

Shri Vivek Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Emphasises Digital Documentation of Village Heritage while Inaugurating Capacity-Building Programme under NMCM

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With the objective of conserving and promoting India's rich cultural heritage, the National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM), implemented by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), organised a one-day Capacity-Building Programme (Level-I) at IGNCA, New Delhi. The programme was conducted as part of the nationwide series of All-India Gram Sabhas scheduled for 26 January 2026.



The initiative aims to further strengthen the systematic documentation of India's tangible and intangible cultural heritage under NMCM's flagship scheme "Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD)", while also creating new opportunities for revitalising the rural economy through heritage-led engagement.



The inaugural session was graced by Shri Vivek Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, as the Chief Guest, and Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, as the Guest of Honour. The welcome address was delivered by Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Vivek Agarwal described the initiative as a significant step towards ensuring a strong digital presence for India's villages. He outlined a five-point framework for enriching the MGMD portal, which included developing a comprehensive understanding of the portal, assessing its categories and limitations, adopting corrective measures through the 'Contribute' tab, collecting data using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods, and ultimately enriching the portal. Referring to the initiative as "heritage in PRA", he urged participants to work collaboratively across departmental boundaries. His address concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session.

Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh highlighted the pivotal role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in cultural mapping, citing their extensive grassroots experience and outreach. He emphasised the importance of timely implementation, continuous monitoring, and sustained field-level guidance to ensure comprehensive coverage and impactful outcomes.

In his address, Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi underscored the need to preserve the original character and spirit of villages in an increasingly urbanised world. Referring to the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat, he emphasised the importance of documenting both tangible and intangible heritage on the MGMD portal and observed that the goal of decolonising Indian society by 2035 can be achieved by restoring village identities and cultural heritage.

The concluding session was graced by Shri Vivek Bhardwaj, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, as the Chief Guest, with Shri Sushil Kumar Lohani, Additional Secretary, attending as the Guest of Honour. Sharing his childhood memories of village life, Shri Vivek Bhardwaj drew attention to the gradual disappearance of intangible cultural traditions over time. His reflections inspired the trainers to undertake the documentation process with renewed commitment and dedication.

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