



SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (SAARC)

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Editorial

We are pleased to present the third issue of the Newsletter (Vol.1: No. 3-September 2011). The highlight of the quarter (July - September 2011) was the successful conclusion of the Third Meeting of the Governing Board. We are also happy to report the progress of the construction work of the SAARC Cultural Centre Complex at Matara. Furthermore, this issue outlines our work during the last quarter and presents our new and forthcoming publications, delineates the up-coming programmes and announces the future vacancies. We are looking forward to the comments and contributions of our esteemed readers.

Third Governing Board Meeting of SAARC Cultural Centre Successfully Concludes



Members of the Governing Board of the SAARC Cultural Centre

Governing Board of SAARC Cultural Centre (2011 - 2013):

▶ Mr. Shyam Sunder Sikder, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Bangladesh.	Member
▶ Mr. Dorjee Tshering, Director General, Bhutan.	Member
▶ Dr. V. Venu Vasudevan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, India, Chairman.	Member
▶ H.E. Mr. Mohamed Mamdhoo Waheed, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Maldives.	Member
▶ Mr. Ram Saran Chimoriya, Under Secretary, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Culture, Nepal.	Member
▶ Dr. Shaista Nuzhat, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Pakistan.	Member
▶ Mr. N.V.P.C. Piyathilake, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Culture and Arts, Sri Lanka.	Member
▶ Mr. Kapila Jayaweera, Director (South Asia), Ministry of External Affairs, Sri Lanka. (Rep. of the Ministry of External Affairs, Sri Lanka)	Member
▶ Mrs. Damayanthi Rajapakse, Director - SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu. (Rep. of the Secretary General, SAARC.)	Member
▶ Mr. G.L.W. Samarasinghe, Director - SAARC Cultural Centre, Colombo.	Member Secretary

SAARC Cultural Centre hosted the Third Meeting of the Governing Board on 8 and 9 September 2011 at Galle Face Hotel, Colombo. Dr V. Venu Vasudevan of India was appointed as the Chair of the SAARC Cultural Centre Governing Board for the next two years.

The Board analysed the progress of the Centre in implementing the approved programmes and congratulated for the successful and ground-breaking initiatives in promoting the Cultural cooperation in the region. The indicative programme and budget for 2012 and the five year programme for 2012-2016 were also reviewed and approved at the Meeting.

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Five Year Programme of SAARC Cultural Centre 2012-2016

Based on the success and experiences learnt during SAARC Cultural Centre's initial experience, the Centre proposed a five year programme, which was approved by the Governing Board. The theme of the five year programme is "Unity within Diversity – Exploring the Arts and Culture". The key areas of the programme are,

- Establish linkages between culture and other sectors
- Promotion of SAARC Culture online (Includes Website, Facebook, Blog, Twitter, YouTube, SAARC Cultural Portal)
- Promotion of Cultural Festivals in the Region
- Development of Archeology, Architecture, Archives and Museology
- Promotion of Management of World Heritage Sites in the Region
- Development of Cultural Industries
- Development of Literature in the Region
- Promotion of Visual and Performing Arts in the SAARC Region (Includes Paintings and Sculpture, Film Industry and Photography)
- Preservation of folklore in the SAARC Countries
- Research Programme
- Publication Programme (Includes Reports and Monographs, SAARC Cultural Journal, and other publications)
- SAARC Exchange Programme on Culture (Includes Training Programme, Regional Cultural Coordination and Exchange Programmes among Member States)

Programmes for 2012

The Governing Board of SAARC Cultural Centre approved the following Programmes to be implemented in 2012.

- Establish linkage between culture and other sectors.
- Promotion of SAARC Culture Online.
- Promotion of Cultural Festivals in the Region.
- Development of Archaeology, Architecture and Archives.
- Development of Cultural Industries.
- Development of Literature in the Region.
- Promotion of Visual and Performing Arts in the Region.
- Preservation of Folklore in the SAARC Member States.
- Research Programmes.
- SAARC Publication Programme.

Progress of SAARC Cultural Centre Complex in Matara

Construction of SAARC Cultural Centre Complex in Nawimana, Matara is now in progress. 4th Engineer Services Regiment of Sri Lanka Army is the Contractor for this project. University of Moratuwa acts as the Consultant. Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the Arts, Sri Lanka is monitoring the project.



Construction Work of SAARC Cultural Centre Complex, Matara.



Regional Conference on Diminishing Cultures

South Asia is a region where diverse ethnic, religious and social groups exist. The Tenth SAARC Summit recognized the need to acknowledge the profound cultural continuum of South Asia as a historical basis for sustaining harmonious relations among the peoples of the region. As a result of the recognition given to the importance of protecting and promoting cultures of South Asia, the SAARC Cultural Centre was established in 2009 in Sri Lanka.



*Hon. Tikiri Kobbekaduwa, Chief Guest of the Conference
lighting the Oil Lamp*

The SAARC Cultural Centre has undertaken a research project on Diminishing Cultures in South Asia as a part of its mandate of promoting cultural diversity in South Asia by recognizing and protecting diminishing cultures.

As the first phase of this project a Regional Conference on Diminishing Cultures was held from 19-21 July 2011 at Queen's Hotel, Kandy. The objectives of the Conference were to identify key issues and research themes that merit independent and in-depth research; to discuss the country situation related to diminishing cultures in SAARC Member States and also recognize research approaches and methodologies for further research. On the basis of the recommendations of this Conference, the SAARC Cultural Centre will fund a series of research projects over the next one year. The outcome of these projects will be shared with all concerned in the form of research publication. It is expected that the recommendations enshrined in these reports could be used by the advocates and policy-makers alike in protecting diminishing cultures in South Asia.

Over 45 participants who are experts in the field, participated in the Conference which include delegates from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka.



Delegates of the Conference with the Chief Guest, Director and Professional Staff of the Centre

SAARC Cultural Centre NEWSLETTER



ACHIEVEMENTS

The Conference was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Tikiri Kobbekaduwa, Governor of the Central Province. In his address Hon. Kobbekaduwa emphasized on the singular responsibility that we jointly have in representing, devising and crafting the future of our South Asian regional culture in general and more importantly the specific cultures of our respective countries and communities that are facing immense stress in today's fast changing world.

Academic Session 1 was an Introduction session. This session was Chaired by Mr G.L.W. Samarasinghe, Director of SAARC Cultural Centre. The session started with an Introduction of the Conference Theme and Research Project by Dr Sanjay Garg, Deputy Director, Research of SAARC Cultural Centre. The session proceeded with the Key Note Speech by Prof. K.T. Nimal P. de Silva on **Diminishing Cultures in South Asia: An Overview** and a presentation by Prof. Desmond Mallikarachchi on **Why (indigenous) Cultures diminish or face the danger of extinction?**

Academic Session 2 was Chaired by Prof. K.N.O. Dharmadasa. During this session Mr. Gengop Karchung, Delegate from Bhutan presented a paper on **Diminishing of Bhutanese Cultures, with Special Reference to the Costume of Merak Community** and Dr B.N. Sarkar, Delegate from India presented a paper on **Diminishing Culture of the Tribes of Andaman Islands: Bio-Cultural Perspectives**.



Conference in Progress

Academic Session 3 was Chaired by Mr. Shamsuzzaman Khan, Director General, Bangla Academy, Dhaka (Bangladesh). The session

began with a video and presentation by Dr. Surjeet Singh from India on **Performing Arts and Traditions of the Nomadic (Gypsy) Tribe of Bazigars**. Thereafter, Prof. Kalinga Tudor Silva presented on **Social Marginality and Cultural Challenges of Rodiya Communities in Sri Lanka**.



Discussion at the Conference

Fourth Academic Session was Chaired by Dr. Surjeet Singh, Project Director, The Oral Traditions and Cultural Heritage of Punjab. The first presentation for the day was by Prof. K.N.O. Dharmadasa, Chief Editor, Sinhala Encyclopedia Office, Sri Lanka on **Creolization as Mechanism for Language Survival: The Case of the Vedda Language of Sri Lanka**. The next presentation on **Living Heritage in Sri Lanka: The New Tourism Product for the Vedda Society** was by Prof. Prishantha Gunawardhana Professor of Archaeology, Department of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya.

Mr. Moosa Naseem, First Secretary of the High Commission of Maldives Chaired the Fifth Academic Session. In this session Prof. Premakumara De Silva presented his paper on **Diminishing or Struggle for Survival: Case of Vedda Culture in Sri Lanka**. The presentation was followed by a video on Vedda Community.

The Sixth Academic Session was Chaired by Prof. Desmond Mallikarachchi. Mr. Amaralal Sumith Nakandala, Director General Economic Affairs Division, Ministry of External Affairs presented a paper on **Intellectual Property Rights of the Diminishing Cultures: Need for Global and Regional Framework for Protection and Preservation**.



The Plenary Session focused on identifying and finalizing key issues and research themes on cultures that will merit independent and in-depth research and was Chaired by Dr. Sinharaja Tammita-Delgoda. After extensive discussion, the Conference made the recommendations for research themes/topics.



Plenary Session Chaired by Dr. Sinharaja Tammita-Delgoda

Field Trip to Dambana

Delegates of Member States and participants participated in a field trip to Dambana, a village of the Vedda Community on 21 July 2011. During the visit, a visit to the Museum and interaction with the Vedda Community was facilitated by Prof. Yasanjali Jayathilake. A Cultural performance by the Vedda Community and a traditional lunch was also organized.

The delegates and participants lauded the efforts and initiative taken by the SAARC Cultural Centre in addressing this critical issue of diminishing cultures in South Asia and assured their full cooperation in playing an active role in their protection and preservation.



Hoisting Flags by Vedda Chief and the Director of SAARC Cultural Centre



Vedda Community Song



Vedda Community Member Participating in the Interactive Session



Ritual Dance (Kirikoraha) of Vedda Community



Traditional Lunch

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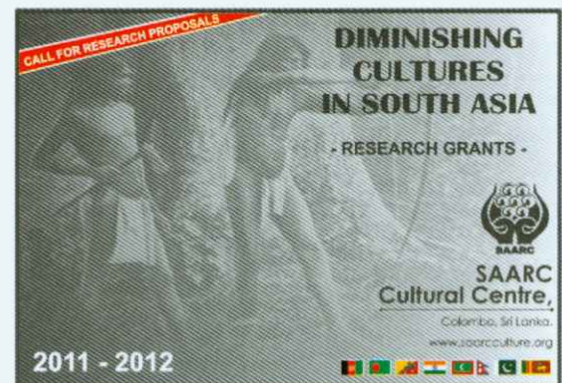


Research Project on Diminishing Cultures

SAARC Cultural Centre, as part of its mandate in promoting cultural diversity in South Asia and part of its research project on Diminishing Cultures in South Asia invited proposals for research for recognizing and protecting productive components of the Diminishing Cultures in South Asia.

The identified research themes were an outcome of the SAARC Diminishing Cultures Conference

1. Diminishing/ Dying Languages and Scripts
2. Diminishing Food/ Culinary Cultures and Traditions
3. Traditional Cultural Expressions (Phonetic or Verbal Expressions/ Musical or Sound Expressions/ Expressions by Actions such as Dance, Plays, Folk Theatre, Ceremonies, Rituals, etc.)
4. Folk Religions
5. Indigenous Communities (Comparative Study/ Survival Strategies)
6. Indigenous Farming (Agricultural and Agro-based Practices and Traditional Knowledge)
7. Traditional Technology
8. Traditional Games and Sports
9. Traditional Medicines, Therapies and Healing Practices
10. Kaffirs of Sri Lanka
11. Gypsy Communities
12. Bio-cultural Heritage of Inter-state Communities of SAARC Countries



Applicants were requested to submit a detailed research proposal on any of the themes given above. SAARC Cultural Centre is currently reviewing the research proposals and will be selecting up-to **Eight** proposals for the purpose of research grant.

All the research grants will be subject to a mid-term review and the continuation of the project will be subject to the approval of the Progress Report by the SAARC Cultural Centre. At the end of the research project each researcher will be required to submit a publishable draft of the report. The research projects are to be completed in 11 months, by 30 August 2012. Each selected researcher will be granted US\$ 2,000/- for the research.



SAARC Artist Camp and Exhibition of Paintings

The SAARC Cultural Centre, organized an artist camp and exhibition of paintings in the region. The artists were from Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



An Exhibition of paintings from several noted artists from the region was inaugurated on 2 September 2011 at the J.D.A. Perera Gallery, Horton Place, Colombo 7, while the Artist Camp was inaugurated on 3 September 2011 at Janakala Kendraya, Battaramulla.



Exhibition

Representing four countries from the region 25 top artists, the likes of Prof. Samarjit Roy Chowdhury from Bangladesh, Ms. Mariyam Omar from Maldives, Miniature artist Ms. Silwat Mumtaz from Pakistan and Mr. S.H. Sarath from Sri Lanka were among the participants at this event.

One of the main objectives of the Artist Camp and Exhibition, as per the SAARC Agenda for

Culture, is to give all Member States an opportunity to showcase the talents of the artists from the Member States of the SAARC region and to accord due regional recognition for their work of art. The Artist Camp focused on Contemporary Modern Art.



Artist at Work - I

These twin events provided a unique opportunity to all art lovers to come and witness the finest artists of the region working at the scenic location of Janakala Kendraya on 3-4 September 2011 and view priceless exhibits from 3-6 September 2011 at J.D.A. Perera Art Gallery. All the paintings completed at the camp were also exhibited at the Art Gallery on 6 September 2011. The SAARC Cultural Centre hopes to continue such initiatives in the future.



Artist at Work - II

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We are Active Online

SAARC Cultural Centre, Sri Lanka website was launched on 5 October 2010, at the 2nd Governing Board Meeting of SAARC Cultural Centre held in Colombo Sri Lanka.

Our **Website** is a strong means of communicating with the outside world about the role of the Centre, work completed and future plans. The Announcements, News, Publications and Photo Gallery, Media Room and Vacancies are updated regularly.



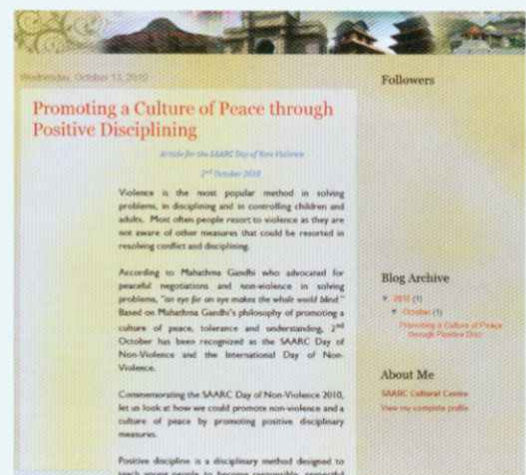
Screen-shot of Facebook Fan Page



Screen-shot of Website

f Facebook page of SAARC Cultural Centre ensures interaction with a wider audience. Through facebook, event invitations are created for upcoming events of the Centre to raise public awareness. Information page provide basic information about the Centre and link to our website. Photo Gallery is updated regularly to share photos of activities of the Centre. Facebook also provide a platform for discussions about activities of the Centre as well as SAARC Culture among the interested parties.

B SAARC Cultural Blog is used to post short articles on topics related to SAARC Culture. Anyone interested could submit articles for the blog. It will be published only after reviewing by the Staff of SAARC Cultural Centre. Any interested party could subscribe to the blog and post comments on published articles.



Screen-shot of Blog

t Twitter is used to collect online newspaper and web articles of activities of SAARC Cultural Centre.



Screen-shot of Twitter Fan Page

You Tube hosts videos developed by SAARC Cultural Centre, including events of the Centre and SAARC Culture.



Screen-shot of Youtube

SAARC Cultural Portal

SAARC Cultural Portal was launched by the Centre in February 2011. Member States were requested to identify a person from each country to provide guidelines and passwords to upload and maintain the country pages (but it is yet pending). In the coming years, each Country page of the SAARC Cultural Portal will be developed with detailed information on culture from respective countries. Information available on country pages of SAARC Cultural Portal will

include, an introduction to the country, cultural identities, cultural festivals and events, traditions and rituals, languages, heritage sites, archeology, costumes, food, literature, films, dance, drama, art, music, handicrafts, sculpture and decorative arts, videos on culture and announcements on cultural events.



Screen-shot of Webportal

The web portal could be accessed through the following link - www.saarcculture.org/portal.

E-LIBRARY

E-Library structure has been developed by the web developers. In the coming years, the E-Library will be developed with the SAARC Cultural Resource Centre. E-Library will include all material in the SAARC Cultural Resource Centre and e-documents. It will be an electronic information management database of Journals, Books, DVD/ Video, available at the SAARC Resource Centre. Call numbers, catalogue numbers, authours, titles, key words and summaries of the book will be available for easy reference. Availability of resource material could be monitored online. E-documents and links to e-resources and websites will be uploaded on the E-library for easy access of material on SAARC Culture for researchers

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UP-COMING PROGRAMMES

Symposium on Folk Dances



**Symposium on Folk Dances
in the SAARC Region**
Dhaka, Bangladesh



"Experience the vibrant traditions of Folkdancing from the SAARC Region"

Organized By:
**SAARC
Cultural Centre,**
Colombo, Sri Lanka.
www.saarcculture.org

**22 - 25
OCTOBER
2011**



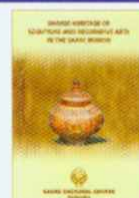
SAARC Cultural Festival

The SAARC Cultural Festival featuring traditional dancers and musicians from the region, will be held in December 2011. Cultural Festivals are the best way to experience culture, traditions, life and people. Dancers and musicians from all the SAARC Member States will be invited to participate at this Cultural Festival, which will be an annual event. The Cultural Festival will open with a parade, followed by performances by the dancers and musicians during the three day festival. As fringe events to the main cultural festival, there will also be stalls showcasing cultural industries and local handicrafts from the region, as well as an exotic food festival with food from the region. Visit our website for more information on the event.

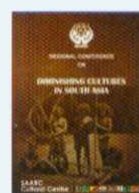


New Publications

1. **Shared Heritage of Sculpture and Decorative Arts in the SAARC Region** – is based on the Symposium on Shared Heritage of Sculpture and Decorative Arts in South Asia held on 27-30 January 2011 at Colombo. It contains the proceedings of the Symposium and full papers on the subject



2. **Diminishing Cultures in South Asia** - is a report on the proceedings of the SAARC Conference on Diminishing Cultures in South Asia held on 19-21 July 2011.



3. **SAARC Artist Camp and Exhibition** – Sri Lanka- is an information booklet brought out on the occasion of the SAARC Artist Camp and Exhibition. It contains details about the artists nominated for the Artist Camp and details of their paintings that were exhibited at the Exhibition.



Forthcoming Publication

4. **SAARC Culture 2011 (Volume II)**

SAARC Culture is an annual research journal of the SAARC Cultural Centre, Colombo. It seeks to provide a platform to the academics, practitioners and policy makers of culture in the region to present their research findings and to debate on issues of mutual and common interest. The Second issue (Vol.2:2011) of the journal will focus on Diminishing Cultures of South Asia. It will be published by the end of this year. The journal will be widely disseminated as an on-line publication and also as hard copy to project the cultural richness and cultural diversity of the SAARC Region.



His Excellency Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India in Sri Lanka Visits SAARC Cultural Centre

HE Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India in Sri Lanka, visited the SAARC Cultural Centre on 19 September 2011. He was accompanied by Mr. Birender S. Yadav, Counsellor (Press, Information and Culture) and Mr. M. Ramachandran, Director, Indian Cultural Centre. Ms. Soundarie David Rodrigo, Deputy Director (Programme) and Dr. Sanjay Garg, Deputy Director (Research) welcomed HE the High Commissioner and introduced him to the staff of the Centre. Later, in a meeting attended by all the professional staff of the Centre, a presentation about the approved programmes of the SAARC Cultural Centre for the year 2012 was made. HE the High Commissioner and his colleagues discussed ways and means for ensuring closer cooperation in the Centre's activities and ensured their full support in promoting culture. A set of publications of the Centre and a Souvenir was presented to His Excellency.



Discussion with HE Ashok K. Kantha and SCC Officials in progress

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VACANCY

GSS Category Vacancies

SAARC Cultural Centre is likely to advertise for the following posts by end of this year

1. Post of Computer Operations Officer (GSS II)
2. Post of Documentation Assistant (GSS III)
3. Post of Receptionist (GSS IV)

Please visit our website - <http://www.saarcculture.org> regularly for updates on vacancies.



Culture Quotes



*"No culture can live,
if it attempts to be exclusive."*

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)
Mass leader, 'Father of the Nation', 'Man of the Millennium',
Apostle of peace and nonviolence.

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