

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

Shastra Utsava (Performative Texts and Traditions of North-East India)

Concept Note

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) is an autonomous Trust, set up by the Government of India under Ministry of Culture and is a premier resource centre engaged in research, documentation, publication and dissemination of knowledge of the arts. It is visualized as a Centre encompassing the study and experience of all the arts, each form with its own integrity, yet within a dimension of mutual interdependence and inter-relatedness with nature, social structure and cosmology. Through diverse programmes of research, publication, training, creative activities and performances, IGNCA seeks to place the arts within the context of the natural and human environment. The arts are here understood to comprise the fields of creative and critical literature, written and oral; the visual arts, ranging from architecture, sculpture, painting and graphics to general material culture, photography and film; the performing arts of music, dance and theatre in their broadest connotation; and all else in fairs, festivals and lifestyle that has an artistic dimension.

The fundamental approach of the Centre in all its work is both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. The work of the Centre is carried through five divisions, viz. Kala Nidhi, Kala Kosa, Janapada Sampada, Kala Darsana and Sutradhara. It has a well-resourced Media Centre for audio-visual documentation, film making; a well-appointed studio for fortnightly screenings of films and documentaries. It also has a state of the art Cultural Informatics unit for production of CD-ROMs, DVDs and developing National Digital Data Bank on Culture.

Shastra and Prayoga programme

The **Shastra and Prayoga** Programme of IGNCA is an endeavour to highlight the interactive and dialogical nature of the concepts of theory and practice of the arts in Indian context and brings the experience of arts, codified in texts, to the experiential level of spectator, by arranging lectures, demonstrations and performances based on texts on the arts, published under its various series.

Under the aegis of this programme, a two day Seminar and festival titled **Shastra Utsava** based on **Performative Texts and Traditions of North-East India** is being organized, which will attempt to look at the theme from the points of view of artistic theories and practices. It may be mentioned here that the IGNCA has published seminal texts like the *Natyasastra* (Nevai version, Volume I), *Sri Hastamuktavali*, and

Kalikapurane Murtivinirdesah in its *Kalamulasastra* series. This series of the IGNCA aims to bring to light primary and fundamental texts in the fields of arts, especially architecture, sculpture, painting, music and dance; in a manner that the insularity between the theory and practice, the textual and the oral, the creative and the critical, and the expressed and the experienced can be broken and the dynamic interplay and complementarity of both the traditions is established.

The two-day event will be hosted by the IGNCA at its Eastern Regional Centre, Varanasi. It will focus on tracing the inherent presence of the literary milestones of Sanskrit performative texts such as *Sri Rama Vijaya Natakam* (composed by Srimanta Sankaradeva) and their performance traditions, in the geographically distant, yet culturally close North-Eastern India and will highlight the common thread that runs through the pan-Indian art-forms.

During the event, on **28th** and **29th** of **March 2016**, the academic sessions of the Seminar will be organized during the day time and therein, a group of noted scholars will deliberate on various aspects of Sanskrit/ north-eastern artistic texts and their influence on the performative traditions of the region. Evenings will present visual treat to spectators when the Sanskrit play titled *Sri Rama Vijaya Natakam* will be presented in *Ankia Nat-Bhaona* form on the first day and *Sattriya* dance will be performed on the second. These evening performances will present an opportunity to all the connoisseurs and audiences to witness and experience the change and continuity of Sanskrit/regional tradition in the said performances of the celebrated art-forms of North-East.

Distinguished scholars, well-trained traditional artistes and grand masters are being invited from North-East for scholarly presentations and evening performances. For this event, noted institutions from Varanasi like Banaras Hindu University (celebrating the Centenary of its establishment), Jnana Pravaha and Parshvanath Vidyapeeth are also providing their active collaboration.

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