



Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts

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GOLDEN ICON AWARD
for exemplary implementation of e-Governance initiative

THE CONCEPT

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), established in the memory of Smt. Indira Gandhi, in 1987, is visualised as a centre encompassing the study and experience of all the arts – each form with its own integrity, yet within a dimension of mutual inter-dependence, inter-relatedness with Nature, the social structure and cosmology. This view of the arts, integrated with and essential to the larger matrix of human culture, is predicated upon Smt. Gandhi's recognition of the role of the arts as essential to the 'integral quality of a person, at home with himself and society.' It partakes of the holistic world-view so forcefully articulated throughout the Indian tradition and emphasised by modern Indian leaders, especially Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore.

The arts are here understood to comprise the fields of creative and critical literature, written and oral; the visual arts, ranging from architecture, sculpture, painting and graphics to general material culture, photography and film; the performing arts of music, dance and theatre in their broadest connotation; and all else in fairs, festivals and lifestyle that has an artistic dimension. In its initial stages, the Centre will focus attention on India; it will later expand its horizons to other civilizations and cultures. Through diverse programmes of research, publication, training, creative activities and performance, the IGNCA seeks to place the arts within the context of the natural and human environment. The fundamental approach of the Centre in all its work will be interdisciplinary.

The principal aims of the Centre are:

- To serve as a major resource centre for the arts, especially written, oral and visual;
- To undertake research and publication of reference works, glossaries, dictionaries and encyclopedia concerning the arts, the humanities and cultural heritage;
- To establish a folk arts (including those of tribes) division with a core collection for conducting systematic, scientific studies and for live presentations;
- To provide a forum for creative and critical dialogues between and among the diverse arts - traditional and contemporary, through performances, exhibitions, multi-media projections, conferences, seminars and

workshops.

- To foster dialogues between the arts and contemporary ideas in philosophy, science and technology, with a view to bridging the gap that often occurs between the modern sciences on the one hand and the arts and culture, including traditional skills and knowledge, on the other.
- To evolve models of research programmes and arts administration more appropriate to the Indian ethos;
- To elucidate the formative and dynamic factors in the complex web of interactions between and among the diverse social strata, communities and regions;
- To promote awareness of and sensitivity to historical and cultural linkages between India and other parts of the world;
- To develop a network of communication with national and international centres of arts and culture, and to affiliate with universities and other institutions of higher learning within India and abroad, for the purpose of expanding the knowledge base in the arts, the humanities and the cultural heritage.

Through specific programmes and projects, the interdependence amongst the arts and between the arts and other forms of cultural expressions, the mutual influence between the diverse regions and the inter relationship of the tribal, rural and urban population as well as the written and oral traditions are investigated, recorded and presented. To fulfill the objectives outlined in the Conceptual Plan of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and its principal aims, its functions are organized through divisions that are autonomous in structure but inter-locked in programming.

The **Kalā Nidhi** consists of an outstanding Reference Library of print collections, a large collection of microfilms/microfiches, a substantial collection of slides, cultural archives and well-maintained audio-visual and photo-documentation covering a wide range of disciplines including Archaeology, Anthropology, History, Philosophy, Literature, Language, Art and Crafts, on India, South Asia, Southeast Asia and West Asia. The Reference Library has over 1.5 lakh books in 12 languages, including some foreign languages. They are on a wide range of subjects, with the subject catalogue of nearly one thousand. The Library subscribes to over 250 research and technical journals.

The Cultural Archives collects material related to

different genes in the original and in the other forms of copies. It has the largest collection of the glass plate negatives of the world-renowned pioneering photographer Raja Deen Dayal. One of the pride of our collection is the 1.2 km long scroll painting on Mahabharata, done by folk painter Smt. Santokba using vegetable dye.

The audio-video section has collections of rare recordings of music and dance, documentation of lifestyles, performances and photographs.

Media Center is the core sector for all the audio video documentation of all the research activities of all the divisions of the Centre and positions itself for a global multi-mode outreach. It has several thousand hours of audio visual material and over last half a decade transmitted some 200 hours of programme software through DD networks. Media Centre has recently created two documentaries on Vedic Chanting—the oral tradition and Ramlila tradition of Ram Nagar and both of these were declared as Worlds Intangible heritage by UNESCO. The unit has well equipped linear and non-linear edit suite, skilled manpower. An auditorium, a bigger studio and well equipped audio-video library with viewing and listening cutters are in making.

The **Kalā Kośa** Division serves as the main research and publication wing of the Centre and carries out investigations in the intellectual and textual tradition connected with the Arts in their multi-layered and multi-disciplinary dimension. It endeavours to place the arts within the integral framework of a cultural system, combining the textual with the oral, the visual with the oral and theory with practice. Some of the major projects of the Division are:

Kalātattvakośa (A Lexicon of Fundamental Concepts of Indian Arts) Under this programme a list of about 250 terms of the concept has been drawn up after considerable research and deliberations with eminent scholars. Each concept is investigated through some 300 primary texts of various disciplines. Since the year 1988, when the first volume of this series was published, five volumes have come out.

Kalāmūlāśāstra (Series of Fundamental texts bearing on the Arts) publishes reliable critical editions of certain fundamental texts relating to the Indian arts from Vedic literature, *agama*, *tantra*, architecture, sculptures and painting to music, dance and theatre and to publish them in the series with annotations and translations.

Kalāsamālocanā Series (A series of publications of critical scholarship and research) publishes books of great scholars, which are out of print. Several books of Anand K. Coomaraswamy have been published under this. The Area Studies unit of this division looks at India's relations with her neighbours. There are separate sections dealing with South Asia, South East Asia and Central Asia. Seminars, publications and cultural exchange programmes form part of the activities of this unit.

The **Janapada Sampadā** Division deals with research and documentation on the contextual aspects of culture including life style, traditions, folklore and art practices of communities, from eco-cultural, socio-economic points of view. Concentrating on the oral traditions, it has a wide canvas covering regional studies from a multi-disciplinary perspective emphasizing the inter-relationships between different cultural groups and communities. Loka Paramparā and Kshetra Sampadā are the two long term projects of this division. While the former looks at all that is related to people, lifestyles, live rituals, fairs, melas and festivals, the latter studies the importance of temples and places of worship as the social centre and the pivotal role they play in the life of the surrounding region. Two pilot projects on Bharadeswara temple in Tamil Nadu and Vraja Kalp in the north have been successfully completed. The various aspects of the study have been brought out in the publications. Documentation of the rich cultural heritage of rural, tribal, folk and nomadic communities is an invaluable assets of this division.

The **Kalā Darśana** Division provides the forum for presenting the activities of the various divisions of the IGNC A and for a creative and critical dialogue between and amongst the diverse art forms. Through its programmes, the division has established a unique style of projection and presentation of the arts. It organizes exhibitions, seminars, conferences and lectures relating them to the academic activities of the Centre, till now, the IGNC A has hosted over 130 conferences/seminars and workshops, over 700 lectures, more than 80 exhibitions and published over 150 books.

The **Sūtradhāra** Division provides administrative, managerial and organizational support and services to all the other Divisions.

The IGNC A has three regional Centres at Bangalore, Guwahati and Varanasi. While the Bangalore office works on the IGNC A charter

concentrating on the southern states, the Guwahati office covers the culturally rich north-eastern region of India and the Varanasi office caters largely to the publication work relating to the Kalā Kośa.

The **Cultural Informatics** is a pioneering unit of the IGNCA, established in 1994 with UNDP assisted multimedia documentation project titled *Strengthening National Facility for Interactive Multimedia Documentation of Cultural Resources*, has emerged as world-class documentation unit that demonstrates the manner in which the heritage can be recreated virtually, in the holistic and integrated perception of culture. It also acts as a focal point of digitisation of manuscripts, slides, books, audio and video to preserve the entire repository of its present and future holdings in digital mode and to disseminate the contents in various digital formats to the scholars, researchers and the people in general. The contents developed by Cultural Informatics, which serves as the end-point in the assembly line of the IGNCA's activities are presented to the world through the thematic multimedia CD-ROM(s), in-house developed Kalāsampadā (Digital Library-Resources of Indian Cultural Heritage) and website (www.ignca.gov.in).

Kalāsampadā, a digital repository of content and information integrated with a user-friendly interface, has been developed to encompass and preserve the rare archival collections of the IGNCA. The Kalāsampadā facilitates the scholars (users) to access and view the materials - over a couple of lakh of manuscripts, over one lakh slide, rare books, thousands of rare photographs, audio and video along with highly researched publications - of the IGNCA, from a single computer interface (window). The project has received the prestigious **GOLDEN ICON AWARD** for Exemplary Implementation for e-Governance Initiative under category Best Documented Knowledge and Case Study for the year 2004 from the Ministry of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India.

The IGNCA's projects on computer aided content exploration systems will intensify Cultural learning and visualisation. The CD-ROMs on *Devadāsī Murai*, *Muktesvara Temple*, *Rock Art and Ajantā*: A world heritage site from the

Maharashtra have been published by the IGNCA. The CD-ROMs on *Devanārīyayā* (an oral tradition from Rajasthan), *Two Pilgrims* (life and work of Hungarian painters *Padmashree* Elizabeth Brunner and Mrs. Sass Brunner), *Agnicayana*, *Viśvarūpa*, *Bṛhadīśvara Temple* and *Gīta Govinda* are in the different stage of development. The IGNCA website is one of the most popular websites on Indian art and culture.

Narivada: Gender, Culture & Civilization Network: The IGNCA views women's contribution to art and culture as an integral part of our endeavors. However, there is a great need to connect the vast resources on women's culture with contemporary discourse in gender studies to protect and guard it from over simplification and mis-representation. The aim of Narivada Programme is to recover lost and suppressed voices of women; revision and contextualize women's cultural resources and traditional knowledge systems as an integral element of gender studies, and to emphasize and re-assess the key role women have played in the creation, preservation and transmission of our cultural heritage.

National Mission for Manuscripts: The National Mission for Manuscripts was established in February 2003, the IGNCA as nodal agency, by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India. An ambitious project in its programme and mandate, the Mission seeks to unearth and preserve the vast manuscript wealth of India. The main objectives of the project are

- Locate manuscripts through Survey
- Document each and every manuscript for a National Electronic Database that currently contains information on one million manuscripts.
- Conservation of manuscripts using modern and indigenous methods.
- Training of scholars in various aspects of Manuscript Studies like languages, scripts and critical editing and cataloguing of texts and conservation of manuscripts,
- To digitize the rarest and most endangered manuscripts and
- To facilitate lectures, seminars, publications and other outreach programmes.

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