



estival

of

Museums &



Intangible Natural Heritage



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

(Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India)

In collaboration with

Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady

&

ICOM-NATHIST

(International Council of Museum's Committee
for Museums and Collections of Natural History)

Programme Partners :

State Forest Department,
State Tourism Department (MHP),
Kerala Kalamandalam,
Moozhikulam Saala

22-27 June 2011

Venue: Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady- 683574



Introduction

Intangible Heritage (IH) is a term increasingly used while discussing about Heritage. The term has been in circulation only during the last decade or so. Before the arrival of the term IH, Heritage in general has been restricted to the tangible aspects only. However, it has been felt during the last decade or so that restricting Heritage to the tangible/ materialistic aspects alone excludes a large percentage of heritage efforts, especially from the Asian countries including India. The World Heritage tag, which was earlier restricted to sites of materialistic heritage such as forts, monuments, national parks etc were expanded to include IH as well by efforts such as the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage identifies five key domains in which the ICH is manifested:

- * Oral traditions and Expressions
- * Performing arts
- * Social practices, Rituals and Festive events
- * Knowledge and Practices concerning Nature and the Universe
- * Traditional Craftsmanship

Along with the shift in definition of Heritage by UNESCO and ICOM (International Council of Monuments) the International Council of Museums (ICOM) also began giving equal importance to Intangible Heritage along with Tangible Heritage while discussing about Museum collections. The ICOMNATHIST (International Committee on Museums and Collections of Natural History) is taking lead in the safeguarding Intangible Natural Heritage (INH) in Museums on an international level.

In India the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) has taken early lead in the interpretation of Intangible Natural Heritage (INH) by launching a Project INH. The Project INH involved two national level Conferences in Calicut (2007) and Kochi (2008) and resulted in the opening of a Museum Gallery on „Early Plant Heritage of India. in Mysore (2009).

The first Charter on IH and Museums in India was released by the NMNH. In continuation of the various programmes mentioned above, the NMNH plans to launch a series of Festivals of Museums and Intangible Natural Heritage in collaboration with ICOM-NATHIST in 2011. The focus of these Festivals will be to explore the possibilities of documenting the Nature Elements in Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Accordingly the Festivals are being planned in Kalady, Jodhpur and Bhubaneswar with focus on the UNESCO Inscriptions on the Representative List of the ICH of Humanity 2010 such as Mudi yettu ritual theatre and dance drama (Kerala), Kalbelia folk songs and dances (Rajasthan) and Chhau dance (Seraikella, Purulia and Mayurbhanj).



Aim

The Festivals are proposed as Capacity building training programme for Museum personnel and students of Museology, aimed to promote Museums as the hubs for documentation of Traditional Knowledge, Intangible Heritage and Natural Heritage systems that are culturally perceived.

Objectives

By the end of the Festival, the participants will have identified concrete recommendations for future actions at the local level in order to protect the natural heritage in the country by

Understanding that both the tangible and intangible elements of heritage are important for better interpretation of heritage collected, documented, conserved and exhibited in Museums
Recognising that documentation of Traditional Knowledge about Biodiversity is an invaluable intangible element of natural heritage

Locating natural heritage (NH) as a basic component of heritage along with cultural heritage (CH)

Expected Results

Publication of Reports with Recommendations

Sensitisation of participants to the protection of INH

Capacity building training programme for Museums/ Students for safeguarding INH

Preparation of an action plan for an Exhibition on Intangible Natural Heritage

PROGRAMMES

INH: Spice Heritage (Day 1 and 2)

The spice trade was the principal context of contact between Asia and Europe in the early modern era. Until the middle of the 18th Century, botanicals from India were important ingredients of European life as culinary additives, medicines and luxury items like perfumes, aromatics and unguents of religious rituals. Vast quantities of natural products, "Rich Merchandize" went through and from India to Europe along the spice route. The search for shorter and direct sea routes to India was the driving force for the voyages of discovery that profoundly changed both the world's maps, and its history...In 1498

Vasco da Gama arrived in Calicut to procure pepper and other natural products for Portugal. Large numbers of European traders followed da Gama and settled in coastal areas of India to join the Asian spice trade. Along with the commodities, Europeans in India sought out and compiled indigenous knowledge of medicinal and agrarian plants for their use in India and elsewhere.... Information about the many hitherto unknown plants collected from India was also important for the emerging field of botany and was key to the development of botanical classification systems in the 18th century (Annamma Spudich, 2008. *Such Treasure & Rich Merchandize. Indian Botanical Knowledge in 16th and 17th Century European Books*, NCBS/TIFR, Bangalore).



From as early as 3,000 BC, Kerala had established itself as a major centre for spices with Muziris as the epicentre. Muziris was where ancient mariners anchored. It was a port city, among the earliest of its kind in the world. In the Ramayana, Muziris is Murachipattanam; the place Sugreeva's sleuths scurried through while looking for the abducted Sita. In his characteristic flight of romance, Kalidasa meditates on Murachi's pepper vine, cardamom and outlandish damsels. In Sangam literature, Muziris becomes Muchiri, and later Muyirikkode.



Muziris was a primeval **spice city** where world traders met. The merchants of Muziris had instituted Indo-Greek and Indo-Roman-Egyptian trade channels, dealing in gold and other metals, pepper and spices, gemstones and textiles from the 1st century onward and they traded with Jews, Arabs, and Chinese.



Tragedy struck in 1341, when the profile of the water bodies in the Periyar River basin, on the Malabar Coast in Kerala, underwent a major transformation. The prosperous city-port of Muziris suddenly dropped off the map due to flood and earthquake. Where Muziris once bustled, now sleeps this unassuming village, Pattanam, thirty

kilometres north of Kochi. With the decline of Muziris, Cochin slowly became prominent as the hub of Spice trade and future interaction with Colonisers from Portugal, Netherlands and Britain.

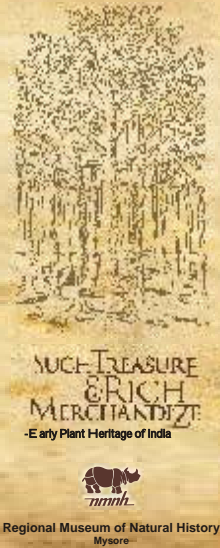
Recent archaeological excavations in Pattanam have yielded evidence of the ancient glory of Muziris as a world mall. Realizing the importance and potential impact of such discoveries, the Government of Kerala has initiated the ambitious **Muziris Heritage Project** to conserve and develop the area that was once Muziris.



The MHP is today gaining the attention of the world – thanks to its nature and extent of preservation. It was the recognition obtained by the Muziris Heritage Project that motivated the conceptualization of the „**Spice Route Initiative**“, modelled on “Silk Route”, in consultation with UNESCO. A meeting of Ambassadors of countries related to the „Spice Route“ was organized jointly by UNESCO and the Government of Kerala at New Delhi recently as a key step in developing this route and exploring its potential. The MNMH was invited to participate.

NMNH initiatives in Spice Heritage

The NMNH has established a Museum gallery on "Such Treasures & Rich Merchandize: The Early Plant Heritage of India" in the RMNH Mysore. The Gallery depicts the indigenous knowledge about the medicinal properties of plants including spices documented in seven European books. One of the books, Hortus Malabaricus, is considered to be the earliest systematic scientific documentation of traditional knowledge about the natural heritage in Asia. All these books were the result of contact between India and Europe essentially on account of search for spices by the latter.



PROGRAMMES

INH: Aspects of Culture (Day3)



The thrust is on the contribution of plants and animals in performing arts like Kathakali and Kutiyattam. For example Kathakali actors learn to do their own make up though for chutti (white facial enhancement), there is a specialist. The make-up is of natural colours. A field visit to Kerala Kalamandalam, a Deemed University for Culture, will expose the delegates to demonstrations of a few selected performing arts and recital of Kathakali. A few specialists on makeup and costuming will demonstrate about the role of nature elements in Kathakali and Kutiyattam.

Mudiyettu, an example of ICH, is a ritual dance drama from Kerala which has been recently included in the UNESCO Inscriptions on the Representative List of the ICH of Humanity 2010. Experts representing various schools of Mudiyettu will discuss about the role of nature elements in this ritual dance drama. Mudiyettu is based on the mythological tale of a battle between the goddess Kali and the demon Darika. It is a community ritual in which the entire village participates. After the summer crops have been harvested, the villagers reach the temple in the early morning on an appointed day. Mudiyettu performers purify themselves through fasting and prayer, and then draw a huge image of goddess Kali, called as kolam, on the temple floor with coloured powders, wherein the spirit of the goddess is invoked. This prepares the ground for the lively enactment to follow, in which the divine sage Narada importunes Shiva to contain the demon Darika, who is immune to defeat by mortals. Shiva instead commands that Darika will die at the hand of the goddess Kali. Mudiyettu is

performed annually in 'Bhagavati Kavus', the temples of the goddess, in different villages along the rivers Chalakkudy Puzha, Periyar and Moovattupuzha. Mutual cooperation and collective participation of each caste in the ritual instills and strengthens common identity and mutual bonding in the community. Responsibility for its transmission lies with the elders and senior performers, who engage the younger generation as apprentices during the course of the performance. Mudi yettu serves as an important cultural site for transmission of traditional values, ethics, moral codes and aesthetic norms of the community to the next generation, thereby ensuring its continuity and relevance in present times.



PROGRAMMES

INH: Sacred groves and Snake worship (Day 4)

Sacred groves are the 'Gardens of Gods', consisting of natural vegetation of the locality and the associated supernatural power. In India sacred groves are known under different names in different parts with Sarpakavu in Kerala.

In Kerala it was the common practice to assign a part of their land near the Tharavadu or house as the abode of goddess Durga or Serpent God Naga or Shasta and the place is called Kavu or Sarpakavu. Sacred Groves represent the major effort to recognize and conserve biodiversity (ethnic diversity) traditionally. The age-old system of every village having a temple, a tank and associated sacred grove explains the ancient method of water harvesting and sharing and may be considered as the backbone of village economy. People were prohibited from felling trees and even removing a twig was considered a taboo. Some of the trees such as *Borassus*, *Alstonia scholaris*, *Antiaris toxicaria*, *Hopea parviflora*, *Strychnos nux-vomica*, *Ficus religiosa* etc are being worshipped in many sacred groves.



On a rough estimate Kerala has about 1500 sacred groves which are distinct and unique in biological diversity. Most of the sacred groves represent the relics of once gregarious and



abundant low lying evergreen forests of the Western Ghats. The vegetation in the undisturbed groves is luxuriant and with multi layered trees mixed with shrubs, lianas and herbs. The ground is humus laden and abundant with fungus and ferns. The floristic composition is highly influenced by exposure to anthropogenic pressures, cattle grazing, edaphically and climatic variations.

Animals found in sacred grove are of two types, those which inhabit the grove like snakes, frogs, lizards and other lower group of organisms and higher group of fauna who nests and dens there and those who visit the grove temporarily for food, shelter etc. Sacred groves act as an abode for many rare, endemic, endangered species and economically important plants of fruit bearing and medicinal properties. Apart from conserving biological diversity, sacred groves that are situated in the middle of the human habitation are responsible for conserving water and soil. This is evident from the perennial nature of ponds, wells and tanks, which are situated near the sacred groves. The fertility of the agro-ecosystems is very high due to the humus and nutrients generated in the sacred groves.



Sacred groves have existed in India from time immemorial as patches of densely wooded areas, venerated on religious grounds. Sacred groves have preserved many rare and endemic wild plant species, many of which hold potential benefit to man in medicine, agriculture and industry. In fact,

sacred groves represent the ancient Indian way of in situ conservation of genetic diversity. Reverence for all forms of life human, animal or plant, characterizes our ancient thought and continues to this day as a legacy laced with spirituality, humility and recognition of the importance of the elements and nature. Sanctity attached to places where nature shows her bounty was both spiritual and secular. These places were considered 'sacred', as Gods were supposed to bless them and naturally their protection was considered an obligation on the part of the society. Thus many a sacred grove has been preserved as sustainable resources, ensuring the basic capital intact. These sacred groves are therefore valuable gene pools and the first major effort to recognize and conserve biodiversity.

Most sacred groves harboured perennial water source and hence formed the vital support system of many villages. The age-old system of every village having a temple, a tank and associated sacred grove explains the ancient method of water harvesting and sharing.

There are many myths, legends and faiths associated with Sarpa Kavus. Ayyappan Kavus the sacred groves dedicated to Lord Ayyappan used to be the most common in Kerala in the past.



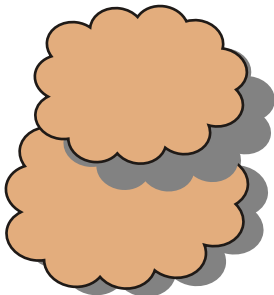
The Kavus in North Kerala are mostly associated with goddesses or ancestral spirits (Amma, Ayalakshi, Ayiravalli, Bhagavati, Durga, Mahishasura Mardini, Vanadurga, Vanadevatha, Marutha, Madan, Yakshi, Gandharvan, Yogeeshwaran, Muthappan etc) while in South Kerala these are generally associated with **snake worship** (Nagam, Nagaraja, Nagini, Sarpam etc). A ritualistic recitation called Sarpam Pattu is performed in Central and South Kerala once in 10-12 years to propitiate the **snake gods**. In the sacred groves associated with Goddesses in North Kerala, a ritual dance is performed called theyyam or Theyyattam.



Another form of snake worship is Nagakkalam which is drawn by the Pulluvas to appease the serpent gods. Pulluva is a community in Kerala practicing snake worship. The male member of the community is called Pulluvan and the female member is called Pulluvothi. Pulluvan Paattu literally means 'song of the Pulluva'. Nagakkalam is drawn in Sarpakkavus, sacred groves meant for snake worship. These groves are found in temples and ancient homes. The rituals start in the evening with the drawing of the Nagakkalam. Red, green, yellow, black and white are the colours and only natural derivatives are used to make the colours. This is followed by a series of rituals that conclude with Sarpam Thullal. In Sarpam Thullal, unmarried females are left to sit in the Kalam. The Pulluvan and Pulluvothi start singing in praise of various gods and the girls go into a trance and start erasing the Kalam. Pulluvan Kudam and Pulluvan Veena are the two musical instruments played by the Pulluvas during the ritual. The Pulluvan Kudam is an earthen pot to which two leather strings are attached with the help of a piece of bamboo. The strings are played rhythmically and the pot serves as an amplifier for the sound. The Pulluvan Veena is a short fiddle with just one string and it is played with a bow.

PROGRAMMES

INH: Njattuvela (Day 5)



Njattuvela is the solar positioning with respect to zodiac signs. The 365 days of the year are divided into groups of fourteen days called **Njattuvela**, each one bearing the name of a star. Literally, it is Njayarinte Nila or position of the Sun. Starting from Vishu day on Medam 14 according to the Malayalam Era (or April in Roman calendar); there will be 27 njattuvelas in one calendar year. The arithmetic being one Njattuvela having duration of thirteen-and-a-half days.

More than the dates of these njattuvelas, this calendar is a record of the myths and legends from our past i.e. the

traditional knowledge about nature. It, for instance, lists how rains were divided among kings of the Chera-Chola-Pandya dynasties. Rains during *Midhunam*, *Karkidakam*, *Chingam* and *Kanni* were taken by the Chera King, those during *Thulam*, *Vruschikam*, *Dhanu* and *Makaram* by the Chola King and finally, those during *Kumbham*, *Meenam*, *Medam* and *Edavam* by the Pandya King. When they met again after one year to evaluate the partition, it was found that the Chera King got less rain. So, the Chola King gave him rains during *Vruschikam* and *Thulam* and the Pandya King gave him those during *Medam* and *Edavam*. That was how Kerala got the eight-month long monsoon, so goes the myth. There is an element of disarming innocence and camaraderie in this story.

The International Astronomical Union had standardised all the constellations of the Sidereal Zodia and the exact boundaries fixed in 1930. But none of the Indian names figure in the list of the IAU, despite the fact that India had one of the earliest astronomical cultures. That the ancient Babylonians, the Hindus and the Egyptians had deep and independent knowledge of the Heavens is an undisputed fact. Thenames of fabled heroes, animals and deities were assigned to the constellations. Those who followed the "Star of Bethlehem" had come from these pagan cultures. The ascendancy of Sirius marked the resuscitation of the Nile, after a long dry spell. Edava Pathi transformed the hot, parched landscape of Kerala into a lush green Paradise, a tropical wet system.

The Indian system is far more comprehensive. It deals with the Sidereal Zodiac, which begins from 0 degrees of Beta Arietis (Aswini) and ends at the 360th degree of Zeta Piscium (Revathi). As the Sun moves roughly one degree per day, the solar transit of a 30 degree Sign is 30 days and a constellation is 13.33 days (as the constellation is 13 degrees and 20 minutes). A Njattuvela is a solar transit of constellation of 13 degrees 20 minutes and hence the duration is 13.33 days.

PROGRAMMES

Exhibition Development (Day 6)

During the final day of the Festival, there will be reports and discussion on the previous days' activities. The feedback from these reports/discussion will help in developing an action plan for the development of an Exhibition on INH. This will be an occasion for



Museologists and students of Museology along with local trainees of the MHP to be part of a capacity building training programme in the nascent subject of intangible heritage which has recently become an essential component part of Museums along with its tangible/materialistic aspect. It will also be an experience in Community Museum / Ecomuseum movement where the local people are Curators and the Museologists are only facilitators. The Festival is also expected to recommend an action plan for Museums to act as the hubs for documentation and safeguarding of intangible natural heritage.

PROGRAMME (Tentative)

Day 1: 22 June		INH: Spice Heritage
0900-1000	Registration	
1100-1200	INAUGURATION	
1230-1400	PLENARY SESSION	
1230-1300	Key note 1: Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Indian scenario	Dr. K. G. Paulose , Former Vice Chancellor, Kerala Kalamandalam
1300-1330	Background Address 1: Intangible Natural Heritage and Museums	Dr B Venugopal , Executive Board Member, ICOM-NATHIST (International Council of Museums' Committee for Collections/ Museums of NH)
1330-1400	Background Address 1: NMNH and Intangible Natural Heritage	Shri C. Rajasundaram , RMNH Mysore, Smt. Naaz Rizvi , NMNH New Delhi, Shri John Thomas , RMNH Mysore
1400-1500	Lunch	
	SESSION 1: SPICE HERITAGE	
1500-1700	Presentation/ Panel discussion	Venue: SSUS, Kalady Shri Sohan, Former Cochin Mayor Shri Sethumadhavan, Writer, Chendamangalam Dr Krishnan, Head, Dept of Archaeology, MSU, Baroda Shri E. Kunhikrishnan, University College, Trivandrum Dr. B. Venugopal, Director, NMNH, New Delhi
	Discussion	
1700-1800	Portuguese influence on Culture:	Lecdem on Chavittu natakam: Gothuruthu Yuvajana Chavittunadaka Kala Samiti: Shri Thampi Asan and troupe
1800-1900	Visit oldest Nutmeg plantation	Poonolly Plantations, Mekkalady
2000-2100	Welcome Dinner	

Day 2: 23 June		INH: Spice heritage
	Coordinator	Shri V.M. Sunil, Former Special Officer, MHP
0800-0900	Depart Kalady	Reach Kottappuram
	SESSION 2: MUZIRIS HERITAGE	
0900-1300	Introduction/ Orientation	Venue: MHP (Muziris Heritage Project) Sites Shri V. M. Sunil, Former Special Officer, MHP
	Visit	Kottappuram Fort; Excavation site: Dr. S. Hemachandran
	KIDS Resource Centre	Usage of natural fibres: Dr. Sunny George
1300-1400	Lunch	
1400-1800	Visit	
		Paliam tharavadu & Kottayil Kovilakam: Dr Adarsh, Consultant, MHP
		Jewish Synagogue: Dr. Aju Narayanan, Consultant, MHP
		Pattanam Excavation site
		Pokkali fields and Cherai Beach
1800-2000	Depart Cherai	Reach Kalady
2000-2100	Dinner	

Day 3: 24 June		ICH: Nature Elements in CH
	Coordinator	Shri V. Kaladharan, PRO, Kerala Kalamandalam
0800-1000	Depart Kalady	Reach Cheruthuruthy: Kerala Kalamandalam
	SESSION 3: NATURE ELEMENTS IN CULTURAL HERITAGE	
1000-1200	Visit Kalaries (Training schools)	Venue: Kerala Kalamandalam Exposure to various training programmes
1200-1215	Tea break	
1215-1330	Visit	Art gallery and Koothambalam
		Nila Campus
1330-1430	Lunch	
1430-1700	Presentation/ Panel discussion on Nature elements in Makeup and Costuming	Shri Kalamandalam Rammohanam Shri Kalamandalam Sivaraman Shri Silpi Janardanan Shri Kothavil Ramankutty
	Discussion	
1700-1830	Recital/ Performance	Kathakali
1830-2000	Depart Cheruthuruthy	Reach Kalady
2000-2100	Dinner	

Day 4: 25 June	INH : Sacred groves	
	Coordinator	Dr Induchoodan
	SESSION 4: SACRED GROVES	Venue: Kalady
1000-1300	Presentations / Panel discussion [11]	Dr Induchoodan
		Dr E. Unnikrishnan, Kasargod
		Shri Dileep, Sarpakavu Samrakshana Samiti
		Shri Padmanabhan, SEEK, Payyannur
	Discussion	
1300-1400	Lunch	
	AN Session	Venue: Iringole
1400-1430	Depart Kalady	Reach Iringole near Perumbavoor
1430-1700	Visit	Iringole kavu Sacred grove
	Demonstration/ Recital	Pulluvan pattu
1700-1730	Depart Iringole	Reach Kalady
1730-2000	Visit	Adi Sankara Temple (Sringeri Mutt)
		Adi Sankara Sthambham (Kanchi Mutt)
2000-2100	Dinner	
Day 5: 26 June	INH: Njattuvela	
	Coordinator	Shri Premkumar
0900-1000	Depart Kalady	Reach Moozhikulam
	SESSION 5: NJATTUVELA	Venue: Moozhikulam Sala
1000-1300	Introduction/ Orientation	Premkumar, Moozhikulam Sala
	Presentations/ Panel discussion on Njattuvela	Dr. C. R. Rajagopalan, University of Kerala, Trivandrum
		Dr. Vijayakumara Menon, Thrissur
		Dr. V. P. N. Nambudiri, CUSAT (TBC)
		Shri V. K. Sreedharan
	Documentary on Rain/ Monsoon	Shiny Jacob Benjamin/ INVIS Multimedia
	Discussion	
1300-1400	Lunch	
	ICH: Nature Elements in CH	Venue: Moozhikulam
	SESSION 6: MUDIYETTU	Venue: Moozhikulam Sala
1400-1630	Presentation/ Panel discussion on Nature Elements in Mudi yettu	Dr C. K. Thomas, Thrissur
		Pazhoor Damodara Marar Smaraka Gurukulam
		Sankarankutty Marar Mudi yettu Kalasangham, Keezhillom
		Kizhakke Varanattu Mudi yettu Kalasangham, Koratty
		Shree Bhadra Mudi yettu Sangham, Koratty
1630-1700	Kalamezhuttu	Sasidhara Sharma, Vaikam
1700-1800	Lecdem/ Performance on Mudi yettu	Shree Bhadra Mudi yettu Sangham, Koratty
1800-1900	Discussion	
1900-2000	Depart Moozhikulam	Reach Kalady
2000-2100	Dinner	
Day 6: 27 June	INH: Exhibition development	
0900-1000	SESSION 7: OPEN/ GENERAL	Venue: Kalady
1000-1030	Report of Sessions	
1030-1300	SESSION 8: EXHIBITION DEVT.	Planning, Development & Presentation of Draft Exhibition
1300-1330	VALEDICTION	
1330-1430	Farewell Lunch	



Day 1: FN	Inauguration	Dr. S. Sivadasan	SSUS, Kalady	98464 99980
Day 1: FN	Seminar on Spice heritage	Dr. B. Sreekumar	Spices Board, Kochi	9847705691
Day 2	Field Visit to MHP Sites	Mr.V. Sunil	MHP. Kodungalloor	9995880262
Day 3	ICH: Kalamandalam	Mr. V. Kaladharan	Kerala Kalamandalam	9446426662
Day 4	Sacred Groves	Dr. Induchoodan	State Forest Dept.	9847022947
Day 5	Njattuveh	Mr. Prem kumar	Moozhikulam Saala	9847022947
Day 6	Exhibition Development	Mr. R.R. Bakde	NMNH, New Delhi	9868231161
		Mr. C. Rajasundaram	RMNH, Mysore	9448784654
		Mr. John Thomas	RMNH, Mysore	8088537363

National Coordinator

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NMNH, New Delhi
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Programme Implementation

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