



## India International Centre



# India International Centre



Main IIC complex, circa 1962.

Facing page: {A} Rose beds along main driveway.  
 {B} The Reading Room, IIC Library.

## INTRODUCTION



**The India International Centre** was founded with a vision of India as an ideal meeting point between the East and West. Since it serves as a 'bridge' for cultures and communities from all over the world, it has always been seen as the natural venue to initiate dialogues in a climate of amity, understanding and the sharing of human values. In the words of its Founder-President, Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, this institution was designed to be a meeting of minds, a place where 'various currents of intellectual, political and economic thought could meet freely'. Statesmen, diplomats, intellectuals, scientists, jurists, writers and activists convene here for discussions. Lectures and conferences initiate the exchange of new ideas and knowledge in the spirit of international cooperation.

The IIC is a non-governmental institution that has remained financially self-reliant over five decades. The basic purpose of its existence is clearly stated in its objectives that declare the Centre as a society 'to promote understanding and amity between the different communities of the world by undertaking or supporting the study of their past and present cultures, by disseminating or exchanging knowledge thereof, and by providing such other facilities as would lead to their universal appreciation.'

Following these objectives, international and national conferences, seminars and round tables are initiated on topics of universal as well as national concern. These intellectual activities are complemented by a variety of cultural programmes that include excellent classical and folk music of different genres from all parts of the world, films and documentaries, plays and literary events, as well as art and photographic exhibitions. These are offered not just to its members but to all those who share the IIC's vision on the dissemination and exchange of culture and knowledge. Three nodal departments work together to bring a high quality of intellectual and cultural life to its members. Called the Programmes Division, the Library and the Publications Division, they create a calendar of cultural and intellectual activities throughout the year.

In its programmes the Centre pursues values of a liberal humanism, which are today of universal significance. An expression of this vision is the Memorial Plaza, a beautiful space dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King.



The grand central portico at the entrance.

Facing page: {A} Japanese Crown Prince and Princess arrive for the Foundation ceremony, 1960.  
 {B} Distinguished gathering at the Inauguration of the IIC complex, 1962.

## FOUNDATIONS AND HISTORY



**Conceived during an era of** great institution-building in India, the India International Centre has grown enormously since it was founded. However, its vision and activities have lost none of their relevance since they were first articulated over fifty years ago. This is mainly because the people who were involved with its inception were men and women who had a unique vision for India's future, and her role in a world of mutual cooperation.

The idea of the India International Centre was initially proposed in 1958 by John D. Rockefeller III to Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, then Vice-President of India. This proposal, which came with a handsome grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to initiate the building process, also received enthusiastic support from several universities in the country. Among its most ardent supporters was the Prime Minister of the country, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who chose a particularly beautiful site adjacent to the Lodi Gardens for it.

On 9 March 1959, the India International Centre was registered under the Societies Registration Act and the management of the Centre was entrusted to 5 members until such time as the first regular Executive Committee was formed. These members were Professor N.K. Sidhanta, Dr. B.P. Pal, Shri Charat Ram, Col. B.H. Zaidi and Shri D.R. Mankekar.

On 15 April 1960 the first sod of earth on site was turned by Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, a Life Trustee and the first Vice-President of the IIC. On 30 November of the same year, the foundation stone was laid by Prince Akihito, then the Crown Prince of Japan. Within fifteen months, on 22 January 1962, the complex that is now known as the India International Centre was formally inaugurated by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Mr. John D. Rockefeller III and several prominent citizens and intellectuals of Delhi were also present on that historic day.

In his speech at the inauguration, Mr. Rockefeller stressed the need for the 'deepening of true and thoughtful understanding between peoples and nations'. He hoped that the Centre 'can help to build toward a world of freedom and justice and peace'. On this ceremonial occasion Jawaharlal Nehru had remarked,

"It surprises me, now it is here, to realise that we did not have it previously, because the world today is so constituted that there can be no escape from international cooperation except, well, disaster. This International Centre will, of course, not change the nature of the world, but it will help in the process."

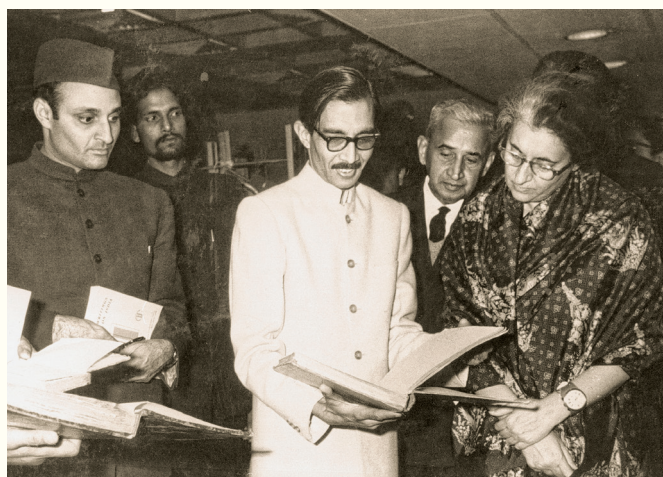


Stately trees are an important feature of the IIC landscape.



{A} Dr. Radhakrishnan, Mr. Joseph A. Stein and Dr. C.D. Deshmukh inspect the site.

{B} Mrs. Indira Gandhi in the Library with Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, Dr. Karan Singh and Mr. J.A. Wajid.



Policy and decision-making at the Centre have been invested in the authority of the Board of Trustees. The Life Trustees of the Centre, each an eminent Indian bringing years of experience to the governing of the Centre, have been Dr. C.D. Deshmukh (1959–82), who was also its Life President; Pandit H.N. Kunzru (1959–78); Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay (1959–88); Lala Shri Ram (1959–63); Nawab Zainyar Jang Bahadur (1959–61); Shri Jaya Chamaraja Wadiyar (1961–63); Shri Karumuttu Thiagarajan (1964–73); Dr. Malcolm Adiseshiah (1978–94); Dr. L.M. Singhvi (1982–2007); and Dr. Karan Singh (1963–2006).

The present Life Trustees are Professor M.G.K Menon, Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, Shri Soli J. Sorabjee, Justice B.N. Srikrishna and Shri N.N. Vohra. Life Trustees also serve, in turn, as President of the Centre: Professor Menon held this position from 1983 to 1988 and again from 2007 to 2011; Dr. Singhvi from 1988 to 1991; Dr. Karan Singh from 1992 to 1996; Dr. Vatsyayan from 1997 to 2001; and Mr. Sorabjee, who is the current President, also served from 2002 to 2006. In addition, there are two elected Trustees.

Since 1960, there have been nine Directors of the Centre selected by the Board of Trustees, each with years of administrative experience: P.N. Kirpal (1960), D.L. Mazumdar (1961–66), Romesh Thapar (1967–72), J.S. Lall (1973–78), U.S. Bajpai (1979–85), Eric Gonsalves (1986–91), A. Madhavan (1992–95), N.N. Vohra (1995–2003), P.C. Sen (2003–2008). Kavita A. Sharma (2008- ) is the present Director.

The site at the India International Centre was carefully nurtured and developed with the supervision of Dr. Deshmukh and Smt. Durgabhai Deshmukh, who took personal interest in planting the trees. This precedence of maintaining the gardens has become a tradition, nurtured by successive Directors at the Centre.



Lily pool and garden view from Lounge veranda.



Pathway to Conference Block.

## BUILDING AN IDEAL ENVIRONMENT

**The India International Centre** was conceived, as Dr. Deshmukh commented, to provide the ideal ambience for ‘exemplars of various cultures [to] stay together for a while ... in order that the sharpness of intellectual exchange is softened by the graciousness of good fellowship’. In consonance with these objectives, the buildings are situated in a unique environment in central Delhi, adjacent to the Lodi Gardens – overlooking a magnificent landscape of gardens and historic monuments from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

A vital aspect of the IIC is the pioneering design for its building complex by Joseph Allen Stein, a renowned architect trained in California and deeply inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright. Stein spent fifty years living and building in India and his affinity for nature is marvellously expressed here in the symbiotic relationship he created between the Centre and the Lodi Gardens. A striking feature of the Centre is its austere beauty and conscious lack of ostentation. The low sweep of its buildings is designed to relate to the human scale, for Stein believed that ‘man comes into relationship with nature’ when this happens.

In an interview, Stein elaborated his vision for this complex:

*There was an attempt to create something, which depended upon simplicity and relationships rather than things. So this is not a five-star appearance in marble and granite. But it is a place where a certain kind of relationship exists – between the garden and the building and the water and the earth and the sky, and the learning and activities that take place and the things that happen ...*

Three separate wings of the IIC complex are designed to reflect the different functional aspects of the Centre and each serves a different purpose. The residential rooms in the west wing, the dining areas in the south wing, and the third complex in the east wing of the library, auditorium and administrative offices are connected to each other by walkways with overhanging eaves. A grand central portico greets the visitor at the entrance driveway on an east-west axis. In the interspaces of paved courts, under shade or in open gardens, the members meet – to quote the architect, ‘when the conditions are right for cooperation, one’s mind expands ...’

Despite its institutional role, the IIC is built with an ‘informal’ approach to architecture. The buildings respond with sensitivity to their specific location in Delhi. The curving facade of the residential wing corresponds to the curving paths and walkways in the adjacent Lodi Gardens. The large windows of the dining hall and the octagonal conference room open out to overlook the wide vistas of gardens and tombs of the Lodi kings. Similarly, light and air and breeze flow from the gardens into the residential rooms.





{A & B} Austerity and simplicity combined with intricate detailing evoke a sense of quiet repose.

{Facing page} Stein's honeycomb ceiling, Main Auditorium.

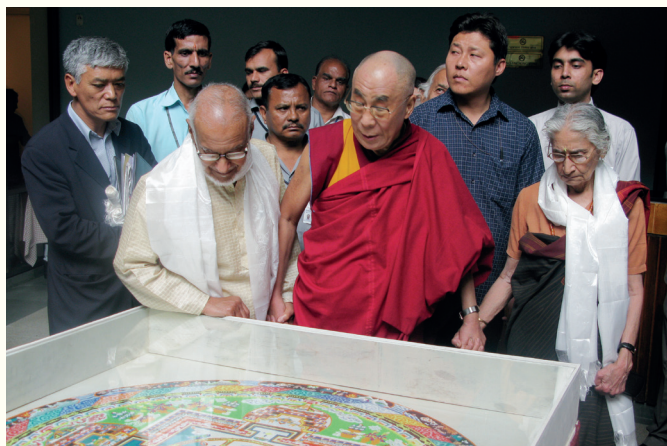
Respecting the garden traditions of north India and the refinement of craft techniques, Stein integrated these indigenous elements with the modern use of exposed concrete and exposed roof patterns. The use of local materials, such as rugged quartzite and blue Kota flooring, is softened by screened jalis in ceramic blue tiles found in Islamic architecture. Austerity and simplicity combine with intricate detailing to bring a sense of quiet repose.

The Centre became the first of seven institutional projects (among them the Ford Foundation and World Wide Fund for Nature-India), laid by Stein like an informal campus in this area. Often referred to as 'Steinabad', the lane leading to this special enclave is now named after this visionary architect. However, the Centre retains its own distinctive character of a green oasis within Lodi Estate. Despite the hurried pace of life swirling all around the area, it imparts a rare sense of leisure with its buildings opening into outer and inner courtyards, lawns and flowering trees and pools of still water.





Vice-President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Mr. John D. Rockefeller and Shri V.K. Krishna Menon at the Centre.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama escorted by Trustees, Professor M.G.K. Menon and Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan.

## BRIDGING CULTURES/SHARING VALUES

Over the years, the Centre has developed a close and mutually beneficial relationship with prominent academic and cultural institutions in India and abroad, as well as diplomatic missions and their cultural centres. Universities and cultural organizations collaborate with us in organizing lectures and seminars, symposia and round tables with eminent scholars visiting the country. The intimate nature of such interaction, which encourages meaningful discussions, has drawn some of the world's leading thinkers and speakers. In the early years, visiting delegates have included Pearl Buck, P.M.S. Blackett, Robert Goheen, Paul Gore-Booth, Frederick Leboyer and Ivan Illich. In recent years, eminent public personalities speaking at the Centre have included H.H. the Dalai Lama, Sogyal Rinpoche, Julius Nyerere, Willy Brandt, Henry Kissinger, Lee Kuan Yew, Shimon Peres, Henry K. Cardoso, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, Wangari Mathai, Kofi Annan and Shirin Abadi. Writers and scholars who drew large audiences at the Centre have included Octavio Paz, Christophe von Furer-Haimendorf, Gunter Grass, Hasan Fathy, Sayed Hossein Nasr, Dominique Lapierre, Noam Chomsky, Kathleen Raine, Helene Cixous, Nadine Gordimer, Mahasweta Devi, Amartya Sen, Nissim Ezekiel, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh and Jung Chang.

The Centre is an important venue for holding international conferences and seminars, ranging from international and civic affairs, ethics and human rights, environment, ecology and wildlife to dimensions in science and medicine, religion, philosophy, culture and literature. Among notable seminars organized by the IIC were the Asian Relations Commemorative Conference in 1987, two conferences held on India and the USSR in 1988, Understanding Contemporary Africa in 1996, the Symposium on Greece-India in 1996, and the Indo-Austrian Symposium held in 1997. Recent seminars have largely focused on SAARC, South Asia, China, India and Europe, and India and Australasia. For some years, the Centre has initiated the Track II Indo-Bangladesh Dialogue in collaboration with the Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka. Most recently, to mark the centenary year of Hind Swaraj, the Centre organized the Hind Swaraj Centenary International Seminar in collaboration with the Council for Social Development.

Each year the Centre organizes the C.D. Deshmukh Memorial Lecture in memory of the founder of the Centre, where distinguished persons in the fields for education, governance and economics are invited to speak. Other annual events are a lecture on Governance and a seminar of the Mid-Year Review of the Indian Economy, the proceedings of which are published.

One purpose of the India International Centre is to influence public opinion and the other is to focus attention on remote or neglected regions and India's cultural plurality. The north-eastern states, folk and craft traditions, alternative medicine and indigenous knowledge systems, vanishing languages—all these have found a hospitable terrain in the Centre.





## CULTURAL PROGRAMMES PERFORMANCES AND FESTIVALS

Ensemble of Polish musicians at the Centre.

{Facing page} Madhavi Mudgal at the IIC Festival, 2011.

The Auditorium and the open gardens of the Centre provide the space for a range of performances round the year. These are concerts and recitals of Indian and western classical music and dance, folk music and dances from across India and the world. Often accompanied by seminars, exhibitions and the local cuisines, these events acquaint the audiences with the colour and local flavour to encourage a genuine intermingling of communities. Initiated by the interest of Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, who introduced lesser known traditions such as those of the Kodavas, Parsis, Nagas, Arunachalis and Mizos to city dwellers, these events became the promise of future festivals.

Keeping this tradition in mind, a cultural feature promoted by the Centre in recent years has been 'country festivals' organized with the support of different countries through their cultural missions and embassies based in Delhi, through lectures, seminars, performances, film screenings, exhibitions and cuisine. Some memorable ones were 'Greece-India: 2500 Years of Cultural Exchange'; 'Namaste Japan'; 'Austrian Millennium', commemorating the founding of the Austrian nation, and 'Tibet 2000: Survival of the Spirit'. In recent years several festivals were organized which focused on specific states and themes such as 'From the Very Heart of India: The Madhya Pradesh Festival'; 'Utsav: Celebrating Tagore in the 21st Century'; '50 Years in Exile: The Tibet Experience'; 'Festival of Kabir in Film and Song, 2009'; 'Samyukta: Collaborations in Creativity'; and 'Jashn-e-Khusro, 2010'.

The Centre also promotes young and upcoming artists from all over the country and provides a platform for established artists to present experimental works and new dance and music compositions. Ensemble performances that blend Indian and western music, jazz, and inspired jugalbandis between performers from different regions of the world are also a regular feature. The IIC's Fountain Lawns are an inspiring venue for concerts of sacred music, whether Manipur's lilting sankirtan, sonorous Buddhist chants or Turkey's dancing dervishes.

Aspects of folk and classical performances, which were in need of patronage, have been presented by the IIC in collaboration with the Sangeet Natak Akademi, such as 'Creativity in Tradition: The Classical Dance; Encounters with Masters'. Other memorable performances included Koodiyattam, Mudi yettu and Pavakathakalli, and Yakshagana, which were new to audiences in the capital. In 2000 and 2001, as a tribute to Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, the Centre presented two puppet festivals. These featured puppeteers from different parts of India and the world, including the internationally renowned Indonesian shadow puppet tradition, Wayang Kulit.

The Centre regularly presents exhibitions of paintings, photographs, sculptures, pottery, ceramic, and glass works of artists from India and abroad. The focus of the exhibitions is to present younger artists, lesser



Dancers from Myanmar perform at the IIC Festival.



From a photography exhibition, Annexe Art Gallery.

known art forms, and folk and traditional styles. The new Conference Block now boasts of a splendid Art Gallery, which was inaugurated with a special exhibition of the work of S.H. Raza in October 2011. In addition to this, there is a smaller, more intimate art gallery in the Annexe which has built up a reputation as an important venue for the presentation of photography as an art form and for new and experimental forms in the arts. In keeping with the spirit of the Centre, these art galleries are not used for commercial purposes and offer young and upcoming artists a space to display their work to the city's elite.

The IIC is proud that it offers all its cultural programmes to the public without tickets, invitations or passes. Announced in the monthly Programme Cards, sent to members and non-members by post and email, the cultural calendar is displayed on our website as well. This is one of the many acts of public service that the IIC performs.

Another recent innovation is the introduction of webcasting undertaken by the IIC. Select lectures, talks, dance and music performances are now webcast live through the IIC website from time to time. The announcement of these webcasts is made through the website and enables members who either live in other cities or are unable to attend them live, to enjoy them through their computers as they are archived on the IIC's website.



Inner courtyard lit up for Festival.

## IIC FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS



Celebrating Tagore at the Centre.

By the beginning of this millennium, the Centre had firmly established its reputation as a place that nurtures diversity, freedom, innovation, creativity, learning and cultural activity. The time had come for an annual festival to be held when all these activities could be brought together. This is how the first such celebration called The IIC Experience: A Festival of the Arts, was held in 2004.

Since then, the IIC Festival of the Arts has become an annual feature and held each year in the latter half of October. Every open space and venue in the Centre comes alive as the events unfold. Special dinners, cooked in the famed IIC kitchen by our catering staff, present exotic cuisine from India and the world at the end of each day's activities. For one week, the IIC is decorated with lamps and flowers and its gardens are lit up to highlight the festive atmosphere.

Over the years, several institutions and foreign missions have collaborated with the Centre to bring together the finest talent in the visual and performing arts. A joyous celebration, the festival offers dance, music, theatre, folk and installation art, photography exhibitions, award-winning films along with fine dining from across the world. The events unfold in the serene spaces that are part of the Centre's reflective ambience, in keeping with its very purpose as a platform for cross-cultural exchanges, and a place where people meet and share ideas and experiences in the spirit of good fellowship.



From the IIC-Asia Project's Sui-Dhaga project.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

Almost from its inception, in addition to its normal on-going programmes and activities, the India International Centre has given special attention to specific research projects that impact public life. For this purpose distinguished members or Trustees have given their time and energy.

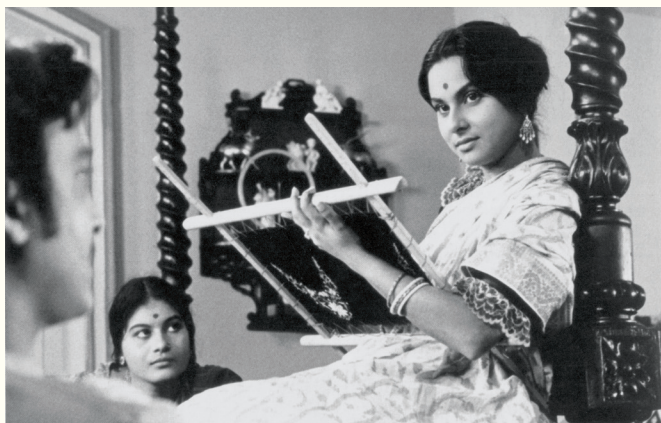
A good example of this is the IIC-Asia Project, an ongoing project currently under the Chairmanship of Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan. Looked after by Dr. Karan Singh from 1997-2003, it focuses on the historical, cultural and intellectual undercurrents that influence socio-economic developments and political policies in Asian countries to build a culture of dialogue and interaction amongst them.

The IIC-Asia Project is the latest in a series of such research initiatives that the Centre has taken up since the very beginning. In 1962, the IIC set up a Research Council for Cultural Studies, which was recognized as an Associate Institution of UNESCO, to carry out projects under the its Major Project III for 'Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values'. Dr. Kali Prasad, a former Vice- Chancellor, and Dr. B. Kuppuswamy, who was Joint Director of the Centre, were in charge of it through a 10-year period.

After this project was completed, the Research Council for Cultural Studies was reconstituted as a 'Council for Cultural Studies' with Dr. B.K. Roy Burman as its first convener. In 1975, a two-year project entitled 'The Himalaya' was initiated, which was overseen by Shri J.S. Lall who was then also the Director of the Centre.

From 1976 to 1985, Shri I.J. Bahadur Singh (an elected Trustee, 1977-81) headed 'The Other India Project' to examine the status of people of Indian descent abroad and their relations with India. In 1992, the renowned constitutional expert, Dr. Subhash Kashyap was named director of the 'Constitution of India Project'. Dr. L.M. Singhvi, a Life Trustee, looked after the Diaspora Project from 1999-2001. The 'Indo-Bangladesh Dialogue', a project started in 2005 in collaboration with the Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka, was held in two phases. All these projects have brought leading international scholars to the Centre and resulted in excellent publications. Some have had far-reaching consequences, such as significant changes in public policy.

## FILM CLUB



Avant-garde films are screened by the IIC Film Club.  
A still from *Charulata*.

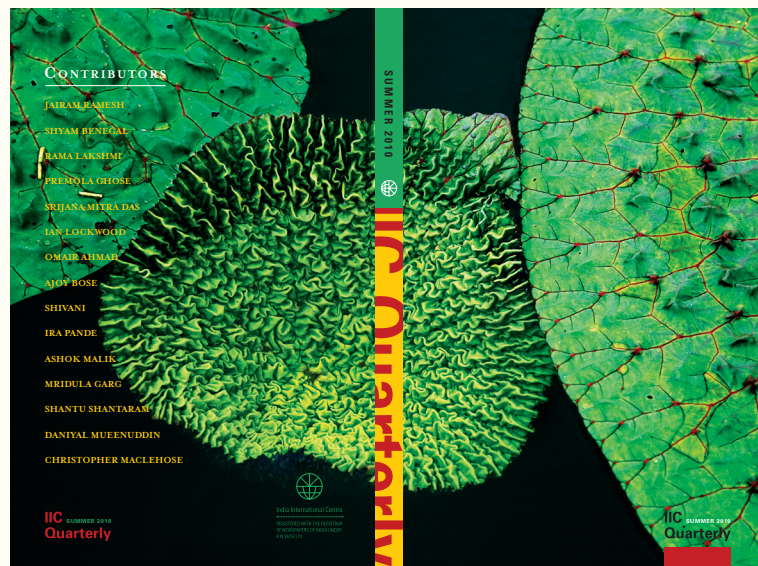
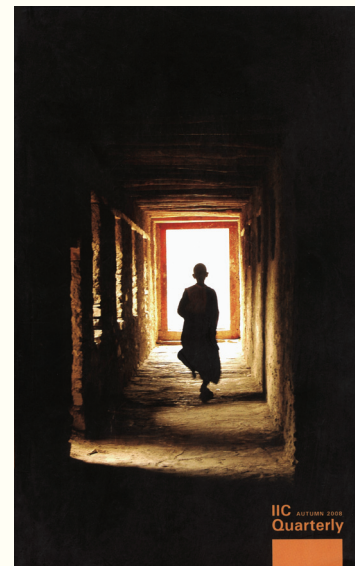
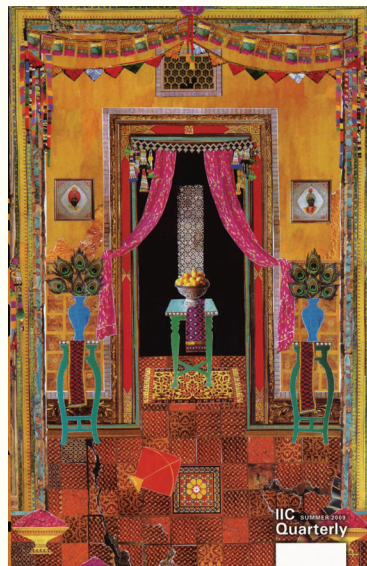
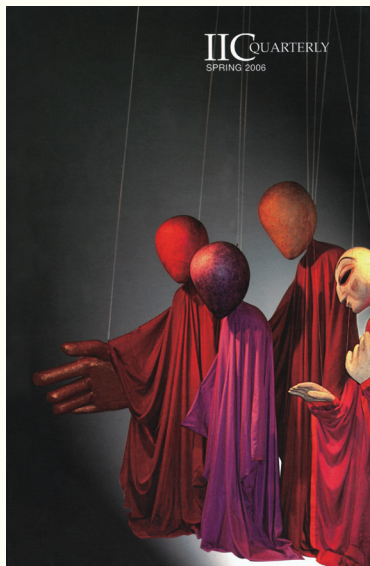
Initiated in 1966, the IIC Film Club today is one of the oldest functioning film societies in Delhi and a member of the Federation of Film Societies of India and the National Film Archive of India, Pune. The screenings are free and open to all members of the Centre.

Every month it screens four to six films of merit and excellence, such as experimental works and art house cinema not normally available in the commercial circuit. In addition, it presents festivals and retrospectives around the classic work of renowned directors as well as films by avant-garde directors in the international circuits shaping new directions in cinema. The IIC Film Club's retrospectives have covered almost every famous filmmaker's work: from Ingmar Bergman (Sweden) to Wong Kar-Wai and Zhang Yimou (China). Retrospectives of almost all important Indian filmmakers have also been screened.

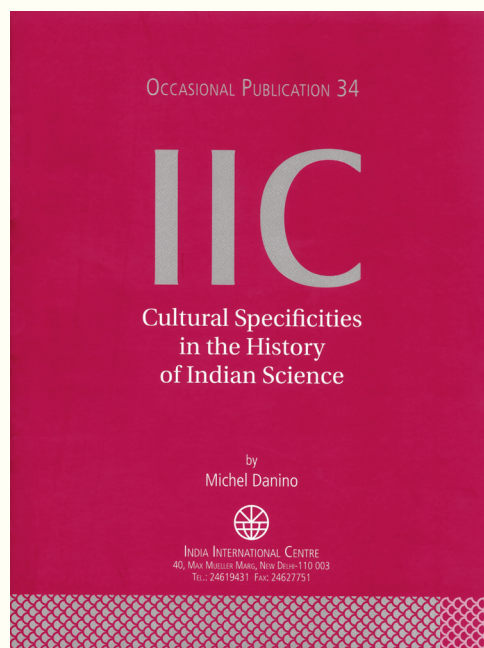
The first festival of films from the Northeast was held at the IIC when leading directors from the region personally presented their work. Other festivals have highlighted particular genres, women directors, film adaptations of literary classics, and feature films focusing on particular issues. Often, they are accompanied by seminars and discussions around the theme of the festival.

Another important space created over the years by the Film Club is a platform for documentary filmmakers to present films, premiere new productions and showcase works in progress. Reflecting the changing patterns in the acceptance and use of the documentary as a tool of debate and contestation, the documentaries cover broad areas and commentaries on current issues—from social and political practices to ecology and conservation, as well as issues of sexuality, migration and identities. Some documentaries are used as points of debate for panel discussions to follow.

Notable documentary festivals held annually are eagerly awaited by film buffs. For its 'outstanding contribution in promoting awareness and appreciation of film art', the IIC Film Club was given the prestigious Pritiman Sarkar Memorial Award for Best Film Society in 1998-99, 2007-2008 and 2010-2011.



IIC Quarterly covers.



Monograph of lecture at IIC.

## PUBLICATIONS



The bi-monthly *IIC Diary*.

As an extension of its public service, the IIC publishes the *IIC Quarterly*, a serious journal with essays from leading statesmen, writers, thinkers and activists based in India and abroad. Regarded among the best of its kind, it has a dedicated readership across the world, among them policy-makers in government, academics, think-tanks and activists.

Originally initiated to publish talks given at the IIC, the *Quarterly* has widened its scope to address matters of civic and international affairs, ethics and society, folklore and anthropology, ecology and the environment, and the perennial philosophy offered in the arts and literature. The abiding concern of the journal is to promote an understanding of different cultures and civilizations, and draw attention to crucial contemporary issues.

The journal has an enviable list of contributors, among them A.K. Ramanujan, Amartya Sen, U.R. Ananthamurthy and Ashis Nandy, to name just a few. The journal also carries photo essays by outstanding photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Dayanita Singh, Richard Bartholomew, among others.

The *Quarterly* is particularly valued by readers for its in-depth interviews with men and women of eminence. These dialogues focus on a wide range of topics from religion, philosophy and history to human rights, politics and activism.

Each year the journal brings out a special theme issue, also published as a book to reach wider audiences. These special issues have covered *Popular Indian Cinema*; *The Calcutta Psyche*; *Indigenous Vision: Peoples of India*; *Second Nature: Women and Family*; *India: A National Culture?*; *India 60: Towards a New Paradigm*; *The Great Divide: India and Pakistan*; *India China: Neighbours Strangers*; *A Tangled Web: Jammu & Kashmir*.

Other publications include the bi-monthly *IIC Diary*, a new series of monographs called *Occasional Publication* and the *Mid-Year Review of the Indian Economy* initiated by the late Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah in 1975.

From time to time, the IIC Publications Division also publishes books drawn mostly from the seminars and important cultural events held here.



Main Reading Room, IIC Library.



View of courtyard from Library.

## THE LIBRARY

Delightfully cool in summer, warmed by the sun in winter, with comfortable reading spaces, computer terminals, Wi-Fi facility, and its helpful staff, the IIC Library is among the most favoured spaces in the Centre. This is why, over the years, several eminent writers and scholars have made it their haunt for it is an ideal location for leisured reading and research.

The IIC Library has over 45,000 reference books, collections on current affairs, and volumes on culture, history, biography, literature and the arts neatly stacked and catalogued. Of particular importance are the rare collections of books donated and housed here. First among these is the 'India Collection' of about 2,500 books from the seventeenth century to 1947, with Mughal and British writings on history, archaeology, religion and customs, biography and literature. The 'Himalayan Club Collection' offers about 550 books on mountaineering and travel, fauna and flora in the Himalayas. Other rare collections of early publications include the 'Bilgrami Collection', as well as rare works on travel, history and literature donated by individual members to the Centre. In addition, there are currently about 1100 audio/videos in CD/DVD form on a variety of subjects, with special booths for private viewing or listening.

The Library also subscribes to 37 national and international newspapers and 161 periodicals, while 43 periodicals are received through gift and in exchange. The scholarly/academic periodicals are bound annually and preserved for reference.

When the Library was recently renovated, it was also equipped with the latest technological aids, which include Kindle to download e-books, as well as audio and video facilities specially adapted for low vision readers.

A member of DELNET (Developing Library Network), the IIC Library interacts with other libraries in Delhi on a regular basis. It is also affiliated with JSTOR, which offers access to a vast e-collection of books and journals to scholars across the world.

The Library organizes 'Book Discussions' programmes of well-known authors on a monthly basis, and also conducts 'Meet the Author' programmes, where eminent authors and panelists are invited. Some memorable names are Gulzar, Shiv K. Kumar, Kamleshwar, Mohan Bhandari, Manohar Shyam Joshi and Upamanyu Chatterjee.



The Lounge, a popular meeting place.



IIC chefs in its modern kitchen.

## FACILITIES AT THE CENTRE

While cultural programmes are open to the interested public in the south wing, the Centre offers residential and catering facilities only to members and their guests. A total of 48 single rooms and 44 double rooms are available to visiting members in the main complex and the Annexe.

At the main complex, most rooms on the ground floor open directly on to the lawns or the Lily Pond, while those on the first and second floors are provided with private verandas. All the guest rooms are centrally air-conditioned, elegantly furnished and have an attached bath. The Centre also provides guests with 24-hour room service and television. The IIC also offers wi-fi facilities and an internet connection can be provided on demand. Members can book rooms through e-mail, by letters or fax. The IIC website is another means of securing room reservations.

The IIC offers its members some of the city's best venues for private hospitality. The main complex and the Annexe each have a Lounge, a Bar and a Dining Hall where members can meet each other or entertain their guests. The Centre takes pride in serving wholesome meals of Indian, continental and oriental cuisine at affordable prices. Each month the members can enjoy an evening of regional cuisine.

The Lounge and Dining Hall in the main complex are located on the west side, overlooking the Lodi Gardens. The main Dining Hall at the Centre is perhaps one of the first in the city to be designed as a hexagonal room, with three of the four sides glassed to offer a spectacular view of the Lodi Gardens. Wide, spacious windows give guests a wrap-around sensation of trees and walkways – of being in harmony with nature. The privilege of being a member, guest or a visitor staying at the Centre is that on any day, you may find yourself at a table next to a Supreme Court judge, a senior journalist, diplomats, scholars, scientists and senior bureaucrats.

The Lounge offers a more informal setting for discussions and serves light snacks, hot and cold non-alcoholic beverages. It is open all day from 10 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. During the winter months, the Lounge at the Annexe offers a brunch of regional specialities, served on the sunny terrace that overlooks the Lodi Gardens.



Main Dining Hall, overlooking Lodi Gardens.



(A) The popular IIC Bar.

(B&C) The main residential suites overlook the Lodi Gardens.



The IIC Bar is immensely popular with members and visitors staying at the Centre. The Bar, offering a wide variety of both Indian and foreign liquor, has become a meeting point especially on evenings after a cultural performance, talk or film.

Besides the Lounge, Dining Hall and Bar, the main building has two Conference Rooms with a capacity of about 75 persons each, an Auditorium that can seat 231 persons, a Private Dining Hall for about 40 persons and a Terrace Pergola that can comfortably accommodate 50 persons.





## THE ANNEXE

Leafy entrance of the Annexe.

{Facing page} Stairwell in Annexe, leading to Art Gallery.

With the rise in membership and expanding activities of the Centre, the building of the Annexe was undertaken on grounds nearby, offering further facilities for residence, conferencing and dining. This building was inaugurated on 29 December 1996 by Dr. Karan Singh, then President of the IIC.

The Annexe is within easy walking distance of the main complex of the India International Centre. Designed as an eco-friendly structure with an accent on natural lighting, it is built around a central foyer, often also used for informal meetings. The ground floor houses a Committee Room and a Lecture Room.

The central foyer opens out to a stepped garden at the rear, with the lawn as an ideal location for hosting book launches and al fresco celebrations after conferences and exhibitions. With a verdant view of the Lodi Gardens, the Dining Hall at the Annexe is often used for quieter dialogues. Its spacious Lounge, Bar and adjoining terrace are preferred by many for their tranquil ambience.

The basement houses an Art Gallery. It has an added purpose, being designed to hold exhibitions of paintings, graphics, installations and photographs, which are often related to talks and workshops on topics such as the environment, architecture and music being held in the adjacent Lecture Room.

The Annexe also has a residential block of 18 bedrooms, spread over two floors.



Art Gallery, Conference Block.



View of Conference Block.

## THE CONFERENCE BLOCK

Inaugurated on 30 March 2011 by Professor M.G.K. Menon, President of the IIC, the Conference Block is the latest addition to the IIC complex. Built over the space formerly known as the rock garden and central court area, it has fulfilled the need for additional venues.

The Conference Block is flanked by the Rockefeller Wing and Fellow's Flat on its east and by the Lodi Gardens on the west. A pathway connects it to the main complex while a gate on Max Mueller Marg provides a separate entry for vehicles. Keeping in mind the spirit and ambience of the original structures, the architects (M/s Ghosh & Associates) have meticulously matched the materials and detailing of the original plans even while using the latest building practices.

A popular venue is its spacious multipurpose hall on the ground floor where a flexible seating arrangement can comfortably seat 350 people. Two large spaces outside the hall are used as pre-function areas and registration. The first floor houses three seminar rooms, two with a seating capacity of forty, and one with a capacity of sixty. These three venues can be merged as one to seat 150 people for larger functions and are equipped with the latest audio-video presentation and display systems, with video-conferencing facilities in one seminar hall. The second floor is devoted to a spacious and well-lit Art Gallery.

The Conference Block has two basements. The Upper Basement is an office space that now accommodates the Centralized Booking Office. A thoughtful addition is a Retiring Room where members can unwind in comfort, access the internet, and freshen up in the shower/washroom facilities. The Lower Basement is used for storage and utilities.

Several new features, absent in the original complex, have been incorporated here. These include efficient lifts, two rain water harvesting systems as well as waste water recycling units to meet the Centre's garden water requirements. Solar hot water panels have been installed on the flat roof space to service the kitchens and the roof of the building is thermally insulated to save energy. Each floor is also provided with fire alarms, smoke detectors and sprinklers.





## CONCLUSION

Jalis blend tradition with modern architectural design.

{Facing page} Light and shade balance form and design.

The IIC is often fondly described by members as their second home. One of the reasons why they feel this way is that the Centre has been successful in accepting and adapting to changing times, absorbing them seamlessly into its activities and spaces. At the same time, it has miraculously preserved its original atmosphere so that old and new members have never doubted its importance in their lives. On any given day, you can come across familiar faces in the Library, meet old acquaintances and new friends over a meal or a drink or simply walk in the gardens to soak in its tranquil loveliness. If you wish, you can come here to see a film, a dance performance or hear a music recital in the evening. There is no simply no day when some interesting event is not on at one or the other of its multiple venues to keep you entertained. If heavy traffic or work keeps you away from attending an evening programme, then tune into your computer and catch that important lecture or cultural event as a webcast on the IIC website. Our lively website offers a host of information and entertainment even to those members who do not live in Delhi any more.

In conclusion, we can only say that a magnificent location, sprawling green spaces, the quality and range of its activities, to say nothing of its warmth and hospitality, make the IIC a unique institution. It has consistently lived up to the expectations of its founders who had conceived of it as an ideal meeting place for cultures and communities, where civilized dialogue takes place in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and which contributes towards an enrichment of learning. As a confluence of cultures and mutual understanding, it stands in a space that few institutions have been able to match over five decades.

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India International Centre  
40, Max Mueller Marg  
New Delhi 110 003  
Telephone: 24619431-38  
Fax: 24627751  
Website: [www.iicdelhi.nic.in](http://www.iicdelhi.nic.in)



