

**Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts**  
**Round Table Conference on Jews of India**

Date: 13th October 2014

Venue: Conference Hall, C.V. Mess, Janpath, New Delhi- 110001

**Background Note**

India has been home to ancient communities of Jews whose centuries of existence in this socio-cultural milieu is marked by the sense of freedom they've enjoyed here. Though numerically a small population, the Jews of India have been remarkable for distinct traditions and practices contributing much diversity to the world Jewry. In the second half of the twentieth century, the Jewish population in India has begun to dwindle owing to migrations and the communities have grown in their number in Israel and in other parts of the world today. There exists a rich variety of legends, tales, rituals, festivals, synagogues, songs, costumes and cuisine which bear testimony to these specific strands of Judaism and their age-old cultural co-existence in India.

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), an autonomous centre under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, is organizing a one-day round table conference on the "Jews of India" on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014, in the Conference Hall, CV Mess, Janpath. The conference is being planned in the form of a consultative meeting of eminent scholars and artists to discuss the organization of a major program comprising an exhibition and international symposium on the Jewish heritage of India at IGNCA in 2015-16. The conference will also include presentations by senior Indo-Judaic scholars on the topics of West Asian and European Jews and

Holocaust Refugees in India, Jewish Contribution to Indian art, literature, music and the Indian Jewish heritage of cities such as Cochin, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Delhi and Mumbai.

The conference will be inaugurated by Mrs. Dipali Khanna, Member Secretary, IGNCA. The participants include Dr. MGS Narayanan (Historian and Former Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research), Dr. Kenneth X. Robbins (Author of *Western Jews in India*), Dr. Sreekala Sivasankaran (Associate Professor, JanapadaSampada, IGNCA), Esther David (Sahitya Academy awardee) and Dr. Jael Silliman (Associate Professor, University of Iowa) among others.