

Preservation and Documentation of Endangered Folk Languages and Oral Traditions

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To protect, promote and preserve various forms of folk art & culture throughout the country, the Government of India has set up seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) with headquarters at Patiala, Nagpur, Udaipur, Prayagraj, Kolkata, Dimapur and Thanjavur. These ZCCs organize various cultural activities and programmes on regular basis in their member States.

These ZCCs also undertake documentation of vanishing art forms, folklores, oral traditions and practices in the form of audio, video and written materials. Documentation and digitization are ongoing processes.

Guru Shishya Parampara Scheme run by ZCCs is one such initiative where traditional masters train young disciples to ensure continuity of cultural knowledge which helps artistes, researchers and community bearers of traditions.

42 oral traditions have been documented viz. Rajasthan (17), West Bengal (9), Odisha (3), Punjab (2), Maharashtra (2), Gujarat (2), Bihar (1), Jharkhand (1), Manipur (1), Uttar Pradesh (1), Haryana (1), Goa (1) and UT of Jammu & Kashmir (1).

All the ZCCs regularly collaborate with NGOs, Universities, Research Scholars and Cultural Organizations to document traditional art forms and oral traditions. These collaborations focus on community participation and academic support for accurate recording and preservation of intangible heritage.

Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) under Ministry of Culture maintains the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) which involves the audio-visual documentation and digitization of the ICH elements. Whistled language of Meghalaya has been added to the National Inventory of ICH which include documentation and digitization.

The library of Sangeet Natak Akademi is a multilingual reference library extensively used by the students, researchers, scholars and performers in the field of performing arts. The library has digitized thousands of newspaper clippings, in addition to rare journals, alongwith 326 rare books/manuscripts.

The Akademi has created a repository of artists/scholars/critics/writers/art historians etc. of performing arts for updating database and for better & direct connection with the artist community.

This information was given by Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today.

Sunil Kumar Tiwari

pibculture[at]gmail[dot]com

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