



Pishin Pajouh Cultural and Art Institute

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Pishin-Pajouh Cultural and Art Institute was established in 1997 by a group of archaeologists who were granted the needed certificates by the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. As its objective, the Institute seeks to promote studies on Iran, especially from archaeological and anthropological viewpoints. The institute enjoys its position as being among the first NGOs of its type. It was established at a time when Iranian cultural heritage authorities were gradually starting cooperation with the private sector.

A considerable portion of the first years following inauguration was spent in endeavours to attract government authorities, including the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization and the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, to collaborate, and this came about only after several years of activities to prepare the needed groundwork.

The activities of the Institute have been divided into three categories—namely, research, publications, and gatherings and exhibitions. Considerable contributions have been done in each division at provincial and national levels. What follows only covers activities related to ICH.

It is worth mentioning that the achievements reported below have been accomplished with close, constructive collaboration with the Anthropology Research Centre to the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organisation.

1. Ethnographies (fieldwork on clothing, food, rituals, and language among other tangible and intangible cultural features)

- Chalus, Noshahr, Nur (Mazandaran Province, Northern Iran)
- Saveh, Zarand, Komejjan (Markazi Province, North Central Iran)

2. Ethnographical Study of Major Cities

- Phase 1: Isfahan

Accomplished in forty days by a team of twenty anthropologists, the project resulted in the 2008 release of the following five volumes of books on Isfahan and its people, on the occasion of nominating Isfahan as the Capital of the World of Islam:

- Traditional Games and Recreational Activities
- Armenian Clothes
- Traditional Medicine
- Armenian Tombstones
- Linguistic Atlas of Iran: Fundamentals and

Methodology (Author: Dr. Yadollah Parmoun), accomplished based on previous linguistic documentation campaigns

3. Exhibitions

Two exhibitions on Iranian rituals and clothes on two occasions of the Iranian Cultural Heritage Week were held. Each lasted for ten days and hosted approximately 400,000 visitors.

4. Manifestations of the ICH

Pishin Pajouh participated in this exhibition following an invitation by Dr. Yadollah Parmoun, Director of the Linguistic Atlas of Iran National Project and the Director of the Tehran ICH Centre. At the event, Pishin Pajouh presented the Linguistic Atlas of Iran as well as other achievements of the country in the field of intangible cultural heritage, including its inscriptions on UNESCO Lists.

5. The Linguistic Atlas of Iran (National Project)

The implementation phase of the Linguistic Atlas of Iran was proposed by the Pishin Pajouh Institute, constituting a major step to protect and promote intangible cultural heritage throughout Iran. Following this proposal, the project was immediately approved and supported by the Research Institute to the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (RI-ICHHTO). Based upon a thirty-five-year-old background of linguistic documentation and a firm computational programming during which the project manifested as a computational linguistic atlas, the implementation phase started with linguistic data entry. The team members, thirty experts with an MA or PhD in linguistics, were first trained by Dr Yadollah Parmoun in a one-month workshop. The first phase of data entry resulted in the transcription of 10,000 linguistic interviews, using the standard International Phonetic Alphabet.

Abstract of the Project

- Upgrading and eliminating obstacles
- Collecting linguistic data from the areas needing documentation
- Entering data: Narrowing the transcription of the collected linguistic data
- Establishing and continually updating the project archive

Objectives of the Project

- Mapping the linguistic appearance of the Islamic Republic of Iran



Ethnic Iranian clothes exhibition © Pishin Pajouh Institute

- Discovering the domains of Iranian linguistic varieties
- Discovering endangered Iranian linguistic varieties
- Documenting the linguistic heritage of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- Preparing a display and interpretive linguistic maps from the whole territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- Stabilising national unity by proving the presence of a shared linguistic heritage in the background of the superficial linguistic diversity observable throughout the Islamic Republic of Iran

Beneficiaries from the Project

- RI-ICHHTO
- Educational and research organisations involved in linguistic heritage
- Language planners
- Major governmental cultural programming sectors of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- Iranian Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, especially the subsection involved in preparing the Comprehensive Scientific Map of the Islamic Republic of Iran to determine the Iranian cultural priorities and to cooperate properly with the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Section

Outcomes of the Project

By the end of the first phase, the project was elected by the Deputy for Technology to the President's Office, Islamic Republic of Iran, among the thirty most prominent projects of the Republic. The contractor to the project—namely, Pishin Pajouh Cultural and Art Institute—was praised as the active private sector institute.

Following this, the project took part in the Simorgh Exhibition of 2010, and was visited by a great number of prominent governmental figures, Members of the Cabinet, governmental managers, and ordinary people.