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### National Inventory on the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

Welcome to the National database of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India

In fulfilment of its obligations under the UNESCO convention on ICH, a statute to which India is a signatory, the Ministry of Culture, Govt. Of India, has declared the Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's apex body on culture, as the Nodal centre for coordinating India's nominations for various lists and other actions such as developing and maintaining the National Inventory of ICH through the Ministry of Culture's **letter no.2-21/2011-UNESCO** cell dated 21 February, 2011.

The Sangeet Natak Akademi's nomination as the ICH Nodal agency has been endorsed, as required by the Akademi's constitution, by its duly constituted Executive Board and General Council. The Akademi is an autonomous body engaged in the work of preserving and promoting the traditional cultural heritage of India's rich performing arts of classical dance, music, theatre, puppetry, crafts and folk arts and is represented on its General Council by India's top cultural and artistic personalities.

As the first step in the making of a National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), this website offers collective ICH database of a variety of well-known institutions and organisations engaged in culture. The National database of Intangible Cultural Heritage also has a [link](#) to the current and ongoing nomination, documentation, attachments and audio-visual materials of each of the chosen elements in its entirety. Each element is supported by the requisite documents by the community engaged in the work of preservation and promotion of each. It is indeed the result of the participating bodies' demand to be placed on the UNESCO Representative List. The respective ICH elements are also part of a larger database culled from regional institutions located all over India and are a product of the community's knowledge of their micro and macro profiles garnered over their intimate association with this knowledge gained over hundreds and even thousands of years.

**Inventory on the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India** (current and ongoing nomination, documentation, attachments and audio-visual materials of each elements)

[Links of archives and other databases of various subordinate offices, attached offices and autonomous bodies of Ministry of Culture, Government of India](#)

[Sangeet Natak Akademi, National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama, India](#)

[North Zone Cultural Centre, Patna](#)

[North Centre Zone Cultural Centre, Allahabad](#)

[South Central Zone Cultural Centre, Nagpur](#)

[Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre, Kolkata](#)

[Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, New Delhi](#)

[Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi](#)

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**Inventory on the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India**

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2	The Tradition of Vedic Chanting					<a href="http://www.sangeetnatak.gov.in/">http://www.sangeetnatak.gov.in/</a>
3	Ramlila - the Traditional Performance of the Ramayana					<a href="http://www.sangeetnatak.gov.in/">http://www.sangeetnatak.gov.in/</a>
4	Novruz, Nowrouz, Nooruz, Navruz, Nauroz, Nevruz	Description	Consent	Images	Video	<a href="http://www.unescoparzor.com/">http://www.unescoparzor.com/</a>
5	Ramman: Religious Festival and Ritual Theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas	Description		Images	Video	<a href="http://uk.gov.in/">http://uk.gov.in/</a>
6	Chhau Dance	Description	Consent	Images	Video	<a href="http://www.jharkhand.gov.in/">http://www.jharkhand.gov.in/</a> <a href="http://odisha.gov.in/">http://odisha.gov.in/</a> <a href="http://westbengal.gov.in/">http://westbengal.gov.in/</a>
7	Kalbellea: Folk Songs and Dances, Rajasthan, India	Description	Consent	Images	Video	<a href="http://www.rajasthan.gov.in/">http://www.rajasthan.gov.in/</a>
8	Mudiyettu: Ritual Theatre and Dance Drama, Kerala, India	Description	Consent	Images	Video	<a href="http://kerala.gov.in/">http://kerala.gov.in/</a>
9	Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir, India	Description	Consent	Images	Video	<a href="http://leh.nic.in/">http://leh.nic.in/</a> <a href="http://jammukashmir.nic.in/">http://jammukashmir.nic.in/</a>
10	Sankirtan, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur	Description	Consent	Images	Video	<a href="http://manipur.gov.in/">http://manipur.gov.in/</a>
11	Thatheras of Jandiala Guru: Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making, Punjab, India.	Description	Consent	Images	Video	<a href="http://punjabgovt.nic.in/">http://punjabgovt.nic.in/</a>
12	Yoga	Description	Consent	Images	Video	reference links

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13	Varanasi - Creative City of Music	Description				Details
14	Kolam: Ritualistic Threshold Drawings and Designs of Tamil Nadu, India	Description	Consent	Images	Video	<a href="http://www.tn.gov.in/">http://www.tn.gov.in/</a>
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23	Kalamkari Paintings	Description	Consent	Images	Video	<a href="http://www.aponline.gov.in/apportal/index.asp">http://www.aponline.gov.in/apportal/index.asp</a>
24	Rathwa ni Gher: Tribal Dance of Rathwas, Gujarat, India	Description	Consent	Images	Video	<a href="http://www.gujaratindia.com">http://www.gujaratindia.com</a>
25	Sankheda Nu Lakh Kam: Lacquered turned wood furniture of Sankheda	Description		Images	Video	<a href="http://www.gujaratindia.com">http://www.gujaratindia.com</a>

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27	Jangam Gayan	Description	Consent	Images	Video	<a href="http://haryana.gov.in/">http://haryana.gov.in/</a>
28	Durga Puja in West Bengal	Description	Consent	Images	Video	<a href="http://www.nationallibrary.gov.in/">http://www.nationallibrary.gov.in/</a>
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**Name of the Element:** Kumbh Mela

**Community:** Kumbh Mela (fair) is a congregation of pilgrims (visitors, aspirants, *kalpavasis* and *sadhus*) mostly Hindus. But the legitimate bearers are the holy men, the ascetics, saints, the *Sadhus*, *Sadhvis* and the *Sants* who have renounced worldly life to follow an exclusive life of the religious. These ascetics either belong to religious organisations-*Ashrams* and *Akhadas* or are individuals living on alms. There are 13 *Akhadas* in India with their own respective Presidents or *Mahants*. The respective Presidents of these *Akhadas* are the first ones who take the dip or bathe in the holy river during the Kumbh and with their bathing the Kumbh Mela proceedings begin. These ascetics are generally male. Though women ascetics or *Sadhvis* belonging from various ashrams and *Akhadas* are also present in large numbers, who participate in the Kumbh Mela with equal zest and enthusiasm.

As the upholders of the element there are also the various Temple Trust organisations like Trimbakeshwar Temple Trust of Nashik, Organisations or *Sabhas* like Ganga Sabha of Haridwar, Civil Societies or Non Governmental Organisations like Godavari Gatarikaran Virodhi Manch of Nashik, who not only assist in facilitating the festival but contribute largely in making the festival a success.

Apart from the Mela being attended by millions of devotees and visitors, government and administration of the respective state and city is also an integral and important part of the Mela. They involve themselves in the efficient working of the festival. They may not be the spiritual bearers and practitioners of the element but their role in conducting and managing such a humongous festival in terms of crowd management, hospitality etc, makes them worthy of being the upholders of the Kumbh as well.

**Region:** The geographical location for the Kumbh Mela spans across four cities within India. They are held at Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh state, Haridwar in Uttarakhand state, Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh state and Nashik in Maharashtra state. With the site of the observation being on the four sacred rivers: at Haridwar on the river Ganga, at Ujjain on Shipra river, at Nashik on the Godavari and Allahabad it is held on the banks of the rivers Ganga-Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati.

**Brief Description:** Kumbh Mela or Kumbha Mela is a mass congregation of generally Hindu pilgrims in which people gather to take a bath/dip in a sacred river. It is considered to be the largest peaceful gathering in the world. A ritual bath at a predetermined time and place is the major event of the festival, called the *Shahi*

*Snan* . It is celebrated four times every 12 years, the site of the observation rotating between four pilgrimage places on the four sacred rivers at Allahabad, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nashik. *Ardha* ("Half")*Kumbh Mela* is held at only two places, Haridwar and at Allahabad, every sixth year. And a *Maha Kumbh* is held after every 144 years. At Nashik and Ujjain, the Kumbh Mela which is held when the zodiac position of Jupiter is in Leo (Simha in Hindu astrology); then it is also known as *Simhastha*.

A great fair is held on these occasions on the banks of these rivers with a huge congregation of devoted pilgrims. The festival of Kumbh or *Ardh Kumbh* is not a festival of market or fair instead it is the festival of knowledge, asceticism and devotion. People from every religion and caste are present in the festival in one form or the other, and it takes the shape of a Mini India. Different types of language, tradition-culture, dresses, food, way of living, can be seen at the festival and the most important specialty is that millions of people reach the place without any invitation.

Kumbha is a Sanskrit word for Pitcher, referred to as *Kalasha*, it is also a zodiac sign in Indian astrology, the sign under which the festival is celebrated. Kumbh is also the human body; the sun, earth , sea and Vishnu (Hindu God) are its synonyms. The elemental meaning of Kumbh says that it's a confluence of all cultures, and is a symbol of spiritual awakening. While Mela means a 'gathering' or 'a meet' or simply a fair.

To understand the significance of the Kumbha Mela and the important role that it plays in the spirituality of India, it is imperative to know the background of the sacred Ganges River. The devout believe that simply by bathing in the Ganges one is freed from their past sins (karma), and thus one becomes eligible for liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Of course it is said that a pure lifestyle is also required after taking bath, otherwise one will again be burdened by karmic reactions .The pilgrims come from all walks of life, travelling long distances and tolerating many physical discomforts, such as sleeping in the open air in near freezing weather. They undergo such difficulties just to receive the benefit of taking a bath in the sacred river at Kumbha Mela and to meet the great saints.