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INTACH plans to document intangible heritage forms

Special Correspondent



C.T. Misra, member-secretary, INTACH-New Delhi, addressing a workshop on 'Documenting India's intangible cultural heritage' in Madurai on Sunday. Photo: S. James *The Hindu*

"Centre giving a thrust on protection of India's legacies"

The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has planned to document intangible heritage forms that face the threat of extinction by engaging local communities as custodians.

It has appealed to heritage lovers to capture the 'memories of India' and use information technology in a big way to preserve them for the future generations. Some of the focus areas of the intangible heritage forms include folktales, proverbs, dances, folk songs of agricultural workers, recitals, tribal dialects, religious practices, herbal medicine, weaving skills, scripts, customs and handicrafts.

C.T. Misra, member-secretary, INTACH-New Delhi, who spoke at the inauguration of a three-day State-level workshop on 'Documenting India's intangible cultural heritage' at Thiagarajar College here on Sunday, said that several proposals and projects prepared by INTACH were beginning to take shape after the Central government announced its plan to promote heritage towns.

"They have become government's priorities. They include the Ganga Action Plan and establishment of heritage zones. We are happy that youths are coming in a big way to take part in heritage preservation efforts," Dr. Misra said.

She cautioned that local people should be sensitised before the implementation of Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) in the 12 places — Ajmer, Amritsar, Gaya, Varanasi, Puri, Dwaraka, Mathura, Warangal, Amaravati, Kanchipuram, Velankanni and Badami — identified for the purpose.

S. Suresh, State Convener, INTACH (Tamil Nadu), said the objective of documenting India's intangible heritage forms was to set history straight. Specific proposals would be discussed in the workshop.

Uma Kannan, convener, INTACH-Madurai Chapter, said there was an urgent need to document and preserve the heritage of all art forms. Heritage walks, heritage tourism initiatives and workshops were regularly conducted by the Madurai Chapter, she said.

Historian R. Venkatraman said that intangible heritage was something that has to be felt and then protected. "It is a non-verbal conveyor of a community's philosophy of life either through music, dance or drama," he said.

Conveners, co-conveners and resource persons from various chapters of INTACH in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and New Delhi are taking part in the workshop.

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