

Making spaces for Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Coastal Communities

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India has a unique coastline, 7,516.6 kilometres long, from West Bengal to Gujarat. Through this vast stretch of coasts, numerous communities have depended on various marine resources for their livelihoods for millennia. In the socio-economic fabric of all these coastal communities, one can find entangled elements of their social institutions with their immediate environment. Inspired by the message given by the Honorable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji's message to our country on '*Panch Pran of Amrit Kaal*,' the third aspect in the message states, 'Take Pride in our Heritage and Legacy,' which inherently stress the need to cherish and value the intangible heritage of communities. Additionally, there is a highlighted aspect regarding maritime heritage and legacy, comprising content-rich wisdom relevant to the modern world.

At the backdrop of 'Living Wisdom' as an overarching framework, it is pertinent to trace the tangible and intangible heritage diversities in detail and their historical sustainability among the coastal communities of India. There is continuity, sustenance, and strength in the local cultural aspects, particularly the tangible and intangible aspects, which, even after being affected, seem to have survived modernity and the forces it engendered. Research and documentation of local tangible and intangible cultural heritage aspects among the coastal communities and thus assume immediate relevance in contemporary times. Like the other groups, it is understood that the traditional knowledge, values, and practices of the coastal communities have helped them build a sustainable and renewable relationship with the natural resources and diversity unique to the coastal ecosystem.

Conceptualizing indigenous or traditional/local knowledge systems concerning coastal communities remains almost undocumented and refers to traditions, customs, practices, and all cultural items. Like many other communities in India, fewer studies focus on the marine communities and their socio-economic development, and not much focus on the role of material significance in the marine communities that live around coastal areas. There is a significant need to understand communities' role and participation in documenting cultural heritage concerning tangible and intangible dimensions while integrating communities' knowledge for sustainability.

The panel seeks themes/topics related to historical,(Colonial and Post Colonial), textual, oral, mythological, collective memory, spiritual/religious belief systems and practices, folklore, socio-economic, materiality, artistic forms and presentations, cultural artifacts, gender relations, knowledge systems and practices in occupation, health, environment and preservation of natural resources among the coastal communities.