Indian Cultural Centre, Embassy of India, Seoul organized its Decennial Celebrations via Video Conference on the occasion of its 10th Foundation Day on 1st July 2020.

Swami Vivekananda Culture Centre or Indian Cultural Centre as it is popularly known is the cultural wing of the Embassy of India in Seoul promoting Indian culture in the Republic of Korea. Fulfilling a long-held desire to provide a platform to showcase India’s rich cultural heritage and serve as the nodal point for cultural exchanges between India and Republic of Korea, this Centre was established on 1st July 2011.

Since its inception, Centre has been providing regular classes on Yoga, Indian classical and contemporary dances, musical instruments like Tabla, Harmonium and languages such as Hindi and Sanskrit. It also organises special lectures on diverse aspects of Indian culture, politics and society by involving renowned Indian and Korean scholars and academia.

It started offering Yoga, Kathak, Bollywood dance, Tabla, Hindi courses in the year 2011 and 76 students enrolled in the first session. So far, Indian Cultural Centre, Seoul accommodated about 3300 students in its regular classes. Till the last regular Session in February 2020, the Cultural Centre has successfully conducted classes in the various fields such as: Yoga and Meditation, Kathak, Odissi and Bollywood dance, semi-classical singing, musical instruments – Tabla, Harmonium and languages – Hindi and Sanskrit.

At this time, when the whole world is experiencing an unprecedented crisis because of the spread of COVID-19 virus, social distancing and lockdowns world over, the Cultural Centre has initiated online activities in its endeavour to keep in touch with the students and Indian cultural enthusiasts in Republic of Korea.

Apart from the regular classes, special programmes including exhibition, cultural performances, lectures and films screenings, etc. have been organized at various places in Seoul since its inception. It has expanded its cultural outreach through Indian cooking classes in association with various culinary institutes and Universities. It provides a platform for artists, scholars and academia to showcase their talents in this culturally alive country.

The Cultural Centre brings fine Indian cultural artistes to perform in Korea under the aegis of our annual “Sarang Festival”, truly a gift of love from India to Korea. With the premiere of the Sarang-Festival of India in Korea in 2015, a package of Indian cultural programmes showcasing all aspects of Indian art forms and culture are being presented in various cities every year. Through this Festival, it tries to introduce diverse Indian arts forms such as dance, music, yoga, Indian films, cuisine, arts and academic works to the people in different parts of the country in association with local hosts and organisations.

The Cultural Centre has also been partnering with the Korean Yoga Association to celebrate the International Day of Yoga every June – this is a joyous celebration where local yoga enthusiasts come together to perform and share this amazing tradition. Keeping into view, the current Covid-19 pandemic including restrictions on the movement of people and a slowdown in our daily activities, this year in collaboration with Seodaemun-gu in Seoul also in partnership with cities like Gimhae and Miryang, along with Wonkwang Digital University, Korea Yoga Association and India Yoga Centre in Busan, the International Day of Yoga celebrations were organized on a digital platform, connecting with people from comforts of their homes truly following the theme of - “Yoga at Home, Yoga with Family”.

Over the years, the Cultural Centre has also built an extensive network of partnership with various cultural organisations, city administrations and provincial governments across the country intending to broaden the stakeholders and promoting Indian culture in Republic of Korea.
Amb. Sripriya Ranganathan, Ambassador of India to Republic of Korea in her welcome remarks highlighted about the activities of the cultural centre and how it has grown over the years. In the past years since its establishment in 2011, the Centre has become a cultural hub for the local community.

Inaugural Address was delivered by Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President, ICCR, New Delhi. In his message he highlighted the four pillars of India-Republic of Korea ties viz:- Cultural, Spiritual, Democracy and Development Diplomacy. According to him, while cultural and spiritual aspects reinforces our civilisational legacy, Democracy and Development aspects relates to our modern day ties. Both India and Republic of Korea as modern day democracies can act as building blocks of cooperation between the two countries.

Keynote Address was delivered by Dr. Kim Yang-shik, Director, Indian Art Museum, Seoul. Mr. Kim Kum Pyoung, Director, Korean Cultural Centre, New Delhi gave a Special Address on this occasion and congratulated the Cultural Centre for its Decennial Celebrations. Prof. Kim Chan-wan, Professor at Graduate School of International and Area Studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies gave a detailed presentation of India-Korea People to people ties.

The session was moderated by Dr. Sonu Trivedi, Director of the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, Embassy of India, Seoul. She expressed her gratitude to all the individuals and institutions associated with the establishment and success of this institution along with all the supporters and partners that have increased in leaps and bounds over the period of last one decade.

The video conference was joined by noted Indologists and academics on Indian studies and a large number of students and researchers from India and Republic of Korea.

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