertainment, media, and intellectual property advancements, with structured operational aspects and centralized regulation for decentralized sectors. The primary objective is to generate economic value from the cultural and creative skills of individuals, enabling both skilled and unskilled production of valuable assets. At first glance, it may appear to sideline conventional economic systems, despite its inherent presence in various economies.

The international market is complex and dynamic, necessitating the careful balancing of demand and supply for sustainable growth. As exemplified above, India has adopted flexible and recurring growth channels, as reflected in the 2025-26 Budget, by implementing initiatives such as Atal Tinkering Labs, Centers of Excellence in AI for education, tourism for employment-led growth, and social security schemes for gig workers. The transition towards a creative economy is as vital as manufacturing or industrial growth, as it can revitalize declining industries, rejuvenate stagnant sectors, and create new market opportunities.

i. This visionary approach is been made possible through various government initiatives: Bharat-VISTAAR'-a multilingual AI tool to enhance farm productivity, improve farmer decision making and reduce risk through customized advisory support, proposed in the Union Budget 2026-27.

ii. 15,000 secondary schools and 500 colleges to have Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics (AVGC) Content Creator Labs to boost India's Orange Economy.

iii. Proposal of a High-Powered 'Education to Employment and Enterprise' Standing Committee to assess impact of AI and emerging technologies on jobs and skill requirement.

iv. A new National Institute of Design to boost design education and development in Eastern India.[1361]

These programmes are designed to foster technological advancement and economic collaboration, shifting the perception of AI from a potentially disruptive force to a developmental tool. This transition extends beyond business to encompass education, research, development, national integration, agriculture, craftsmanship, and artistic innovation. But why focus on the orange economy? Colombia has implemented gradual yet strategic initiatives to promote and facilitate cultural policies aligned with the creative economy, generate cluster initiatives in collaboration with municipal chambers of commerce, create training opportunities for

[1361] PIB Delhi, Release ID: 2221432, 01 Feb 2026, https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2221432&reg=3&lang=2.

cultural entrepreneurship, and strengthen business expertise among entrepreneurial agents. Similarly, India, with its rich cultural heritage, diverse seasons, and 44 world heritage sites, can leverage these assets as strategic tools for education and engagement. When the youth are aligned with global trends, it becomes easier for the nation to achieve and sustain growth.

According to the Economic Survey Report of 2024-25[1362], there is a prevalence of low-skilled workers in India, which is attributable to the quality of educational outcomes across various levels. There is also a relatively lower proportion of specialized skilled individuals in the economy. Conversely, the Economic Survey Report of 2025-26[1363] recognizes India's growing presence in global entrepreneurial sectors. Given that the market is not limited to manufacturing, it is imperative to diversify economic drivers.

The orange economy offers a framework for policy development, stakeholder participation, mutual agreements, and productivity through cultural, creative, and artistic integration. It seeks to integrate agriculture and education through AI, and recognizes the importance of developing a robust design industry in India. This approach supports gig workers, informal networks of freelancers, and small entrepreneurs by providing targeted investments, progressive policies, and R&D support. The orange economy serves as a catalyst for cultural expression, innovation, and social transformation. Creative industries are shaping the cities of tomorrow and unlocking new opportunities for communities worldwide. By investing in this potential, cities can pursue inclusive growth, dynamic economies, and enriched urban life.

[1362] Economic Survey 2024-25, Employment and Skill Development: Existential Priorities, page no.398, https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/economicsurvey/index.php.
[1363] Economic Survey 2025-26, Industry's Next Leap: Structural Transformation and Global Integration, page no.313, https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/economicsurvey/index.php.