Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts

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The uniqueness of IGNCA’s approach to the arts lies in the fact that it does not segregate between types of forms, whether folk and classic, oral and aural, written and spoken, or old and modern. Here the emphasis is on the connectivity and the continuity between the various fields that ultimately relate human to human, and human to nature. The IGNCA manifests its academic and research work in its publications, national and international seminars, conferences, exhibitions and lecture series. The schools and other education institutions fall under the umbrella of IGNCA’s outreach programme. IGNCA is also a nodal body for the ICH programme of the Government of India. It has been responsible for preparing nomination dossiers for Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity such as Ramlila and Vedic Chanting. It was responsible for the nomination of Ramman to the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity for the 2008-2009 cycle.

Janapada Sampada, one of the main research divisions of the centre is fully devoted to the study, documentation and dissemination of India’s rich and variegated cultural heritage. It focuses on the aesthetic manifestations embedded in the very life processes and praxis of small scale communities and societies. It studies both the intangible and tangible aspects of culture as interconnected and intertwined parts of a unified whole. Some of the important studies under the division have been in the area of rock art, ethnomusicology, lifestyle studies, oral narratives, rituals, myths, fairs and festivals, traditional knowledge systems and resource management, expressions in arts and crafts traditions, oral history and sacred centres and landscapes.

Apart from the Janapada Sampada, the centre has four more divisions. Each of these divisions is autonomous in structure but linked through programming. The Kala Nidhi division comprises a conservation laboratory, a multimedia unit, cultural archive and a multimedia reference library which includes printed books, slides, microfilm, photographs and audio-visual material. The Kala Kosh division is focused on research and investigates intellectual traditions in their multi-layered and multi-disciplinary dimensions. The Kala Darshan division provides a forum for inter-disciplinary seminars, exhibitions and performances on unified themes and concepts.

The centre has a well developed Cultural Informatics Laboratory, which acts as a focal point for digitisation of rare manuscripts, books, photographs, slides and audio-video collection not only for IGNCA but also for other organisations working with the Department of Culture.

IGNCA also houses the National Manuscripts Mission, a project that seeks to preserve, document and disseminate knowledge about the vast manuscript wealth of India.

The Sutradhara division provides administrative, managerial and organisational support and services to all the other divisions.

IGNCA has 26,000 hours of audio-video material, 28,000 hours of audio recordings, 200,000 still images, and 4,000 ethnographic objects from all over the world in its rare archival collection of cultural, religious and ritual performances, arts and crafts, and culturally rooted oral traditions of human and natural resource management.

It has organised more than 100 exhibitions and 150 national and international events. It has published over 200 publications on a wide range of subjects ranging from visual and performing arts to cultural and ethnographic studies. In addition, IGNCA also provides a valuable resource through its website (ignca.nic.in) which receives 1.5 million hits a month.