

Annex |  
***IGNCA Inventory on the  
Intangible Cultural Heritage***

Edited and Maintained by  
Prof. Molly Kaushal  
Janapada Sampada Division  
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Buddhist Chanting of Ladakh: Recitation of Sacred Buddhist Texts in the Trans-Himalayan Ladakh Region, Jammu and Kashmir, India.

**Community/ies:** Buddhist community of Ladakh

**Region:** Kargil and Leh Districts, Ladakh region, State of Jammu and Kashmir, India

**Brief Description:** The recitation of ancient sacred Buddhist texts are chanted every day in the monks living in various monasteries and following different sects of Buddhism in the trans-Himalayan region of Ladakh in India. Besides, special chanting is conducted on important days of the Buddhist calendar, during life cycle rituals, and important days in the agrarian calendar. It is done for spiritual and moral well being of the people, by appeasing the wrath of the evil spirits and invoking the blessing of various Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, deities and Rinpoches (high 'Lama' reincarnate) for spiritual and moral wellbeing of the people. The chanting is also meant for peace and prosperity of world at large. The chanting is a highly orchestrated musical drama. It is done either sitting indoors or dancing in the monastic courtyards or in private houses in the village. While chanting, the monks wear special costumes and make hand gestures representing the divine being of the Buddha. Musical instruments such as the bells, drums, cymbals and trumpets are used to bring in rhythm. The chanting helps in the meditation process, in attaining enlightenment and getting liberation from the sufferings of the world.

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Chaar Bayt: A Muslim tradition in lyrical oral poetry, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, India

**Community/ies:** Muslim

**Region:** Tonk in the State of Rajasthan, Bhopal in the State of Madhya Pradesh, and Rampur, Chandpur, Malihabad and Amroha in the State of Uttar Pradesh, India.

**Brief Description:** Chaar Bayt are a four line sequence of verses sung to the beat of the "duff" (a percussion instrument) It is performed in States of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh. It is believed that Chaar Bayt originated from an Arab poetic form called Rajeez and its origin can be traced back to the 7th century. These songs were sung by the soldiers. In the war camps they would sing songs in the evenings to instill valour and courage in their ranks. Songs at a high pitch with fast beats. These songs later travelled eastwards along with the soldiers to Persia and Afghanistan, where they came to be sung in the local language. In 18th century India, many states had their private armies, which recruited Pathan and Afghani soldiers. These soldiers brought along with them the tradition of Chaar Bayt, which is still alive. A Chaar Bayt troupe is referred to as an 'akhara' (arena) which is headed by an 'ustad' (teacher/guru). The groups sing in the evenings, and compete with each other in a didactic style of question and answer. Often the poet sits with the group and writes new verses on the spot. The highly involved and deeply participatory performances would go on till late in the night. The singers of Chaar Bayt are generally unlettered people from economically weak backgrounds.

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Dashavatar: Traditional folk theatre form, Maharashtra and Goa, India.

**Community/ies:** Dashavatar is a folk theatre form practised by agriculturists or farmer in the Sindhudurg district of the South Konkan region of Maharashtra and the North Goa district of Goa. Dashavatar is today popular form of drama in the rural areas. Initially popularised in the Konkan area by a Brahmin named Gore from Kavthe area in Sindhudurg district. Today it come to be looked upon as art of the classes.

**Region:** Dashavatar is popular in major localities like Sawantwadi, Kudal, Malvan, Vengurla, Kankavli etc. in the Sindhudurg district of the South Konkan Region of Maharashtra. The villages of Devgad and Dodamarg also have annual performances of Dashavatar. Most of the villages in Vengurla 'taluka' (estate) such as Valaval, Chendvan, Pat, Parule, Mhapan have a rich tradition of Dashavatar. Dashavatar is also popular in North Goa district in the State of Goa. It is mainly performed in 'talukas' such as Pernem, Bardez, Bicholim and Sattari.

**Brief Description:** Dashavatar is a popular traditional theatre form with a history of eight hundred years. The term Dashavatar refers to the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, the Hindu God of preservation. The ten incarnations are 'matsya' (fish), 'kurma' (tortoise), 'varaha' (boar), 'narasimha' (lion-man), 'vaman' (dwarf), Parashuram, Ram, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki. It is performed during the annual festival of the village deity in the temple premises after midnight, without any technical props. Each character enters the stage from behind a curtain held by two persons.

The Dashavatar performance comprises two sessions, the 'poorva-ranga' (the initial session) and the 'uttar-ranga' (the latter session). The 'poorva-ranga' is the preliminary presentation that precedes the performance proper. The 'poorva-ranga' is the story about the killing of the demon Shankhasur. This act also includes the characters of Lord Ganesha, Riddhi, Siddhi, a Brahmin, Sharada (the goddess of learning), Brahmadev and Lord Vishnu. The 'uttar-ranga', known as 'akhyan' is considered to be the main performance based on Hindu mythological tales, highlighting one of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. The performance uses bright make-up and costumes. It is accompanied by three musical instruments: a paddle harmonium, tabla and zanj (cymbals).

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of Element:** The Festival of Salhesh, Bihar, India

**Community/ies:** 'Dusadh' community

**Region:** Mithila region of Bihar, India

**Brief Description:** Salhesh is the chief deity of the socially marginalized and downtrodden Dusadh dalit community. The festival of Salhesh provides identity, social cohesion and self respect to the community. Celebrated every year during the auspicious month of Shravan (Rainy season), the chief components of the festival are folklore, rituals, craftsmanship and performing arts. The knowledge and skills involved in the entire festival are transferred from one generation to another through oral tradition. The rituals are performed by a priest (Bhagat). In the rituals, the artists (Manarias) enact the legend of Salhesh through music and dance in which the Bhagat takes the lead role. The performance includes instrumental music, recital of songs in local dialect, dancing, acrobatics and symbolic gestures. The festival culminates with the votive offerings of the terracotta horse-riders to the deity. This cultural heritage is in danger of being lost as the younger generation prefers more lucrative and respectable careers. Some safeguarding measures have been taken by the State, art connoisseurs and community itself who seek to create awareness for this rich cultural heritage.

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Hingan: Votive Terracotta Painted Plaque of Molela, Rajasthan, India.

**Community/ies:** Communities are categorised in four groups, as mentioned below:

1. Terracotta Artisans: Caste – Kumhar, Sub caste – Asawla
2. Priests: Local name 'bhopa' - can be of any Hindu caste residing in the region
3. Tribal communities: the buyers of the votive plaque; Bhil, Mina, Garasiya (from the villages lying on the border of Rajasthan and Gujarat)
4. Other communities: Gujjar and Garijat caste (from Rajasthan)

**Region:** Village: Molela, District: Rajsamand, Rajasthan, India

**Brief Description:** Votive terracotta painted plaques produced by the terracotta artisans of Molela is a hand modelled hollow relief of Hindu deities, especially of the neo-Vaishnava deity, Dev Narayan. Dev Narayan is accompanied by his characteristic snake symbol in the plaque. Made from clay, mixed with rice husk and donkey dung in required proportion, the plaque is sun dried and baked in an indigenous kiln before it is painted with mineral colours and eventually coated with a local made lacquer, called 'jala'. Several tribes in Gujarat and Rajasthan travel for more than 200 km once in a year to buy these plaques from Molela and bring them to their villages. Each group is led by a 'bhopa', the family priest, who helps to identify the appropriate deity for the family. These deities are installed and worshipped for 3 to 5 years in the shrines located in their villages till they are replaced by the new ones. Each shrine inhabits a minimum of nine such plaques of several gods and goddesses including Dev Narayan. Terracotta artisans from Molela are the only community entitled to meet this requirement of the tribes. This system has provided sustenance to the traditional craftsmanship for several generations.

**Photographs:** Yes

**Video:** Yes

**Consent:** Yes

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Kalbelia: Folk Songs and Dances, Rajasthan, India

**Community/ies:** Kalbelia community of snake charmers living in Thar Desert

**Region:** Kalbelias are now found predominantly in the districts of Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Jalore and Barmer in western Rajasthan and in the cities of Jaipur and Pushkar in eastern Rajasthan.

**Brief Description:** Kalbelia Dance is an expression of the Kalbelia community's way of life as snake charmers. The women in flowing skirts dance to the beat of the 'khanjari,' a percussion instrument, and the 'poongi,' a wind instrument. Both these instruments are made by the Kalbelias themselves from natural materials like dried vegetable gourds and leather hide. On the occasion of Holi (the festival of colours), the Kalbelias perform a special dance with another percussion instrument called the 'chang.' While men play the instruments, the women sing and dance. It is remarkable that in today's context, the Kalbelia's traditional music and dance has evolved into a creative and contemporary version that enthralls audiences worldwide. The music of the 'poongi' has a sinuous quality, which makes a dancer swirl and dance like a serpent. The songs also portray the creative and poetic acumen of the Kalbelias. The Kalbelias are reputed to compose lyrics spontaneously and improvise songs impromptu during a performance. The vast repertoire of songs covers all the rites of passage in their life.

**Photography:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Chhau Dance

**Community/ies:**

- (i) The dances as mainly come from communities known as Mundas, Mahatos, Kalindis, Pattnaiks, Samals, Darogas, Mohantys, Acharyas, Bhols, Kars, Dubey, and Sahoos.
- (ii) Musicians are from the communities known as Mukhis, Kalindis, Ghadheis, Dhada. They are also involved in the making of the instruments.
- (iii) Masks form an integral part of Chhau Dance in Purulia and Seraikella. Communities of traditional painters known as Maharanas, Mohapatras, Sutradhars are involved in the making of these masks

**Region:** Prevalent in the tribal belt of the bordering areas of the provinces of Orissa, Jharkhand and West- Bengal in eastern India. There are three district forms of Chhau:

- ✳ Seraikella Chhau of Jharkhand
- ✳ Mayurbhanj Chhau of Orissa
- ✳ Purulia Chhau of West Bengal

**Brief Description:** Chhau is a major dance tradition of eastern India. It has three distinct styles *Seraikella*, *Mayurbhanj* and *Purulia* named Masks are an integral part of the dances of Seraikella and Purulia. Chhau dance has a significant role in the celebration of the spring festival Chaitra Parva, being innately connected to its rituals. It is a people's art as it involves the entire community. Performed by male dancers from families of traditional artists, or those trained under *Gurus* or *Ustads (masters)*. It traces its origin to indigenous forms of dance and martial practices. *Khel* (mock combat techniques), *chalis* and *topkas* (stylized gaits of birds and animals) and *uflis* (movements modeled on the daily chores of a village housewife) constitute the fundamental vocabulary of Chhau dance. The knowledge of dance, music and mask-making is transmitted orally. It is performed in an open space called *akhada* or *asar* and lasts through the night. The dancers perform a repertoire that explores a variety of subjects: local legends, folklore and episodes from the epics Ramayana/ Mahabharata and abstract themes. The vibrant music is characterized by the rhythm of indigenous drums like the *dhol*, *dhumsa* and *kharka* and the melody of the mohuri and shehnai.

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Community Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element;** Kolam: Ritualistic Threshold Drawings and Designs of Tamil Nadu, India

**Community/ies:** Women of all communities in South India

**Region:** Kolam is practised in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. It is also practised by South Indian people settled in other states of India.

**Brief Description:** Kolam is a ritualistic design drawn at the threshold of households and temples. It is drawn everyday at dawn and dusk by women in South India who inherit this tradition from their elders. Kolam is believed to be a labyrinth to ensnare harmful spirits and prevent them from causing harm. Kolam marks festivals, seasons and important events in a woman's life such as birth, first menstruation and marriage. Kolam indicates a sphere of 'positive vibes' generated by a feminine energy that influences both the interior domestic space and the outside world. Kolam is a free-hand drawing with symmetrical and neat geometrical patterns.

The drawings are very conceptual and a huge repertoire of designs is stored in the cultural memory of the people. Kolam is laid on a mathematical dotted grid. It is produced either by nonlinear lines interlaced in endless knots around dots, or by lines connecting dots in a decorative design. Kolam, with its mathematical abstraction, geometric shapes and repetitive units, accommodates floral motifs, birds, animals, butterflies, intertwined snakes etc. The deceptively simple domestic art of Kolam is as intricate and conceptual as the jacquard weave or the Islamic tile design. Comparisons are also drawn with Roman floor mosaics and Celtic interlaces.

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Lama Dances of Sikkim: Buddhist Monastic Dances, Sikkim, India.

**Community/ies:** Buddhist monks of Sikkim

**Region:** Sikkim

**Brief Description:** Lama dances are masked dances performed by the Buddhist monks of Sikkim as part of their religious practices. The practices are codified in the religious texts of Sikkim in accordance with the teachings of Guru Padmashambhava, the legendary saint of the Mahayana school of Buddhism. Based on these, Lamas conduct prayers for the benefit of Buddhism and the state of Sikkim.

Most of the Lama dances are the external representations of these prayers conducted inside the monastery for making them accessible to the masses. The basic theme of all such prayers is conquering evil to protect the land and its religion. But each prayer and its dance are distinct from the others as they are derived from different texts dealing with different problems faced by a person during the cycle of birth and death. Unlike the original Tibetan Buddhist dances, Mount Khangchendzonga is central to any Sikkimese Buddhist dance. In the Lama dances, very gorgeous attire and colourful masks made according to the scriptures are used with traditional musical instruments like cymbals and big horns rendering the codified religious music and chanting.

**Photography:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Mudi yettu: Ritual Theatre and Dance Drama, Kerala, India

**Community:** Marar and Kuruppu communities

**Region:** The performance takes place in the following four districts which once belonged to the old Princely States of Travancore and Cochin of Kerala, India.

1. Ernakulam
2. Thrissur
3. Kottayam
4. Idukki

**Brief Description:** Mudi yettu is a ritual theatre form of Kerala based on the mythological tale of the battle between Goddess Kali and Darika, an evil king. It is a community ritual in which the entire village participates. After the summer crops have been harvested, the villagers reach the temple early in the morning on an appointed day. The traditional performers of Mudi yettu having purified themselves by observing the ritual of fasting and offering prayers to the goddess proceed to draw a huge tantric design of Goddess Kali made of powdered rice, on the temple floor. Over a period of time the tradition of chanting the praises of Kali has evolved into a vibrant musical form that accompanies the 'panchavarna kalam' (A five colour design on the floor depicting the Goddess). It is drawn on the floor to help the performers imbibe the spirit of the goddess. The performance takes a dramatic turn when Darika, from the top of the eastern mountains, challenges Kali to a battle. Kali, born of Lord Shiva's (A Hindu god) third eye, retaliates. Kooli, the clown and Koimpada Nair, the chieftain of the 'pancha boothas' (five elements), become her allies in this battle against evil. The temple courtyard turns into a battle field and the villagers the participants in this ritual-theatre event. In the end, after a fierce battle, Kali defeats her adversaries and performs the victory dance. The devotees hail their goddess and welcome the dawn of a peaceful and prosperous new year.

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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**Name of the Element:** Nacha: Folk Theatre, Chhattisgarh, India

**Community/ies:** The Chhattisgarhi speaking rural communities in the state of Chhattisgarh

**Region:** The entire State of Chhattisgarh in India except Bastar and Sarguja regions

**Brief Description:** Nacha is one of the most noted folk theatre forms in the state of Chhattisgarh. It is performed in nearly all the areas of Chhattisgarh except Sarguja and Baster regions. There are four different forms of Nacha, Khare Saaj Nacha; Gandawa Nacha; Dewar Nacha and Baithe Saaj Nacha. Currently the troupes performing Khare Saaj, Dewar or Gandawa Nacha are very few. The most popular form today is Baithe Saaj Nacha. In Dewar Nacha, the female roles are performed by women artists. In the other three forms, these roles are enacted by male artists dressed in female costumes and makeup. Nacha performances are usually held during the night. Comedy is an essential and a most entertaining aspect of the Nacha folk theatre. The humorous skits of Nacha also incorporate themes on social issues to create awareness

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Patola: Double Ikat Silk Textiles of Patan, Gujarat, India.

**Community/ies:** Weavers : Salvis (Religion: Jains or Vaishnav Hindus)

Helpers: Vankars (Religion: Hindu)

Traditional Users :( in India) Jains, Vohra Muslims, Nagar Brahmins, Kutchi Bhatias, Ghanchis (Religion: Hindu)

In Southeast Asia: Royalty and nobility in East Sumba, Surakarta and Yokyakarta in Java, Certain communities in eastern Indonesia, Java, Lembata, Sulawesi, Sumatra, eastern Flores, Bali and Malaysia.

**Region:** Patola is produced in the cities of Patany and Vadodara, situated in Patan and Vadodara districts respectively, in the state of Gujarat.

**Brief Description:** Patola silk textiles are produced by resist dyeing of warp and weft threads before weaving, a complex process known as double ikat which is also practised in other parts of India and abroad. However, Patola of Patan (Gujarat) is unique in its geometric floral and figurative patterns executed with precision of design planning, and meticulously accurate weaving alignment which results in precise outline of the patterns. This requires immense visualisation and coordination skills.

The practitioners of this craft are the Salvis, who get their name from sal' (Sanskrit for loom) and (the rosewood sword used in a Patola loom). Patola has traditionally been considered auspicious among certain Gujarati communities - Nagar Brahmins, Jains, Vohra Muslims and Kutchi Bhatias. Historically, Patola was a prestigious item of Indian export to Indonesia and Malaysia where it was used as a symbol of power and authority and even attributed protective, curative and magical powers. There are only four existing Patola-making families striving to save the craft in the face of many threats - huge investment of time and money, low returns, and lack of interest for continuing the craft among the younger generations.

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

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**Name of the Element:** Phad: Scroll Paintings and Their Narration, Rajasthan, India.

**Community/ies:** Artists of Phad painting belong to Joshi lineage of Chipa'cloth printers and dyers in the state of Rajasthan, India. Another community associated with the Phad painting is the Bhopas (priests) of local deities, whose narratives are depicted on the scroll. Bhopas who sing the story of the local deity Devnarayan are from the Gujjar community, whereas Bhopas who sing the story of the deity Pabuji are from Rajput and other communities.

**Region:** Phad paintings are made in Bhilwada district of Rajasthan. The singers who narrate the stories depicted in Phad are scattered across Rajasthan – in Bhilwada district, Ratanpura in Hanumangarh district, Devmali in Ajmer district etc.

**Brief Description:** Phad is an approximately 30 feet long and 5 feet broad painted scroll, which depicts stories of epic dimensions about local deities and legendary heroes. The local priests - the Bhopas, render these stories musically. Phad when not in use is kept folded in the village shrine or in Bhopa's house. Bhopas carry these scrolls on their shoulders from village to village for a performance, where they unfold the scroll and display it fixed on to a bamboo frame in an open area. Phad represents the moving shrine of the deity and is an object of worship. Some of the most popular and largest Phad belong to local deities Devnarayanji and Pabuji. The performance takes place at night and Bhopi (priest's wife), lights up a lamp to make the images visible. Stories of Devnarayanji are rendered with the accompaniment of the musical instrument called Jantar'; and a two-string instrument called Bana accompanies the epic of Pabuji.

**Photographs:**

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**Name of the Element:** Rathwa ni Gher: Tribal Dance of Rathwas, Gujarat, India

**Community:** Rathwa tribe.

**Region:** Chota Udepur, Kanwant and Pavijetpur tallukas (sub divisions) of the Vadodara district, and Jambughoda, Narukot, and Ghoghamba tallukas (sub divisions) of Panchmahal district of the southeastern parts of the state of Gujarat, India.

**Brief Description:** The Rathwas, who dwell in Rath-Vistar, the hilly area of the southeastern part of Gujarat state, perform the Rathwa ni Gher dance on the occasion of Holi (festival of colours) also known as Kavant festival, named after the place where the Holi carnival takes place. The Gher (dance with music) performances begin on Dhulendi, which is, literally, 'the day of flying coloured dust'. This is the day when people smear each other with colour powder. The festivities last for five days during which the Rathwas observe fast and abstain from sleeping on cots, washing clothes and bathing. Both men and women perform the Gher together, in groups of 20 to 25.

The entire village community and people from neighbouring areas participate in the festivities. Of all Rathwa dances performed on various occasions linked with the cycle of seasons, Rathwa ni Gher stands out as exquisite, colourful and spectacular. The intricate make-up, the synchronised footsteps, vigorous whirling of the dancers and the mesmerizing symphony created through indigenous musical instruments show how antique and refined the dance form is it constitutes the Rathwas' creative expression of their religiosity cultural identity and understanding of the nature.

**Photography:**

**Video:**

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IGNCA

**Name of the Element:** Sankheda Nu Lakh Kam: Lacquered turned wood furniture of Sankheda, Gujarat, India.

**Community/ies:** Members of the Kharadi-Suthar caste residing in the town of Sankheda in Gujarat. Rana, Tadvi, Bariya – are the castes of some of the hired craftsmen from the surrounding areas, who are traditionally associated with the sawing of timber. The primary users are from Gujarati community (all religious affiliations) in India and all over the world.

**Region:** Sankheda, a small town in Vadodra district in Gujarat, India.

**Brief Description:** Sankheda, a small town in the eastern region of Gujarat derives its name from 'sanghedu', the word for a lathe in the Gujarati language. The town has about 80-100 families belonging to the 'Kharadi-Suthar' community identified with the occupation of wood turning. Lacquered, turned wood furniture with hand painted motifs and traditional method of ornamentation, popularly known as Sankheda furniture, is thought to have been produced in the town from about 1855.

The traditional craft process of making Sankheda furniture involves shaping and painting the members while the craftsman is turning the lathe. He wields the brush with great mastery to map the patterns freehand, achieving symmetric and even contours without using any measuring device or markings. As most of the craftsmen in Sankheda town are involved in this craft it gives them a strong sense of community identity and continuity. The ornate nature of the product lends itself to becoming a visible symbol of expression that has been identified as Gujarati within its local precinct and elsewhere. There is a wide range of furniture items produced including child's cradles, child's walkers to chairs, tables, and large swings, a response unique to tropical and humid climate.

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Edited and Maintained by  
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IGNCA

**Name of the Element:** Sankirtan of Manipur

**Community/ies:** Hindus of Manipur.

**Region:** In the province of Manipur in the North East of India and also in the region of Assam and other places where Manipuris are settled.

**Brief Description:** Sankirtana is the artistic manifestation of Manipuri worship. To the Manipuris Sankirtana is the visible form of God. Woven within the framework of sacrosanct rituals and ceremonies the art consists of narrative singing and dancing. Always performed in a Mandala (circular area) inside a Mandapa (hall) attached to a temple or erected in a courtyard. The rituals and formalities are strict and even the audience are seated according to set rules. It employs musical instruments like drums and cymbals. The artistes play these instruments and dance at the same time. An artiste spends a life-time specializing only in one aspect.

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Edited and Maintained by  
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**Name of the Element:** Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre

**Community/ies:** The communities which are distinctively associated with it are:

- (i) The Assamese Hindu Community in the entire Brahmaputra Valley in Assam including Majuli, the river-island of the Brahmaputra,
- (ii) The Rajbanshi Community in Chatrasal in the bordering areas of Assam as well as Cooch Behar in West Bengal,
- (iii) Some groups of the Nocte Community in Arunachal Pradesh,
- (iv) Some groups of the Bodo Community in Assam and Nagaland border,
- (v) Mising and Sonowal tribes spreading over different areas of the valley and
- (vi) Some groups of the Naga tribes living within Assam and bordering areas of Assam and Nagaland.

**Region:** Geographic location of the Sattriya tradition ranges from some areas in the Arunachal Pradesh, in east to Cooch Behar, West Bengal in the West with the vast expanse of the Brahmaputra Valley in Assam and parts of the Barak valley in southern Assam.

**Brief Description:** Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre is a composite body of multiple forms of artistic expressions combining music, dance, drama and other allied arts bearing great significance and impact on both spiritual and social life of Assam. Based on a vast corpus of devotional compositions in Brajvali as well as in vernacular Assamese and woven with a melodic and rhythmic structure distinctive of its own, this body of cultural expressions is inextricably associated with rituals and ceremonies in the Sattri, a monastic institution of Vaisnavite faith and learning. Permeated with intense spiritual fervour and educational value, the Sattriya tradition has become an indispensable part of the religious, social and cultural life of the practicing community as a medium of internalizing the experience of the Divinity. Always performed with deep emotional attachment to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals, this is a unique testimony of religious experience integrated with aesthetic elegance. The style of music and dance combining elements from the pan-Indian and Indo-Mongoloid traditions is distinct from the major schools of North and South Indian music and dance. The theatre also, celebrated as a tradition next only to the Sanskrit drama and theatre, has several distinguishing features of its own. The Sattriya Music, Dance and Theatre incorporating melodic and rhythmic improvisations from time to time, is mostly a group work having a performance text orally handed down to generations.

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Shadow Puppet Theatre Traditions of India

**Community/ies:** The communities which are distinctively associated with it are:

<b>Form</b>	<b>Community/group</b>	<b>Province</b>
1. Chamadyacha Bahulya	Thakar	Maharashtra
2. Tolu Bommalatta	Killekyata/Are Kapu	Andhra Pradesh
3. Togalu Gombeyatta	Killekyata/Dayat	Karnataka
4. Tolu Bommalattam	Killekyata	Tamil Nadu
5. Tolpava Kuthu Vellalchetti,	Nair	Kerala
6. Ravanachhaya	Bhat	Orissa

**Region:** The geographic locations of the six traditions of shadow puppetry in India, range from Maharashtra in the west of India to Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the south, and to Orissa in the east.

**Brief Description:** There are six shadow puppet theatre traditions across different regions in India, which are locally known as: Chamadyacha Bahulya in Maharashtra, Tolu Bommalatta in Andhra Pradesh, Togalu Gombeyatta in Karnataka, Tolu Bommalattam in Tamil Nadu, Tolpava Kuthu in Kerala and Ravanchhaya in Orissa. Though these forms have distinct regional identities, languages and dialects in which they are performed, they share a common worldview, aesthetics and themes.

The narratives are mainly based on the epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, *Puranas*, local myths and tales. They communicate significant messages to the rural community besides entertainment. The performance begins with an invocation on a ritually set up stage in a village square or a temple courtyard. Stock characters provide comic relief. A sense of rhythm and dance is inherent in all the traditions, across regions. The puppets are crafted from either goat or deer skin. They are manipulated from behind the screen, where lighting is provided to cast shadows. Puppet performances are a part of festivals, celebrations of special occasions and rituals, and sometimes staged to ward off evil spirits and to invoke the rain gods in times of drought in rural areas.

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Thatheras of Jandiala Guru: Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making, Punjab, India.

**Community/ies:** The Thatheras of Jandiala Guru are Khatri, a clearly defined community who work on the family business with their own hands.

**Region:** The craftsmen occupy a specific settlement, Bazar Thatherian (market of the Thatheras), Gali Kashmirian, in the small town of Jandiala Guru about 10 km from Amritsar on the Grand Trunk Road in the state of Punjab.

**Brief Description:** The craft of the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru represents the traditional technique of manufacturing brass and copper utensils in Punjab. The technique itself, along with the mud-brick kiln, traditional implements, specific type of wood chips, and the specialized process of hammering the metal sheets, constitutes the traditional skills and knowledge systems of the community. The Thatheras are a specific caste group within Punjab, and as a community, have a common identity based on a shared history, geographic location and ethnic beliefs. The current craftsmen's community consists of 400 families that migrated here from Gujranwala in Pakistan, while the Muslim craftsmen of Jandiala Guru moved there simultaneously. The utensils manufactured by the Thatheras are of a traditional type not commonly found in modern markets. The metals used, copper, brass and certain alloys, are believed to be beneficial for health. The Thatheras use traditional materials for processing and polishing, such as sand and tamarind juice. The revitalization of this traditional craft should be done in a holistic manner, taking into account that it is not simply a technical process, but an entire knowledge system, linked with the identity and way of life of the community.

**Photographs:** Yes

**Video:** Yes

**Consent:** Yes

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Veena and its Music

**Community/ies:** The main communities and individuals upholding the Veena tradition in North India belong to Jaipur Beenkar School, *Dagar* School, Bande Ali Khan School, Abdul Aziz Khan School, Lalmani Mishra Style and also some other individual styles. In Southern Indian performing communities of Veena the Tanjaur School, Mysore School and Andhra School are prevalent. These schools have their sub-stylistic characteristics interspersed with individual aesthetic and creative expressions.

**Region:** Veena playing is prevalent in the entire India from North to South and from East to West.

**Brief Description:** The oldest musical instrument of India, the Veena, symbolizes the Indian ethos throughout the country and has sociological and cultural connotations. *Saraswati*, the Goddess of learning, is visualized as *Veenapani*, the wielder of a Veena. Veena, regarded as the precursor of all Indian string instruments, has been instrumental in standardizing many fundamental laws of music. Continuity of tradition is evident since the instruments like Sitar, Sarod, Guitar, Mandolin etc. have borrowed and imbibed various technical and physical aspects, from the Veena thereby enriching their instruments and repertoire.

Veena, a generic term earlier, today denotes Rudra Veena, Tanjauri Veena, Vichitra Veena and Gottuvadyam. It has two distinct playing traditions namely Hindustani and Karnatic. Bifacial drums - Pakhawaj and Mridangam - are used in these traditions respectively. Art of crafting this instrument is equally important and duly discussed in ancient texts. Crafting is a challenging task needing experience and skill. It is manually made using natural materials. Veena has a meditative sound, which is capable of taking the performer and listener on a spiritual journey. The repertoire and technique of Veena playing and making are transmitted through oral tradition from generation to generation till today.

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Edited and Maintained by  
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**Name of the Element:** Ritual Fairs and Festivals of the Gaddi Community.

**Community/ies:** Gaddi Community of Himachal

**Region:** Bharmaur Tehsil in Chamba District in the Indian State of Himachal Pradesh in the North Western Indian Himalayas is the traditional homeland of the Gaddis. The slopes and forests that stretch from the high passes of Lahaul in the northeast to the forests of Kangra in the south and southeast. The Gaddi homeland lies on the upper Ravi valley along the banks of the Buddhal and comprises five valleys - Kugti, Tundah, Samara, Holi and Bharmaur. These five valleys constitute the Bharmaur Tehsil. Gaddi settlements are also found outside Bharmaur, in the neighbouring parts of Ravi valley towards Chamba and in some parts of the Kangra district.

**Brief Description:** The Gaddis are devotees of Hindu deity Shiva and believe that they were created by him while he was seated on his gaddi (royal seat). Shiva called this human - Gaddi and bestowed upon him his own garb of chola (coat), dora (belt), chunji topi (pointed cap) and also his nomadic lifestyle of a shepherd. This bond with Shiva is celebrated year after year through ritual fairs and festivals which fall under the generic category of what the Gaddis call the Jatar. These Jataras besides celebrating the sacred bond with Shiva and other village deities focus on seasons and agricultural cycles.

Jatar also constructs, presents and celebrates the Gaddi identity. Music, dance, drumming, trance, healing, ritual worship, singing oral sacred narratives and pilgrimage journey are some of the outstanding features of these Jataras that are celebrated throughout the Gaddi land in the month of August and September. Some of these important Jataras are: a seven day Bharmaur Jatar held in the ancient temple complex of Chaurasi in village Bharmaur dedicated to different deities whose shrines are located in the complex; Chattrari Jatar in village Chattrari dedicated to Shiva-Shakti, the divine consort of Shiva; Guggal Jatar dedicated to a cluster of five deities collectively called 'Panj Biri/ Panj Piri led by local deity Gugga Mandalik and his sister Guggadi; Mani Mahesh Jatar also called Nahaun (Holy Bath) is a pilgrimage journey to Mount Mani Mahesh, the holy abode of Shiva where he lives with his divine consort Gorja in eternal bliss.

**Photographs:**

**Video:**

**Consent:**

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Ramman: Religious Festival and Ritual Theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas

**Community:** Villagers of Painkahanda Valley

**Region:** Painkhanda Valley of Chamoli district of Uttarakhand

**Brief Description:** Ramman is a form of traditional ritual theatre celebrated every year in the courtyard of the temple of Bhumiya Devta situated in Saloor Dungra Village in Painkhanda valley of Chamoli district, Uttarakhand, India.

The village deity of Saloor Dungra is Bhumichetrapal where he is better known as Bhumiya Devta. It is in this temple where every year Ramman festival is organized by the local inhabitants. Though no historical account of this tradition is available before 1911, the tradition itself existed much before that. The documents available with the community tell that the history of this particular fair is more than hundred years old. The date for the festival and performance is traditionally fixed by the village priest which usually falls on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April every year.

On the auspicious day of *sankranti* (Baisakhi) in the month of Baisakh, Bhumiya Devta comes out in a procession from his place of residence (which is one house in the village) to the central temple of the village accompanied by beating of drums and mask dances. After the festivity come to a close for the year, Bhumiya Devta goes to live in one of the houses for the entire year till the next Baisakhi festival. His place of residence in the village is decided by the Village Panchayat.

## Photographs

## Video

## Consent

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Qawwali.

**Community:** Muslim, Mirasi.

**Region:** Qawwali is sung all over India.

**Brief Description:** Traditionally Qawwali is a devotional music. It belongs to a tradition of Islamic mysticism and contains the compositions of the Sufi saints. The salient feature of Qawwali is an elaborate verbal code sung to the beat of the Dholak. Its repertoire comes from the different saintly lineages, and also those which reflect regional styles and languages. It extends to the larger network of social and ideological base. Apart from religious functions, it is also sung during the birth and other lifecycle ceremonies. The singers are supported by musical instruments such as the Harmonium, Sarangi, Sitar, Tabla and Dholak. The rendition starts with Hamd (in praise of Allah), Qual (the sayings of the Prophet Mohammad), Naat (in praise of the Prophet), (in praise of the Saints) and ends with Rang (in praise of the Chishti lineage). The rhythm and music have a powerful impact on the listeners, and create an atmosphere of piety. Qawwali is sung as an offering (haazri) to Allah and to the Pirs (saints). The knowledge and style of singing is transmitted orally, from generation to generation, and that is how the tradition has been kept alive. The singers' quest is for unity with God, a spiritual experience which transcends his consciousness with mystical love, and transforms him into a state of ecstasy. The rhythm and poetry culminates in a vibrant performance. It combines in itself the religious, mythological and festive aspects of the community, and is an expression of its aesthetic and creative aspirations of the community.

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Practice of turban tying in Rajasthan.

**Community:** Among the Hindus, the names of communities are: Rajput, Charan, Bhaat, Bishnoi, Jasnathi, Jaat, Raika (Rebari), Kalbelia, Jogi, Ramsnehi, Brahmin, Gujjar, Mahajan, Meena, Bhil, Gawaria, Kamadh, Meghwal, Suthar, Naai, Lohar, and Kumhar. Besides this, there are Muslim communities like Langa, Manganyar, Sindhi, Qayamkhani, Rangrez and also the Sikh community resident of the state. This tradition spans across all class, caste and creed divisions.

**Region:** In all the 33 Districts of Rajasthan we can see traditional demarcation of regions such as Marwar, Mewar, Dhundhar, Hadoti, Godwad, Shekhawati, Vagad, Bikana, and Mewat being the prime regions where the culture is prevalent.

**Brief Description:** The practice of turban tying, (safa wearing in local parlance), consists of tying a long, generally unstitched cloth, in a set manner of wrapping in folds, which is tied on the head of men. The cloth could have a plain texture or be printed in various designs. There are two primary variants: a) safa, which is 8 - 10 m in length, and 1 m in width; and b) paag or pagdi, which is around 20 m in length, and 20 cm in width. Given the immensity of length, the tying of a turban is a complex mechanism. Each community has its own unique style of wearing this outfit.

The earliest evidence of the element is available from a 2nd century BC statue of the Kushana period, depicting a woman wearing a turban. However, the modern turban is around 300 years old, and is worn now by men only. British ethnographers of the colonial period have recorded the phenomenon vividly.

Today, the turban is a symbol of pride and identity. Also, it has several practical uses. It protects the wearers' head from extreme temperatures. The turban can be used as a pillow, a mattress, or a rope to draw water from wells. Rajasthan is a desert state, and people have compensated for the lack of colour in nature through colourful attires and music, and the myriad hues of turbans are in consonance with that. Whether the context is rural or urban, the turban is ubiquitous and the most visible living tradition of the state.

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Kalamkari Paintings.

**Community:** The craft is practised at Sri Kalahasti by the family of Jonnalagadda Lakshmaiah of the Balija community and other communities which practice this art are- Reddys, Mutharasis, Brahmins, Naidus, Padmasalis of weavers' community, Christians, Muslims, etc. in Andhra Pradesh.

**Region:** The element is practised mainly at Sri Kalahasti in the Chittoor district of the state of Andhra Pradesh. The craft is also practised at the following places in Andhra Pradesh:

1. Yerpedu, Kolla pharam (near Lanco), Kadur, Narasingapuram and Kannali village in Chittoor District.
2. Venkatagiri in Nellore District, adjoining the Chittoor district along the coastal belt of the Bay of Bengal.
3. Machilipatnam, a local fishing hub in Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh.

**Brief Description:** Sri Kalahasti near the temple town of Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh specializes in producing temple cloths - Kalamkari (lit. pen-work). Kalamkari is primarily used for the temple festivals or as wall hangings.

The stories from the epics Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas are painted as continuous narratives, each important event framed in a rectangle. Sometimes short episodes from the stories are also painted. The relevant Telugu verses explaining the theme are also carried below the artwork. Considerable degree of imaginative and technical skill is required to condense the stories into illustrative formats.

The master craftsman draws the outline of the design with Kalam or pen on the myrobalan treated cloth using charcoal sticks made from tamarind wood. He draws from the rich repertoire of design and motifs and iconographical details of various god and goddesses as lay down traditionally. The colors are obtained from vegetable and mineral sources. The main colors used are black, red, blue and yellow and alum is used as mordant to fix the colors and to obtain the reds. The gods are painted blue, the demons and evil characters in red and green. Yellow is used for female figures and ornaments. Red is mostly used as a background. The cotton cloth is washed in flowing water to remove starch and between dyeing and bleaching. Keeping up with the times, the Kalamkari artists are now designing also for their modern clientele.

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Jangam Gāyan.

**Community:** Jangam community belongs to the state of Haryana, India. The members of this community are wandering mendicants.

**Region:** Jangam community is dominant in Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Ambala and Jind districts in Haryana. Besides, they also move as itinerant religious mendicants in the adjoining states of Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir in north India.

**Brief Description:** Jangam Gāyan is a narrative sung by the Jangam community. It is performed in the temple courtyards of Shiva temples to huge gatherings. Sometimes, there are public performances in village squares.

The main component of Jangam Gāyan is a poem that deals with the narrative of the wedding of Shiva and Parvati. The poem is sung in a chorus and the singers double up as actors and musicians, as they dramatise the sequence of events leading up to the wedding. The music accompaniment for the performance is provided by the damru (a small drum, associated with Shiva) and bells.

The poem is a rare narrative as it describes a process of transformation of Shiva from a deity to a human being. Significantly, this transformation is an experience of earthly passion leading to the realisation of one's being. The poem begins with the story of the birth of Parvati. The narrative moves on to a detailed description of Parvati's growing up into an exceptionally accomplished, beautiful girl and her dream of marrying Shiva, followed by a description of Parvati guiding the Brahmin match maker to the abode of Shiva. This part of the narrative deals with a fascinating expose of Shiva, the wild god in an intoxicated state surrounded by dangerous serpents and black snakes. The poem then elaborates on the preparations and rituals of the marriage ceremony and talks about how Shiva, the wild god becomes a family man who can never afford to displease Parvati.

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the Element:** Chettikulangara Kumbha Bharani Kettukazhcha.

**Community:** It's a common practice in thirteen villages of the Chettikulangara region. The Sree Devi Vilasom Hindumatha Convention, a not-for-profit organization since 1957, acts as the authorized umbrella organization on behalf of the 13 villages to conduct the festivities related to the Chettikulangara temple.

**Region:** The thirteen villages of Chettikulangara spread over Mavelikara and Karthikapally sub-divisions (taluks) of Alleppey district and the Onattukara region in the Alleppey and Quilon districts of Kerala State. These villages are Erezha South, Erezha North, Kaitha South, Kaitha North, Kannamangalam South, Kannamangalam North, Kadavoor, Pela, Anjilipra, Mattam North, Mattam South, Menampally and Nadakkavu.

**Brief Description:** Chettikulangara Kumbha Bharani Kettukazhcha, a post-harvest float festival, is a spectacular confluence of art, culture, architecture and the dedicated human endeavour of approximately 50000 people. The festival is held as thanksgiving to the Goddess Bhadrakali, for the rich harvest gathered in, and protection from diseases and calamities. It begins on the day of Shivarathri and concludes on the 'Bharani' day of the Kumbha month of the Malayalam calendar (during February or early March). Over half-a-million people participate with passion and devotion in the two-week long festivities. In the evenings, devotees conduct a unique dance-song ritual named Kuthiyottam where the entire village is in attendance. Sumptuous community feasts are served thrice a day as part of the celebrations.

The grand finale of the festivities is the dragging of decorative floats to the local shrine of the Goddess. The floats weigh hundreds of tonnes and stand 20-30 metres tall, with a square base of 16 (4X4m) to 25 sq. meters (5X5m) approx, tapering to the top in a pyramidal form. The framework of these floats harks back to Buddhist tradition and to Kerala's traditional temple architecture. The wooden structures are made using wood, coconut and arecanut tree poles, coir, and are covered with colourful embellishments and ornamental 'torans' or fringes. Two huge wooden sculptures of the epic figures of Bhima and Hanuman are included in the group of floats.

The event is possibly among the largest mobile float festivals in the world, in terms of size of the floats and participation of communities concerned.

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Edited and Maintained by  
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IGNCA

**Name of the Element:** Ranmāle.

**Community:** The agricultural and forest dwelling communities of Western Ghats of Goa are the bearer of this tradition. It is practiced by valips and Gaonkars, the forest dwelling communities of Sanguem Taluka of the South Goa district. It is also performed by the agricultural communities, locally known as the Nave Marathe and Zune Marathe in Zarme and Caranzole of Sattari Taluka of North Goa.

**Region:** Ranmale is performed in Western India in the Sattari Taluka of North Goa District and Sanguem Taluka of South Goa District. It is also performed in the border villages of Maharashtra like Mangeli, Patye and is also practised in Karnataka in the villages of Chikhale, Kankumbi, Parwad, Gawali, Degao.

**Brief Description:** Ranmale is a ritualistic and folk theatre form based on mythological stories from the popular Indian epics of Ramayan and Mahabharat. It is presented during the Holi festival which is celebrated as Shigmo (spring festival) in Goa and Konkan areas.

The word 'Ranmale' has evolved from two words, 'Ran' which means battle and 'Male' representing the traditional torch used as a source of light during the performance. It is believed that its origin is rooted in ancient times when a group of visiting artists peevd by the demands of the local settlers killed them while they were engrossed in watching their performance, since then Ranmale is performed as an act of atonement of that past event.

This form comprises dance, drama and folk songs called Jats. Each participant of the drama makes his entry to the tune of folk songs. The traditional instrument, Ghumat is an earthenware drum with one of its ends covered with the skin of the monitor lizard and the other mouth kept open. The accompanying instruments Kansale, cymbals of brass, are used for the base rhythm. Jats are sung by the initiator of the folk drama called Sutradhar, while the folk artists stand in a row on the stage acting like a backdrop.

In the village of Zarme, the presentation of Ranmale is a must after the annual festival of Chorotsav, while in Caranzole it precedes the festivities. It is a popular belief that non-performance of the element may invite the wrath of the village deity.

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the element:** Durga Puja in West Bengal.

**Community:** Bengalis of all religious denominations residing in the state of West Bengal.

**Region:** Durga Puja is celebrated not only in West Bengal but in other regions such as Bihar (Biharis), Odisha (Oriyas) and Assam (Ahomiyas) as well as in other states of India where Bengali community reside. Bengali migrants residing in Europe, America and Australia also celebrate this festival.

**Brief Description:** Durga Puja is the most important socio-cultural and religious event in the Bengali festival calendar, celebrated in autumn. The festival is to propitiate the Goddess Durga for her blessings as also celebrate her victory over the demon Mahishasur. It is also believed that Lord Rama had worshipped the goddess Durga to seek divine blessings before undertaking the battle against Ravana.

Durga Puja is a ten-day festival, usually in October, which starts from Mahalaya, the inaugural day of the event. Mahalaya is celebrated by Agomoni or songs of welcome. Festivities start five days later with the observance of Shashti, Shaptami, Ashtami, and Nabami. An elaborate community bhog or food-offerings to the Goddess, is prepared and then partaken by congregations on each day of the festivities. On the tenth day, or Bijoya Dashami, the goddess is borne away to the sounds of the dhak, or traditional drum for immersion in nearby rivers or water bodies.

The puja mandap or the main altar is essentially a platform inside a makeshift bamboo structure called a pandal. The rituals are performed by designated priests in front of the deities inside the mandap. Offerings of fruits, flowers, sweetmeats, incense and sandalwood are placed in platters in front of the deities while the congregation in the pandal repeat the mantras, or holy chants, after the priest, conducting the services. The makeshift structures, as well as the image of the goddess are adorned with meticulous artwork and stylistic themes made with local craft materials such as shola or pith, coloured jute, woven brocades, imitation jewellery, clay and terracotta ornamentation.

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# IGNCA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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**Name of the element:** Nautanki.

**Community:** Nautanki is a secular, broad based and inclusive form that incorporates people from various castes and communities such as Khangar, Pal, Thakur, Darzi, Gadehr, Nai, Pasi, Chamar, Kahar and Brahmin Valmiki, Dholi, Jato, Mirasi, Bhand and Kalamat and Muslim communities. The women performers are mostly from the Bedin, Sonar, Barin and Lodhi communities. The Nats are also involved in acrobatic and comic acts.

**Region:** This is a form widely spread over the Jamuna-Gangetic plain of Northern India. Hathras Kanpur Agra, Mathura, Jhansi, Banda, Barabanki among others in UP. In Bihar, Sonapur, Patna, Rajgir, Nalanda, are important centres among others while in Rajasthan, Alwar and Bharatpur are important. The form is also prevalent in the states of Haryana and Madhya Pradesh.

**Brief Description:** Nautanki, a folk operatic theatre form, has emerged out of many traditions such as Bhagat, Swang etc. It implies acting with and through singing. Central to the performance is the Nakkara, a percussion instrument which heralds the announcement of the start of a performance, bringing the audience into the performing space, which could vary from the village square to the marketplace. The audience sits around a raised platform (sometimes constructed) on which a night-long performance takes place. The atmosphere is informal and interactive. The stories vary from episodes in the Ramayana and Mahabharat (like Satya Harishchandra) to Persian tales like Laila Majnu. Many groups use written scripts by authors, like Natharam Gaur, but there is ample scope for improvisation and spontaneity. Heightened poetry consisting of metric patterns of different syllables like doha, tabil, maand, khamsa, dedtuki, behre tabil, chaubola, are used. There is an element of high drama because of emotional conflicts and universal situations that are played out, incorporating shades of valour, pathos and love. In Hathrasi style there is an emphasis on singing which borders on classical ragas, but the artist has the freedom to add individual colour and improvise spontaneously while performing. The Kanpur style incorporates stylised and eloquent speech with broad clear gestures. Interludes, comedy and dances are interwoven, which over a period have gained popularity. Earlier the female roles were enacted by male actors but the 1930s entry of women changed the scenario completely. Some groups use elaborate costumes while others do not consider this essential.

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