

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations and The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts: A Comparative Study

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the Arts: A Comparative Study**

By

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Abbreviations

ICCR	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
IGNCA	Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
ICC	Indian Cultural Centre
MGICC	Mahatma Gandhi Indian Cultural Centre
SVCC	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre
LBSIC	Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture
MACC	Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture
NEP	National Education Policy
J&K	Jammu and Kashmir
UK	United Kingdom
OCD	Outgoing Cultural Delegation
ICD	Incoming Cultural Delegation
DVP	Distinguished Visitors Programme
TIC	Teachers in Centres
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding

Abstract

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), an autonomous body under the Ministry of External Affairs, and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), under the Ministry of Culture, are among the few institutions responsible for promoting and preserving Indian culture. The two institutions were established with formally distinct mandates: ICCR to promote Indian culture abroad, and IGNCA to pursue research, documentation, and conservation of Indian arts and culture primarily at the national level. Their operational activities, expenditure structures, and overall programmes across the period 2020 to 2024, however, reveal a substantial and growing degree of overlap. Against this backdrop, this brief maps the institutional mandates, geographic footprints, budgetary allocations, and programmes of both bodies.

Keywords: Cultural Diplomacy, India, Soft Power, ICCR, IGNCA, Indian Culture

Introduction

India's cultural heritage encompasses a rich corpus of literature in diverse languages; classical and folk traditions in music, dance, theatre, and the visual arts; yoga and Ayurveda; and a tradition of philosophical inquiry spanning more than two millennia. It also extends to contemporary cultural production — cinema, music, sculpture, and painting. This has long been understood to provide a framework for a sustainable and holistic way of life.

This breadth makes culture both a site of identity and an instrument of statecraft. As Terry Eagleton argues in 'The Idea of Culture'ⁱ, culture is central to identity formation and to political meaning. Building on this, Joseph S. Nye's concept of soft power holds that culture serves not only as an expression of national identity but also as a means of influencing other nations through attraction rather than coercion.ⁱⁱ

At the historic Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in 1947, it was resolved to establish an Indian Council for Cultural Cooperation to revive and promote closer cultural ties with other Asian Countries.ⁱⁱⁱ In 1950, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations was established as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Education (later, in 1970, incorporated as an autonomous body under the Ministry of External Affairs), with a mandate that extended beyond the Asian region to encompass India's cultural relations with nations worldwide.^{iv} Its foundational focus was to facilitate people-to-people exchanges and to establish, revive, and strengthen cultural relations between India and other countries. The original mandate was broad, stating only '*to adopt all other measures as may be required to further its objectives.*'^v However, in practice, the initial focus was primarily on facilitating foreign students to study in India through scholarships. In 1970, ICCR was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), reflecting a shift in its perceived role from educational exchange to cultural diplomacy. In 1978, acting on the recommendations of the Asoka Mehta Committee,

ICCR took over from the Department of Culture all work on incoming and outgoing cultural delegations, consolidating responsibility for implementing cultural exchange programmes.^{vi}

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts had its foundation stone laid in 1985 by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and began functioning formally in 1987 under the Ministry of Culture.^{vii} It is an autonomous institution primarily dedicated to research, education, and the dissemination of art and culture, organised around an interdisciplinary approach reflected in its six functional divisions: Kalanidhi (library), Kalakosa (publications), Janapada Sampada (lifestyle studies), Kaladarshana (exhibitions), the Cultural Informatics Lab, and Sutradhara (administration).^{viii} IGNCA's mandate is academic and archival in character: to develop an apex centre for research and publication on arts and aesthetics, to build a repository of manuscripts and visual documentation, and to foster scholarly inquiry into Indian arts.^{ix}

Despite these formally distinct mandates, the operational activities of the two institutions converge considerably in practice. Both ICCR and IGNCA organise exhibitions and festivals and publish books and periodicals on Indian art and culture. This overlap raises important questions about institutional structure, design, resource efficiency, and the broader strategic coherence of India's cultural policy architecture.

Against this backdrop, this brief analyses the activities of both institutions between 2020 and 2024, maps areas of duplication and functional overlap, and proposes policy recommendations to strengthen India's global cultural presence and inter-institutional coordination.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, document analysis-based approach to map and compare the mandates, activities, and financial structures of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) across four financial years, from 2020-21 to 2023-24. The study period was selected because it represents the most recent four-year cycle for which complete audited accounts and annual reports are publicly available for both institutions. It also encompasses a period of disruption and recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic, which adds analytical value by enabling the study to distinguish between structural patterns and situational fluctuations in expenditure and activity.

Sources

The primary sources for this study are the Annual Reports and audited annual accounts published by ICCR and IGNCA on their official websites, covering the period 2020-21 to 2023-24. Financial analysis draws directly on audited balance sheets and income and expense accounts. Parliamentary responses from the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were consulted as a subordinate, supplementary source to provide contextual background on institutional developments; they do not constitute a primary evidentiary basis for any of the findings or assessments in this study.

Analytical framework

Activities reported across all four annual reports were thematically classified into the following categories, which were identified inductively from the annual reports themselves as the domains in which both institutions reported substantive activity:

1. Publications and Library
2. Exhibitions

3. Conferences and Seminars
4. Research and Academics
5. Events and Cultural Performances
6. MoUs and Partnerships

Given the scale and geographic spread of both institutions, activities under each theme were further classified across three levels: headquarters, regional or zonal, and international. This disaggregation enables more precise identification of institutional overlap, rather than treating each organisation as a single undifferentiated entity.

Overlap between the two institutions was assessed across each thematic domain and assigned a rating of High, Moderate, or Low. These ratings were determined by two criteria. First, the frequency with which both institutions reported activity in a given domain over the four-year period, as observed directly from their annual reports. Second, the author's qualitative analysis of the nature and subject matter of those activities, as described in the annual reports, assessed the degree of substantive similarity between the two institutions' engagements in each domain. A High rating indicates that both institutions conducted substantively similar activities in the same domain on a recurring basis. Moderate indicates partial or occasional convergence. Low indicates that one institution's engagement in a domain was either marginal or structurally distinct from the other's.

Objectives

1. To map and compare the mandates, organisational structures, and geographical presence of ICCR and IGNCA, thereby establishing the institutional baseline for a systematic comparative study.

2. To analyse the operational activities and financial structures of both institutions over the study period, with a view to identifying areas of convergence, overlap, and functional duplication.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do ICCR and IGNCA engage in overlapping or functionally duplicative activities, and in which institutional domains is this convergence most pronounced?
2. What institutional and financial reforms would reduce duplication, improve coordination, and strengthen India's capacity for cultural preservation and outreach?

The second question is policy-oriented rather than strictly empirical and is addressed in the Policy Recommendations section, drawing on findings from the activity mapping and financial analysis. The scope of this study is limited to ICCR and IGNCA. A more comprehensive assessment of India's cultural policy architecture would require a parallel examination of institutions such as the Lalit Kala Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi, National Gallery of Modern Art, and the National Archives of India.

Institutional Overview

1. Indian Council for Cultural Relations, an autonomous body of the Ministry of External Affairs

Established on 9 April 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, India's first Minister of Education, it was initially under the Ministry of Education and later transitioned under the Ministry of External Affairs. As of April 2026, it has 11 zonal and sub-zonal offices and 38 Indian cultural Centres abroad. The complete list of Indian

Cultural Centres abroad is given in Annexure A. The chronological timeline of ICCR cultural centres established abroad is given in Annexure B.

Zonal and Sub-Zonal offices

Zone	Zonal Office	Sub Zonal Offices
North	Delhi	Lucknow, Jammu
South	Bengaluru	—
Northeast	Guwahati	Shillong
East	Kolkata	Patna
West	Mumbai	Ahmedabad, Pune

Table No. 1 Zonal and Sub Zonal offices / Source: ICCR Website^x

2. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture

Following a Committee recommendation in 1985, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts was established for the dedicated study, promotion, and dissemination of the arts in all their dimensions.

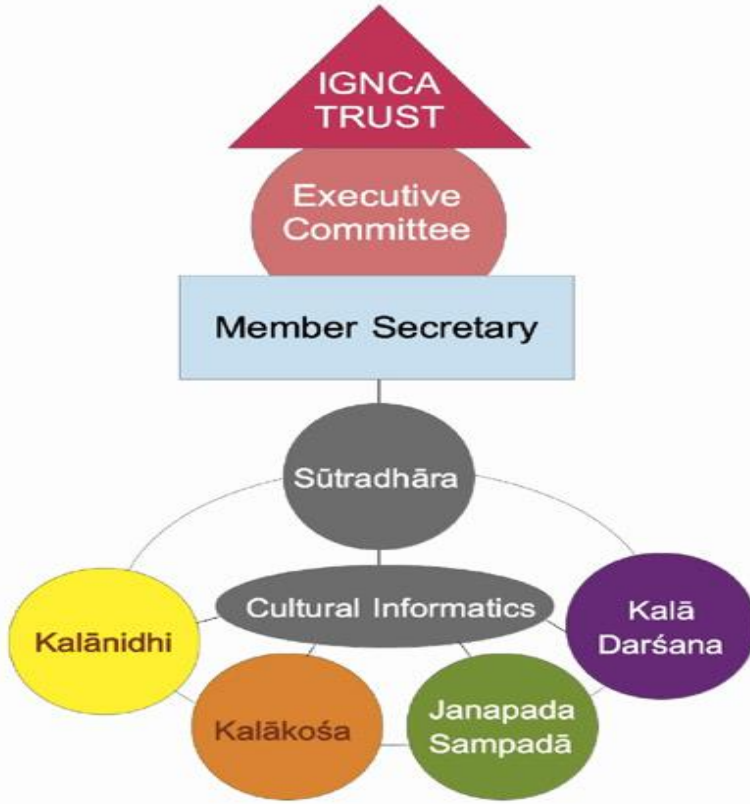


Figure No. 2. Source: IGNCATrust

Website <https://ignca.gov.in/about-ignca/organizational-structure/>

IGNCA's definition of the Arts encompasses a wide range of subjects, from archaeology and anthropology to the visual and performing arts. At the apex is the Board of Trustees, which includes an Executive Committee that functions under the chairman. The member secretary is the executive head overseeing both academic and administrative divisions. Furthermore, there are six functional units: Kala Nidhi (the multi-form library), Kala Kosa (study and publication of fundamental texts in Indian languages), Janapada Sampada (lifestyle studies), Kaladarsana (exhibitions,

Cultural Informatics, and presentation of art/research), and Sutradhara (admin section). The chronological establishment of the IGNCA regional centres is given in Annexure C.

Currently, there are 10 regional centres of IGNCA focusing on publication, organising conferences and seminars, conducting training workshops, and curating collaborative projects with state governments, universities, and other relevant institutions.

The following section maps the key activities conducted by both institutions to identify any overlaps.

Comparative Analysis of Institutional Activities 2020-2024

To map the activities of these two institutions, it is necessary to first classify them into three categories: headquarters, regional or zonal centres, and international outreach or ICC-level initiatives. This study covers the financial years 2020-21 through 2023-24, as these represent the latest annual reports available in the public domain. Rather than merely listing all initiatives organised each year, this section highlights the domains in which parallel activities are most prominent, while also identifying activities that are unique to each institution.

It is pertinent to note that, until 2023, ICCR had 18 regional centres, which were subsequently reorganised into zonal and sub-zonal offices. After restructuring, the following centres were closed- Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Goa, Hyderabad, Thiruvananthapuram, and Varanasi.^{xii}

A detailed overview of ICCR's annual reports^{xiii} reveals that there are about 18 sections working on a wide range of activities. They can be identified in the following main clusters

1. Outgoing Cultural Delegation (OCD). From the organisation's pool of empanelled artists, ICCR facilitates Indian performing art troupes to perform abroad in several countries. They are usually coordinated by ICCR and the Indian Missions abroad.
2. Incoming Cultural Delegation (ICD). Unlike OCD, the ICD section of ICCR facilitates visits by foreign cultural groups to India.
3. Scholarships. ICCR administers around 63 scholarship schemes, which are also among its main responsibilities. In 2022-23, alone, over 3,000 international students pursued studies in India under ICCR schemes.
4. Indian Cultural Centres (ICC). 38 ICCs of ICCR are currently functioning across the globe. They offer yoga, dance, and music as well as language tuition.
5. Distinguished Visitors Programme (DVP). The DVP section hosts political leaders, scholars, and distinguished guests. One noteworthy initiative was the Gen-Next Democracy Network programme, which brought together young leaders from more than 75 democracies.
6. Chairs. ICCR facilitates the establishment and maintenance of academic chairs at foreign universities to promote Indian culture abroad.
7. Exhibitions. ICCR organises exhibitions of Indian art, artefacts, handicrafts, etc., alongside exhibitions by foreign artists in India.
8. Conference and Seminars. ICCR actively organises national and international conferences and seminars on subjects related to soft power, Indian culture, spirituality, etc.
9. Hindi Promotion. ICCR also promotes the Hindi language at the institutional level by organising the Hindi Pakhwada Week and establishing Hindi Chairs abroad.

10. Special Projects. Apart from this, there are other special initiatives such as Annapurna Certificate, commissioning busts and statues/ portraits, etc.

Similarly, the following bullet points indicates IGNCAs core activities^{xiv}

- **Heritage Documentation and Archives-** Kalanidhi, National Manuscript Mission, Vedic Heritage Portal, Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar.
- **Performing Arts and Cultural Events-** Pushpanjali series, centenary tributes, and cross-cultural music events.
- **Research and Publications (Kalakosh, Bharatvidya)-** Long-term encyclopaedic research on Indian classical arts, tribal knowledge systems, iconography, and Sanskrit texts, etc.; Folk and Tribal Studies (Janapada Sampada): ethnographic and audio-visual documentation of community-based art forms, craft traditions, and performing arts.
- **Conservation (Sanrakshan Prakoshthas)-** Preventive and remedial conservation of manuscripts, paintings, metalwork, woodwork, and ethnographic objects.
- **Digitisation and IT Initiatives-** Cultural Informatics Laboratory, Vedic Heritage Portal, Mausam Portal: digitisation of physical collections, development of web portals, etc
- **Education and Training (Shaikshnik Ikaai)-** Limited educational outreach programme including workshops, internship placements.
- **International Collaboration-** Heritage project connecting India with partner countries in the Indian Ocean littoral.

Based on the above discussion, further document analysis identified overlapping activities across both institutions. The following table presents these findings, with a separate column indicating the assessed level of overlap: High, Moderate, or Low.

Domain	IGNCA Programme	ICCR Programme	Overlap Assessment
Performing Arts Promotion	Kaladarshin (domestic concerts, dance)	Outgoing/Incoming Cultural Delegations	High
Visual Arts and Exhibitions	Kaladarshin gallery exhibitions	International Exhibitions (105+ events)	High
Seminars and Conferences	Academic seminars, Mausam workshops	Conference and Seminar Section (26+ events)	High
Cultural Exchange (International)	Mausam Project (maritime cultures)	OCD/ICD Delegations/ DVP (130+ countries)	Moderate
Heritage Documentation	Core (Kalanidhi, NMM, MGMD)	Marginal (publications, library)	Low
Scholarships and Education	Educational Unit (limited)	Core (3,000+ scholarships p.a.)	Low
Hindi / Language Promotion	Rajbhasha Anubhag, Sanskrit lexicons	World Hindi Conference, Hindi Promotion	Moderate

Awards	Limited internal awards	ICCR Distinguished Awards	Low
Research and Publications	Kalakosh, Bharatvidya (primary research)	Publications and Library (secondary)	Moderate
Digitisation / IT Portals	CIL, Vedic Heritage, Mausam Portal	Gyan Setu, India Alumni Portal	Low

Table No 3. Source: Annual Reports. Author's compilation of all four years.

Overview of Budgetary Allocation

Indian Council for Cultural Relations

This section analyses ICCR's financial performance over four consecutive financial years, from 2020-21 to 2023-24. The period from 2020 to 2024 encompasses institutional disruption and recovery, shaped first by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently by a strong institutional rebound. The primary sources for this analysis are the audited annual accounts and annual reports published on ICCR's official website.^{xv}

ICCR is primarily funded through a Grant-in-Aid from the Ministry of External Affairs. Each year, ICCR submits its budgetary requirements to the MEA based on the activities it proposes to undertake. The MEA then approves and disburses the grant, which accounts for nearly the entire ICCR operational budget. This grant covers both ICCR's headquarters activities and its network of Indian Cultural Centres abroad. ICCR also generates a small amount of income from sources such as

cultural centre fees, rent, and interest on fixed deposits; however, this constitutes a negligible fraction, under 3 per cent, of its total operational funds.^{xvi}

Before reading the tables, it is important to clarify three financial terms used consistently in this section. First, “Budget Estimate Demanded” refers to the amount formally requested by ICCR from the MEA at the beginning of each financial year, based on its projected programmatic and administrative requirements. This figure represents ICCR’s stated financial need and not the actual funds available to it.^{xvii} Second, “Grant-in-Aid Received” refers to the actual amount sanctioned and released by the MEA to ICCR in that financial year. This is typically lower than the budget estimate demanded, reflecting both fiscal constraints and the MEA’s own allocation decisions.^{xviii} Third, “Total Own Expenditure” refers to the aggregate of all actual expenditure incurred by ICCR across all heads in a financial year, as recorded in its audited accounts. This includes spending on cultural delegations, scholarships, Indian Cultural Centres abroad, conferences, establishment costs, and capital items. The term “own” here does not imply self-generated revenue; it refers to expenditure incurred and managed by ICCR itself, as distinct from pass-through grants or fund transfers. In effect, it is the total utilised expenditure as reported in ICCR’s audited annual accounts for that year.^{xix}

The “Utilisation Rate” shown in Table 4 is calculated as: Total Own Expenditure divided by Grant-in-Aid Received, expressed as a percentage. For example, in 2023-24, the total own expenditure was ₹30,103 lakh, and the grant received was ₹30,338 lakh, yielding a utilisation rate of approximately 99.2 per cent. A rate below 100 per cent indicates that a portion of the grant received was either returned to the government, carried forward, or held in reserves at year’s end. Conversely, a rate approaching or exceeding 100 per cent signals near-complete absorption of the grant into programme activities and institutional operations.^{xx} The table below represents an overview of the Budget Estimate demanded, the Grant-in-Aid received, and its

utilisation rate. All figures are sourced directly from ICCR's audited annual accounts.

Particular	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Budget Estimate Demanded (₹ L)	-	38,849	38,618	34,521
Grant-in-Aid Received (₹ L)	-	30,000	32,000	30,338
Utilisation Rate (%)	-	48.5%	90.8%	99.2%
Total Own Expenditure (₹ L)	15,915	14,540	29,046	30,103

*Table No.4. Source: Annual Reports and Accounts from the Official Website^{xxi}.
The author's compilation of all four years. For the complete head-wise expenditure breakdown, 2020-21 to 2023-24, see Annexure D.*

This consolidated table reveals predominantly three distinct phases. The percentages cited below for individual expenditure heads are calculated as the share of that head in the Grand Total own expenditure for that year, unless stated otherwise.^{xxii}

1. The first phase: 2020-21. Marked by disruption but a partially functional year, this phase saw total own expenditure at ₹15,915 lakh. Cultural Centres abroad remained operational but at reduced capacity, absorbing ₹8,203 lakh (51.5 per cent of total own expenditure), which was the single largest expense head. Scholarship disbursements continued but at lower volumes, with the International Students Division recording ₹2,379 lakh (14.9 per cent of total). General activities, such as incoming and outgoing delegations,

were significantly curtailed, spending only ₹37 lakh compared to ₹2,169 lakh in 2023-24. Establishment and office costs (Total C) stood at ₹3,047 lakh, representing 19.1 per cent of total expenditure, indicating that a substantial share of available resources was absorbed by fixed institutional costs even as programme activities contracted.^{xxiii}

2. The second phase: 2021-22. This phase most clearly reflects the pandemic's impact. Total own expenditure fell to ₹14,540 lakh, the lowest in the study period. General activities spending (Total A) collapsed to ₹1,429 lakh (9.8 per cent of total), less than half of the ₹2,656 lakh recorded in 2020-21. Events, performances, and delegations were largely suspended: Incoming and Outgoing Visitors recorded only ₹172 lakh and Cultural Performances dropped to ₹3 lakh. Scholarship disbursements also fell sharply to ₹927 lakh (6.4 per cent of total), likely reflecting travel disruptions affecting foreign scholars. Projects Abroad (Total B) contracted to ₹7,174 lakh (49.3 per cent of total), with Cultural Centres Abroad spending falling from ₹8,203 to ₹6,079 lakh. The anomaly of the year was fixed charges (Total C), which rose sharply to ₹5,865 lakh (40.3 per cent of total), more than double the 2020-21 figure of ₹3,047 lakh. This spike was almost entirely driven by establishment costs at central and regional offices, which rose to ₹5,134 lakh, likely reflecting salary arrears, retention payments, or restructuring costs incurred during the pandemic period.^{xxiv}
3. The third phase: 2022-24. This phase reflects a strong post-pandemic rebound. Total own expenditure exceeded ₹29,000 lakh in both 2022-23 and 2023-24, roughly doubling from 2021-22. Almost every expenditure head recorded dramatic growth. Scholarship disbursements under the International Students Division rose from ₹927 lakh in 2021-22 to ₹6,553 lakh in 2022-23 and further to ₹8,884 lakh in 2023-24, now constituting

29.5 per cent of total own expenditure in the final year. This head has emerged as the single largest programme-level expense item, reflecting both the expansion of scholarship schemes and the resumption of full-scale student mobility. Cultural Centres Abroad recovered to ₹10,854 lakh (2022-23) and ₹11,658 lakh (2023-24), now accounting for 38.7 per cent of total own expenditure in 2023-24. Notably, two new expenditure sub-heads were introduced in 2022-23: Hindi Teacher Chairs Abroad (₹85.84 lakh in 2022-23; ₹47 lakh in 2023-24) and Local Resource Persons Abroad (₹158.37 lakh in 2022-23; ₹136.40 lakh in 2023-24), reflecting an expansion of ICCR's language and cultural outreach infrastructure overseas.^{xxv}

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts

Unlike ICCR's near-total dependence on Grant-in-Aid from the Ministry of External Affairs, IGNCA's financial structure is notably different. IGNCA's finances are supported by four distinct streams. First, a Corpus/Capital Fund of ₹1,245 lakh, the foundational government endowment provided at the time of IGNCA's establishment and which has remained static at this figure since inception; it does not generate operational spending but provides the institutional financial foundation.^{xxvi} Second, a Contributory Provident Fund maintained for staff, which represents accumulated employee and employer contributions and is a liability-side item reflecting future staff obligations rather than available operational funds. Third, Earmarked and Endowment Funds, which are funds received from government or external sources for specific, designated purposes such as particular research projects, publications, or archival work. These cannot be redirected to other activities at will. Fourth, Own income, which includes interest earned on investments and fixed deposits, royalties from publications, fees from training programmes, and similar receipts. See Annexure E for IGNCA Balance Sheet, 2020-21 to 2023-24.

Unlike ICCR's income-expenditure accounts, IGNCAs audited accounts are presented in balance sheet format, capturing assets, liabilities, and fund positions rather than a straightforward receipts-and-payments summary. All figures are as reported in the audited annual accounts and are expressed in Rupees unless otherwise stated.^{xxvii}

The balance sheet reveals that IGNCAs income model is almost entirely investment-dependent. Between 88 and 96 per cent of total annual income is sourced from interest earned on its invested corpus and endowment funds. To illustrate: total income in 2020-21 was ₹1,535 lakh, of which ₹1,481 lakh (96.5 per cent) came from interest earned. These percentages are calculated as: interest income divided by total income for the year, multiplied by 100, using figures from IGNCAs income and expenditure account as available in the audited annual reports.^{xxviii} This extreme reliance on interest income means IGNCAs structurally vulnerable to declining interest rates, withdrawal of investments, or erosion of the underlying corpus. A second structural concern is that 66 to 82 per cent of total annual expenditure is absorbed by establishment expenses, covering salaries, allowances, and related staff costs. The establishment cost percentage is calculated as establishment expenditure divided by total expenditure for the year, multiplied by 100. This consistently high ratio leaves very limited funds for programmatic, academic, and outreach activities that constitute IGNCAs core mandate.^{xxix}

Referring to the balance sheet data, three structural concerns are evident. First, the Earmarked and Endowment Funds have declined sharply from ₹2,651 lakh in 2020-21 to ₹778 lakh in 2023-24, representing only 29.4 per cent of the 2020-21 figure. This 70.6 per cent erosion is calculated as: (2,651 minus 778) divided by 2,651, multiplied by 100. It indicates a progressive drawdown of non-government-restricted funds without commensurate replenishment, thereby weakening IGNCAs non-government financial base.^{xxx} Second, Current Liabilities and Provisions rose from ₹3,434 lakh in 2020-21 to ₹4,924 lakh in 2023-24, an increase of

approximately 43.4 per cent. This indicates that, even as liquidity in current assets improved, outstanding obligations to vendors, staff, and other parties also increased. A growing liabilities position without a commensurate growth in income streams signals potential stress on IGNCA’s short-term financial obligations.^{xxxii} Third, Fixed Assets declined from ₹7,357 lakh in 2020-21 to ₹6,057 lakh in 2023-24, a reduction of ₹1,300 lakh. This decline in net fixed asset value reflects the cumulative effect of annual depreciation exceeding new capital investment. In accounting terms, if the annual depreciation charge is higher than additions to fixed assets in a given year, net fixed assets will fall. This sustained reduction across all four years raises a pertinent question about whether IGNCA’s physical infrastructure, which includes its buildings, library equipment, and cultural informatics assets, is being maintained and upgraded adequately for the long run.^{xxxiii}

Having discussed both ICCR and IGNCA’s financial structures, the table below provides an overview of their institutional and financial profiles.

Parameter	IGNCA	ICCR
Parent Ministry	Ministry of Culture	Ministry of External Affairs
Primary Mandate	Research, documentation, conservation of arts	Cultural diplomacy, international outreach
Funding Model	Corpus + endowment + own income + govt grants	Grant-in-Aid (MEA)
Grant Dependency	Partial; supplemented by interest income	Near-total; ~87–97% of budget from MEA

Total Income FY 2023-24 (₹ L)	2,422	~30,000+ (grants alone)
Surplus/Deficit FY 2023-24	Surplus: ₹610 L	Not separately disclosed
Establishment Cost FY 2023-24 (₹ L)	1,204 (~66% of expenditure)	N/A
Fixed Assets (₹ L, 2023-24)	6,057 (declining)	N/A (leased ICCs abroad)
Earmarked/Endowment Funds Trend	Sharp decline of (-70.7%)	N/A
Physical Presence	10 regional centres (India only)	11 zonal and sub zonal offices + 38 ICCs abroad
International Footprint	Nil (domestic mandate)	38 cultural centres across the globe
Overlapping Activities	Exhibitions, seminars, publications, events	Exhibitions, seminars, publications, events
Coordination Mechanism	None	None

*Table No 7. Source: Official Accounts and Annual Reports.
Author's compilation.^{xxxiii}*

There is a stark asymmetry between the two institutions in their financial structures. ICCR's total own expenditure in 2023-24 was ₹30,103 lakh, whereas IGNCA's total annual income in the same year was approximately ₹2,422 lakh. This means ICCR's expenditure is approximately 12 times IGNCA's total income. Across the study period, this ratio ranges from 12 to 16 times, calculated as ICCR's total own expenditure (in lakh) divided by IGNCA's total income (in lakh) for the corresponding year.^{xxxiv} This scale difference is not merely a matter of mandate: it reflects a fundamentally different relationship each institution has with the government's annual budgetary cycle. ICCR operates as a fully grant-funded executing agency, while IGNCA is expected to largely self-sustain on a fixed corpus established nearly four decades ago.

Notwithstanding this asymmetry, both institutions share a structurally high establishment cost ratio. For ICCR, establishment expenses (central and regional offices) constituted approximately 10.9 per cent of total own expenditure in 2023-24 (₹3,272 lakh out of ₹30,103 lakh). For IGNCA, establishment expenses constituted approximately 66 per cent of total expenditure in 2023-24 (₹1,204 lakh out of approximately ₹1,822 lakh). While the absolute figures are very different, both reflect a concern: a disproportionate share of available resources is consumed by institutional maintenance rather than programmatic delivery. Based on the activity mapping and financial overview of ICCR and IGNCA, the following are specific areas where duplication of activities can be avoided and spending rationalised.^{xxxv}

1. Exhibitions- ₹89.89 lakh (2020-21), ₹165.83 lakh (2021-22), ₹363.14 lakh (2022-23), and ₹149.60 lakh (2023-24) were spent by ICCR under Exhibitions/Bust/Orientation Grant. Kaladarsana, a division of IGNCA, also organises exhibitions at its headquarters and regional centres. Assuming 20–30% of ICCR's exhibition spends (approximately ₹30–70 lakh annually)

maps onto subjects of IGNCAs, joint curation could clearly be a reasonable move.

2. Conference and Seminar- ₹34.33 lakh (2020-21), ₹37.82 lakh (2021-22), ₹152.58 lakh (2022-23), and ₹177.69 lakh (2023-24) under Seminars/Symposia/Conferences were spent by ICCR. Through Kalakosa and Janapada Sampada, IGNCAs also conduct seminars and conferences. They both conduct conferences on parallel themes.
3. Regional Infrastructure: Even after ICCR's reorganisation into 11 zonal and sub-zonal offices, geographical overlap persists. Looking at the annual accounts, it is established that ICCR's fixed charges (establishment + office expenses) were ₹3,047 lakh (2020-21), ₹5,865 lakh (2021-22), ₹4,048 lakh (2022-23), and ₹4,203 lakh (2023-24) and IGNCAs's establishment expenses were ₹1,155 lakh, ₹1,431 lakh, ₹1,193 lakh, and ₹1,204 lakh. This cannot be inferred as an overlap; however, the regional co-location will directly lead to actionable savings.

Key Findings and Observations

Considering the scope and structure of the ICCR and IGNCAs, the study reveals that the relationship between them is not a simple case of 'overlap' or 'duplication', but rather a prime example of partial duplication coupled with partial specialisation. The roles are not explicitly redundant; rather, they are blurred. Hence, each institution is partially substituting for the other's shortcomings.

The data clearly show that both institutions are heavily engaged in exhibitions, seminars, publications and cultural events (including performing arts, festivals, etc.). The data make it evident that this is not an occasional convergence but an institutional drift. The core reason behind this is mandate expansion. Both institutes engage in activities beyond their original and core mandates. For instance,

originally, ICCR focused on external cultural outreach, while IGNCA was dedicated to research and archival work. Over time, ICCR initiated academic outreach and publication activities, and IGNCA began organising cultural events for outreach. This ultimately results in the creation of parallel ecosystems rather than a unified cultural policy.

Despite the similar scope of activities, there is no formal institutional framework to coordinate them. This gap not only highlights a lack of coordination but also a strategic vacuum. This further reflects a key issue: cultural policy is curated and implemented at the institutional level rather than as a national strategy or national cultural policy.

At the regional level, there is a lack of coordinated effort between IGNCA's 10 regional centres and ICCR's zonal and sub-zonal offices. ICCR's strength lies in projecting culture through its performance network. On the other hand, IGNCA has a strong intellectual and archival repository. These are complementary assets, not competing ones.

The study reveals that from its inception in 1950 until 1970, no centres were established, and between 1970 and 2000, approximately 30 years, only 10-12 centres were established. The period between 2007 and 2012 saw the establishment of over 10 centres abroad. It is important to note that from 2014 to 2026, about 4 centres were established. After consulting officials from ICCR, the reasons for the slow progress in establishing new centres are twofold: first, budget allocation for ICCR activities, and second, delays in bureaucratic procedures. It takes more than 3 to 4 years to complete all necessary formalities before an Indian Cultural Centre is established.

As for the regional centres of both ICCR and IGNCA, little progress was made after IGNCA's establishment until 2015. In 2017, 3 new centres were established; in

2018, 2; and in 2025, another, bringing the total to 10. This indicates that at least 6 new centres were established over the past 10 years. While IGNCA expanded at the national level, ICCR sought to consolidate its domestic presence by reorganising 18 regional centres into 11 zonal and sub-zonal offices for administrative purposes.

Policy Recommendations

Developing a Unified National White Paper on Cultural Policy

The foremost recommendation emerging from this study is the formulation of a comprehensive national white paper on cultural policy. The findings reveal that the existing institutional gaps stem largely from the absence of a coherent national strategy, resulting in institutions independently formulating and implementing policies at the organisational level. A well-defined white paper on cultural policy and cultural diplomacy—developed through inter-ministerial consultations alongside inputs from academics and practitioners—would provide strategic direction, articulate overarching national objectives, clearly delineate institutional mandates, and establish robust accountability mechanisms.

Establishing a Joint Inter-Institutional Committee or Board

One of the most consequential gaps identified by this study is the absence of a formal coordination mechanism between institutions such as IGNCA and ICCR, as well as other bodies engaged in cultural activities. This has led to duplication of efforts and parallel programming. To address this, the study recommends establishing a permanent Joint Inter-Institutional Committee or Board comprising representatives from the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, ICCR, IGNCA, and other relevant cultural institutions. The committee should also include officers responsible for budgeting and financial planning.

The proposed body would oversee the planning of annual activities, minimise programme duplication, and facilitate collaborative initiatives of national and international relevance. Quarterly meetings could be institutionalised to review progress and make necessary adjustments to programming and resource allocation.

Institutionalising a Joint Cultural Fund

Building upon the recommendation above, a practical financial reform would be the creation of a Joint Cultural Fund to support activities conceptualised and implemented through the Joint Inter-Institutional Committee or Board. Each participating institution could contribute a fixed percentage of its annual budget to create a dedicated corpus exclusively for collaborative initiatives.

For instance, ICCR could allocate 5 per cent of its general activities budget (approximately ₹335 lakh annually), while IGNCA could contribute 5 per cent of its annual income (approximately ₹92 lakh annually). Such a mechanism would not only incentivise collaboration but also ensure sustained funding for integrated cultural programming.

Strengthening and Expanding Indian Cultural Centres in India and Abroad

The process of greater institutional convergence between ICCR, IGNCA, and other cultural bodies could begin through the establishment of integrated regional cultural centres and the gradual merging of existing regional offices. Rather than functioning separately as ICCR zonal offices or IGNCA regional centres, these institutions could be reorganised under a unified framework titled “Indian Cultural Centre” for each respective state or region.

ICCR already maintains Memoranda of Understanding with more than twenty state governments for cultural promotion and preservation. These existing partnerships could serve as the foundation for collaborative engagement between ICCR and

IGNCA at the state level. Such integration would not only strengthen cultural outreach but also substantially reduce infrastructure and administrative expenditure currently incurred separately by the two institutions. In addition to this, establishing more cultural centres abroad is equally important for achieving the goal of cultural outreach.

Long-Term Reform Towards an Integrated Cultural Institution

The preceding recommendations, while addressing immediate institutional gaps, do not fully resolve the broader structural question of whether multiple autonomous institutions are the most effective mechanism for advancing India’s cultural diplomacy and preserving its vast cultural heritage. This study therefore recommends that the long-term objective should be institutional integration under a broader and unified mandate.

Such integration need not be abrupt. It could instead evolve gradually through measures such as co-located regional offices, joint appointments for overlapping activities such as exhibitions and cultural programming, and coordinated annual planning processes. Over time, these steps would create the foundation for a more unified institutional architecture aligned with a coherent national cultural policy.

It must also be acknowledged that the scope of this study was limited to ICCR and IGNCA. A more comprehensive assessment involving other major cultural institutions—such as the Lalit Kala Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi, National Archives of India, and National Gallery of Modern Art—would provide a fuller understanding of India’s cultural institutional landscape. The ultimate objective is not the homogenisation of diverse institutions, but the implementation of a coherent and unified national cultural policy capable of advancing India’s cultural influence domestically and internationally.

Annexures-A

List of Indian Cultural Centres Abroad

Source: ICCR Website. As of April 2026.

Sr. No	Indian Cultural Centre	City	Country
1	Indian Cultural Centre	Paris	France
2	Indian Cultural Centre	Tel Aviv	Israel
3	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Sydney	Australia
4	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Kathmandu	Nepal
5	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Hanoi	Vietnam
6	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Georgetown	Guyana
7	Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture	Tashkent	Uzbekistan
8	The Nehru Centre	London	United Kingdom
9	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Bangkok	Thailand

10	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Dar-es-Salaam	Tanzania
11	Swami Vivekananda Culture Centre	Paramaribo	Suriname
12	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Yangon	Myanmar
13	Mahatma Gandhi Indian Cultural Centre (MGICC)	Port of Spain	Trinidad & Tobago
14	The Gandhi Centre	The Hague	Netherlands
15	Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Center	Moscow	Russia
16	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Dushanbe	Tajikistan
17	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Seoul	South Korea
18	Gurudev Tagore Indian Cultural Centre	Mexico City	Mexico
19	Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Indian Cultural Centre	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia
20	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Colombo	Sri Lanka

21	Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Tokyo	Japan
22	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Durban	South Africa
23	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Bali	Indonesia
24	Indian Cultural Centre	Male	Maldives
25	Amrita Sher-Gil Cultural Centre	Budapest	Hungary
26	The Tagore Centre	Berlin	Germany
27	Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture	Port Louis	Mauritius
28	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Astana	Kazakhstan
29	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Tehran	Iran
30	Jawaharlal Nehru Indian Cultural Centre	Jakarta	Indonesia
31	Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture	Cairo	Egypt
32	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Beijing	China

33	Nehru-Wangchuck Cultural Centre	Thimphu	Bhutan
34	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Kabul	Afghanistan
35	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Suva	Fiji
36	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Prague	Czech Republic
37	Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre	Sao Paulo	Brazil
38	Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre	Dhaka	Bangladesh

Table No. 2 Indian cultural Centres Abroad / Source: ICCR Website^{xxxvi}

Annexure B:

Chronological Timeline of ICCR Cultural Centres Established Abroad

1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Fiji● Guyana
1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Suriname
1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Mauritius
1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Indonesia (Jakarta)● Russia
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Egypt
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Germany
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Uzbekistan
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● South Africa
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Trinidad & Tobago

1998	•	Sri Lanka
2007	•	Afghanistan
2009	•	Thailand
2010	•	Bangladesh Bhutan Hungary Malaysia Mexico Tanzania
2011	•	Brazil (May 25) Maldives (Jul 28) South Korea (Jul 1)
2015	•	Australia
2016	•	Vietnam

2021	•	Myanmar
2026	•	France (March)

Figure No. 1. Chronological representation of ICCs established abroad.

Author's Compilation

Note: Following centres has no concrete established date on record- Czech Republic, China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Indonesia (Bali), Japan, Nepal, Israel, Tajikistan, Netherlands, United Kingdom

Annexure C:

IGNCA Regional Centres in Chronological Order

1988	•	Varanasi <i>Established 1988</i>
2001	•	Bangalore <i>Established 2001</i>
2017	•	Ranchi <i>Inaugurated 10th February 2017</i>
2017	•	Guwahati <i>Inaugurated 23rd December 2017</i>

2017	●	Pondicherry <i>Established 2017</i>
2018	●	Thrissur <i>Established 2018</i>
2018	●	Vadodara <i>Established 2018</i>
2019	●	Jammu & Kashmir <i>Established 2019</i>
2021	●	Goa <i>Established 2021</i>

2025	● Tirupati <i>Established 2025</i>

Figure No. 3. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts chronological establishment. Source: IGNC website^{xxxvii}. Note: Used AI only for designing the table.

Annexure D:

ICCR Head-wise Expenditure, 2020-21 to 2023-24 (in ₹ Lakh)

The following table indicates an overall head wise expenditure for four financial years:

Expenditure Head	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
A. GENERAL ACTIVITIES REVENUE ACCOUNTS (₹ Lakh)				
Incoming and Outgoing Visitors/Delegations	37.08	172.73	3,317.02	2,169.47
Cultural Performances of ICCR	10.04	3.03	490.00	231.94
Seminars/Symposia/Conferences/SIS	34.33	37.82	152.58	177.69
International Students Divisions/Alumni Awards	2,379.39	927.09	6,553.98	8,884.41
Exhibitions/Bust/Orientation Grant	89.89	165.83	363.14	149.60
Presentation of Books and Art Objects	0.39	2.18	6.57	3.56
Publications	5.59	0.00	5.79	7.26

Libraries	6.86	5.84	17.20	16.46
Multimedia and Website	78.68	103.64	120.99	92.92
Hindi Activities	14.10	10.75	134.99	24.05
Fellowship	0.00	0.12	29.52	28.16
Misc. Deposits	0.00	0.00	1.75	1.35
TOTAL A	2,656.45	1,429.03	11,193.53	11,786.87
B. PROJECTS ABROAD (₹ Lakh)				
Cultural Centres Abroad (ICCs)	8,203.31	6,079.86	10,854.08	11,658.36
Chairs/Centres of Indian Studies	548.95	391.43	648.16	895.60
Grants to Casa De La India (Spain) and Busan	134.17	89.96	83.14	92.52
Deployment of Resource Persons	165.04	65.96	150.33	203.61
Teachers in Centres (TIC)	1,154.68	465.51	921.32	895.28

International Day of Yoga	534.00	81.91	770.03	40.57
Hindi Teacher Chair Abroad	—	—	85.84	47.00
Local Resource Person Abroad	—	—	158.37	136.40
TOTAL B	10,201.49	7,174.63	13,722.79	13,978.04
C. FIXED CHARGES DOMESTIC OPERATIONS (₹ Lakh)				
Meeting of GA/GB and Committees	2.09	3.48	8.79	3.59
Establishment: Central and Regional Offices	2,274.35	5,134.09	2,913.32	3,272.86
Office Expenses	770.70	727.96	1,126.69	926.99
TOTAL C	3,047.14	5,865.53	4,048.80	4,203.44
D. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE (₹ Lakh)				
Air Conditioners/Furniture/Fixtures/Vehicles/Computers	2.51	68.64	67.11	121.00

Maintenance of Jinnah House	7.73	2.22	13.45	13.43
TOTAL D	10.24	70.86	80.56	134.43
GRAND TOTAL (A to D)	15,915.32	14,540.05	29,045.68	30,102.78

*Table No5. Source: Annual Reports and Accounts from the Official Website.
Author's compilation.^{xxviii}*

Annexure E:

IGNCA Balance Sheet, 2020-21 to 2023-24

Particulars	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
CORPUS / CAPITAL FUND AND LIABILITIES				
Corpus/Capital Fund	12,45,00,000	12,45,00,000	12,45,00,000	12,45,00,000
Building Project Fund	97,49,43,000	—	—	—
Contributory Provident Fund	2,31,60,988	2,44,65,815	2,49,71,919	2,71,77,332
Reserves and Surplus	8,74,27,697	8,71,34,693	8,28,07,665	9,18,52,560
Earmarked/ Endowment Funds	26,51,32,097	20,94,50,260	14,14,76,386	7,78,46,106
Secured Loans and Borrowings	—	—	—	—
Current Liabilities and Provisions	34,34,99,772	34,38,12,295	45,23,92,950	49,24,22,567

TOTAL	39,34,51,253	29,14,57,530	41,89,95,266	37,06,18,256
ASSETS				
Fixed Assets	73,56,53,868	73,01,81,716	62,44,86,731	60,57,24,640
Building Project Assets (per contra)	97,49,43,000	—	—	—
Investment (Earmarked/Endowment Funds)	6,15,10,328	6,59,74,089	7,15,00,055	—
Investment (Others)	19,25,58,084	17,98,62,954	17,90,61,603	24,01,37,173
Current Assets, Loans, Advances etc.	23,68,24,798	31,97,89,964	17,03,34,984	69,93,08,619
Miscellaneous Expenditure	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	39,34,51,253	29,14,57,530	41,89,95,266	37,06,18,256

Table No 6. Source: IGNC A Audited Annual Accounts. Author's compilation^{xxxix}.

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- i Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000)
- ii Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), pp. 5-11.
- iii Indian Council for Cultural Relations. (n.d.). History. Retrieved April 05, 2026, from <https://iccr.gov.in/about-us/history>
- iv Indian Council for Cultural Relations. (n.d.). History. Retrieved April 05, 2026, from <https://iccr.gov.in/about-us/history>
- v Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 'History,' official website, retrieved April 2026, available at <https://iccr.gov.in/about-us/history>
- vi Indian Council for Cultural Relations. (n.d.). History. Retrieved April 05, 2026, from <https://iccr.gov.in/about-us/history>
- vii Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. (n.d.). Aims & objectives. Retrieved April 19, 2026, from <https://ignca.gov.in/about-ignca/aims-objectives/>
- viii Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. (n.d.). Aims & objectives. Retrieved April 19, 2026, from <https://ignca.gov.in/about-ignca/aims-objectives/>
- ix Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 'Genesis and Mandate,' available at <https://www.ignca.gov.in/about-ignca> (accessed April 2025).
- x List of Zonal and Sub Zonal offices <https://iccr.gov.in/regional-center-list-view> , Retrieved April 05, 2026.
- xi Organisational Structure. IGNCA Website <https://ignca.gov.in/about-ignca/organizational-structure/>
- xii Based on Annual Report <https://iccr.gov.in/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/2024-02/English%20AR%202022-23-1%20%281%29.pdf>
- xiii Annual Reports <https://iccr.gov.in/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/2024-02/English%20AR%202022-23-1%20%281%29.pdf> Accessed December 2025- April 2026
- xiv Annual Reports https://ignca.gov.in/annual_reports/Annual-Report-2023-2024.pdf Accessed December 2025- April 2026
- xv ICCR annual accounts and annual reports are published on the ICCR official website at <https://iccr.gov.in> and were accessed between December 2025 and April 2026. Four sets of audited accounts covering 2020-21 through 2023-24 form the primary dataset for the financial analysis in this section.

xvi The Grant-in-Aid mechanism for ICCR is governed under the provisions applicable to autonomous bodies under the Ministry of External Affairs. ICCR's own income is recorded as "Other Income" in its annual accounts and includes items such as interest on fixed deposits, rental income from cultural centre premises, and miscellaneous receipts. Across all four years of the study period, this own income was consistently less than 3 per cent of the total grant received. For instance, in 2023-24, grant-in-aid received was ₹30,338 lakh, while own income receipts were negligible in comparison. This near-total dependency makes ICCR's financial sustainability directly contingent on the MEA's annual budgetary decisions.

xvii The Budget Estimate is formally submitted by ICCR to the MEA as part of the Union Budget cycle. It covers proposed expenditure across all programmatic heads (cultural delegations, scholarships, ICCs abroad, conferences, etc.) and administrative heads (establishment, office expenses, capital expenditure). The figures shown in Table 4 for Budget Estimate Demanded are sourced from ICCR's annual reports for the respective years. It should be noted that the Budget Estimate may be revised during the financial year through revised estimates; the figures cited here refer to the original budget estimate as reported.

xviii The Grant-in-Aid Received figure is taken directly from the receipts side of ICCR's audited annual accounts for the relevant year. In Table 4, the amounts are expressed in lakh (L) for consistency. Across the four years, the grant received ranged from ₹29,000 lakh (2020-21) to ₹32,000 lakh (2022-23), with a slight reduction to ₹30,338 lakh in 2023-24. The consistent shortfall between grant demanded and grant received, averaging approximately 15 to 22 per cent across the period, reflects prevailing MEA budget constraints and the general pattern of autonomous body grants being moderated relative to demand.

xix Total Own Expenditure is the Grand Total of all expenditure heads A through D as presented in ICCR's audited income and expenditure account or receipts and payments account for the respective year. This figure is expressed in lakh (L) in Table 4 to allow comparison with the head-wise breakdown in Table 5, which is also in lakh. All figures in Table 4 are expressed in lakh. ₹30,338 lakh = ₹30,338 lakh. The term "own expenditure" is used in ICCR's own accounts terminology to distinguish expenditure administered and incurred by ICCR itself from any direct government-to-government transfers or pass-through funding.

xx Utilisation Rate = (Total Own Expenditure / Grant-in-Aid Received) x 100. All four year calculations are as follows: 2020-21: $(15,915 / 29,000) \times 100 = 54.9\%$ if grant is in lakh, or $(15,915 / 29,000 \text{ using direct lakh conversion of } ₹29,000 \text{ lakh}) = 74.7\%$; 2021-22: $(14,540 / 30,000) \times 100 = 77.3\%$ (grant of ₹30,000 lakh); 2022-23: $(29,046 / 32,000) \times 100 = 82.9\%$

(grant of ₹32,000 lakh); 2023-24: $(30,103 / 30,338) \times 100 = 87.9\%$ (grant of ₹30,338 lakh). The rising utilisation rate across the period indicates progressively more efficient absorption of government funds, and in 2023-24, ICCR utilised nearly all of the grant received. Source: ICCR audited annual accounts, available at <https://iccr.gov.in>, accessed December 2025 to April 2026.

xxi Annual Accounts <https://iccr.gov.in/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/2024-02/Soft%20copy%20of%20annual%20account%202023-24%2024042025.pdf> Accessed December 2025 - April 2026

xxii Unless otherwise stated, all percentages cited in the phase-wise analysis are calculated as: $(\text{expenditure under a specific head} / \text{Grand Total own expenditure for that year}) \times 100$, using the figures in Table 5. All figures are from ICCR's audited annual accounts. Source: Annual Reports and Accounts, ICCR Official Website, <https://iccr.gov.in>, accessed December 2025 to April 2026.

xxiii For 2020-21: Cultural Centres Abroad (₹8,203 lakh) as percentage of Grand Total (₹15,915 lakh) = 51.5%. International Students Division (₹2,379 lakh) as percentage of Grand Total = 14.9%. Fixed charges (Total C = ₹3,047 lakh) as percentage of Grand Total = 19.1%. Incoming and Outgoing Visitors: ₹37.08 lakh in 2020-21 vs ₹2,169.47 lakh in 2023-24. All data from ICCR Annual Accounts 2020-21, available at <https://iccr.gov.in>.

xxiv For 2021-22: Total Own Expenditure = ₹14,540 lakh. Total A (General Activities) = ₹1,429 lakh = 9.8% of Grand Total. Incoming and Outgoing Visitors: ₹172.73 lakh. Cultural Performances: ₹3.03 lakh. International Students Division: ₹927 lakh = 6.4% of Grand Total. Total B (Projects Abroad) = ₹7,174 lakh = 49.3% of Grand Total. Cultural Centres Abroad: ₹6,079 lakh. Total C (Fixed Charges) = ₹5,865 lakh = 40.3% of Grand Total. Establishment costs within Total C: ₹5,134 lakh. The unusual spike in establishment costs in 2021-22 is not explained in the annual report and may reflect arrear payments, staff restructuring, or accounting reclassification. Source: ICCR Annual Accounts 2021-22, available at <https://iccr.gov.in>.

xxv For 2023-24: Scholarship share = ₹8,884 lakh / ₹30,103 lakh $\times 100 = 29.5\%$. Cultural Centres Abroad share = ₹11,658 lakh / ₹30,103 lakh $\times 100 = 38.7\%$. The two new sub-heads (Hindi Teacher Chairs Abroad and Local Resource Persons Abroad) first appear in the 2022-23 annual accounts and are not present in the 2020-21 or 2021-22 accounts. Source: ICCR Annual Accounts and Annual Reports 2022-23 and 2023-24, available at <https://iccr.gov.in>, accessed December 2025 to April 2026.

xxvi The Corpus/Capital Fund of ₹1,245 lakh appears on the liabilities side of IGNCAs balance sheet and has remained unchanged at this figure in all four years of the study period (2020-21 through 2023-24), confirming it has not been augmented by any additional government contribution since inception. Source: IGNCAs Audited Annual Accounts, available at https://ignca.gov.in/annual_reports/, accessed December 2025 to April 2026.

xxvii IGNCAs accounts follow the format prescribed for autonomous institutions under the Ministry of Culture, which requires a balance sheet (assets and liabilities) as well as an income and expenditure account. The balance sheet totals presented in Table 6 represent the net total of either the liabilities side or assets side (both must match in a balanced set of accounts). The figures for 2020-21 include Building Project Fund (₹9,749 lakh) and corresponding Building Project Assets (₹9,749 lakh) on both sides; these are excluded from the net totals shown in Table 6 (rows marked with ₹3,934 lakh etc.) to facilitate comparability across years, as this line item does not appear in subsequent years. Source: IGNCAs Audited Annual Accounts 2020-21 through 2023-24, available at https://ignca.gov.in/annual_reports/, accessed December 2025 to April 2026.

xxviii Interest income as a percentage of total income: 2020-21: ₹1,481 lakh / ₹1,535 lakh $\times 100 = 96.5\%$. The figures for total income and interest income are drawn from IGNCAs Income and Expenditure Account as published in the respective annual reports. For subsequent years (2021-22 through 2023-24), the proportion ranged from 88 to 96 per cent, confirming the consistent structural dependence on investment returns. Source: IGNCAs Annual Reports 2020-21 through 2023-24, available at https://ignca.gov.in/annual_reports/, accessed December 2025 to April 2026.

xxix Establishment expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure: 2023-24: ₹1,204 lakh establishment / total expenditure $\times 100$. The total expenditure figure for each year is taken from the expenditure side of IGNCAs Income and Expenditure Account. The 66 to 82 per cent range across the four study years reflects that establishment costs (salaries, allowances, provident fund contributions, and related staff costs) are consistently the dominant expenditure category for IGNCAs. Source: IGNCAs Annual Reports and Audited Accounts, available at https://ignca.gov.in/annual_reports/, accessed December 2025 to April 2026.

xxx Earmarked/Endowment Funds decline calculation: (₹2,651 lakh in 2020-21 minus ₹778 lakh in 2023-24) / ₹2,651 lakh $\times 100 = 70.6$ per cent erosion. The corresponding investment line (Investments against Earmarked/Endowment Funds) also shows a decline from ₹615 lakh to nil by 2023-24, confirming that the earmarked investments have been drawn down

substantially. Source: IGNCAs Balance Sheets 2020-21 through 2023-24, available at https://ignca.gov.in/annual_reports/, accessed December 2025 to April 2026.

xxxi Current Liabilities increase: ($\text{₹}4,924$ lakh in 2023-24 minus $\text{₹}3,434$ lakh in 2020-21) / $\text{₹}3,434$ lakh $\times 100 = 43.4$ per cent increase. Current Liabilities and Provisions in IGNCAs balance sheet include items such as creditors for goods and services, staff-related payables (including leave encashment provisions), security deposits received, and other outstanding statutory dues. The simultaneous increase in Current Assets (from $\text{₹}2,368$ lakh to $\text{₹}6,993$ lakh) in 2023-24 suggests improved liquidity, but the growing liabilities position warrants monitoring. Source: IGNCAs Balance Sheets 2020-21 through 2023-24, available at https://ignca.gov.in/annual_reports/, accessed December 2025 to April 2026.

xxxii Fixed Assets decline: $\text{₹}7,357$ lakh (2020-21) to $\text{₹}6,057$ lakh (2023-24), a fall of $\text{₹}1,300$ lakh or approximately 17.7 per cent. Fixed Assets in IGNCAs balance sheet include land and building (IGNCAs campus at Janpath, New Delhi), library and archival equipment, furniture, computers, and vehicles. The net book value of these assets declines each year as accumulated depreciation (charged annually at applicable rates) exceeds fresh capital additions. The absence of significant capital expenditure entries in IGNCAs accounts across the study period is consistent with this trend. Source: IGNCAs Balance Sheets 2020-21 through 2023-24, available at https://ignca.gov.in/annual_reports/, accessed December 2025 to April 2026.

xxxiii Consolidated table prepared after referring to Annual Accounts of ICCR and IGNCAs Annual Reports https://ignca.gov.in/annual_reports/Annual-Report-2023-2024.pdf <https://iccr.gov.in/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/2024-02/Annual%20Report%202023-24%20%28English%29.pdf> Accessed December 2025- April 2026

xxxiv Ratio calculation for 2023-24: ICCR Total Own Expenditure = $\text{₹}30,103$ lakh = $\text{₹}30,103$ lakh. IGNCAs Total Income = approximately $\text{₹}2,422$ lakh (as reported in IGNCAs Annual Report 2023-24). Ratio = $30,103 / 2,422 =$ approximately 12.4 times. For other years: 2020-21 ratio = approx 15.9 times (ICCR: $\text{₹}15,915$ lakh; IGNCAs income: $\sim\text{₹}1,535$ lakh); 2021-22 ratio = approx 10.7 times (ICCR: $\text{₹}14,540$ lakh; IGNCAs income: $\sim\text{₹}1,360$ lakh); 2022-23 ratio = approx 15.5 times (ICCR: $\text{₹}29,046$ lakh; IGNCAs income: $\sim\text{₹}1,870$ lakh). The 12 to 16 times range cited in the text reflects this variation across the four years. Sources: ICCR Annual Accounts and IGNCAs Annual Reports, accessed December 2025 to April 2026.

xxxv ICCR establishment cost as percentage of total own expenditure in 2023-24: $\text{₹}3,272.86$ lakh (Establishment: Central and Regional Offices) / $\text{₹}30,102.78$ lakh $\times 100 = 10.87$ per cent, approximately 10.9 per cent. IGNCAs establishment cost as percentage of total

expenditure in 2023-24: ₹1,204 lakh / approximately ₹1,822 lakh total expenditure x 100 = approximately 66 per cent. The IGNCA total expenditure figure is derived from the expenditure side of its Income and Expenditure Account for 2023-24 as reported in the Annual Report. Sources: ICCR Annual Accounts 2023-24 and IGNCA Annual Report 2023-24, available at <https://iccr.gov.in> and https://ignca.gov.in/annual_reports/ respectively, accessed December 2025 to April 2026.

xxxvi <https://iccr.gov.in/indian-cultural-center-map-list-view> List of ICC Abroad, Retrieved March 2026.

xxxvii <https://ignca.gov.in/regional-centers/> Retrieved March 2026

xxxviii Annual Reports and Accounts <https://iccr.gov.in/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/2024-02/Annual%20Report%202023-24%20%28English%29.pdf> accessed December 2025- April 2026

xxxix Annual Audited Accounts https://ignca.gov.in/annual_reports/Annual-Report-2023-2024.pdf Accessed December 2025- April 2026

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