

CULTURE CONFERENCE 2010

CULTURE CONFERENCE

Held every October, the Culture Conference has been one of our flagship annual events. So far five such Conferences, those of 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010, have been held with Hivos assistance. Here is a report about the 2010 Conference, which comes under the reporting year.

CULTURE CONFERENCE 2010

Held from 3rd to 9th October, 2010, the Conference, like its previous editions, composed of two interrelated segments: (1) day sessions, running from 9.30 am to 6 pm, which had lectures, discussions and demonstrations, a large majority of which centred on the theme of the Conference, while the remaining were used for imparting to participants basic skills in art appreciation and sensitising them to important socio-cultural issues of the day (2) evening sessions, from 7 pm to 10 pm, devoted to performances of various kinds as part of a week-long public cultural festival.

THEME NOTE

Ninasam chose 'Youth Today' as the theme for this year's Culture Conference for a variety of reasons, besides the most immediate reason that over the last many years youngsters have come to form the most significant part of the participants at the Conference. First, world over, there is an unprecedented projection of the younger generation in the present times, leading to a general perception that the world belongs to the 'generation next' like it seldom did before. Second, in India in particular, in almost every field of activity, youth is increasingly being seen as the age-group that can and will redefine and reshape the nation. Third, young technologies and media like the internet, the computer, the cell phone, and television dominate our worldscape and they in turn are ruled over by youth. Fourth, the ever-accelerating speed of life in our world seems to particularly favour the youth brigade, while making those who cannot catch up with it feel disadvantaged. Fifth, there is an exuberant celebration of youthfulness across all media today, as reflected in programming and advertising. Sixth, corporate powers have been constantly trying to turn the constituency of the youth into their monopoly, as evidenced by their relentless wooing of the age-group. At the same time, however, there are views that sharply contrast with some of the ones mentioned above. There is, for instance, a general complaint that today's youth, lost in its own virtual world, shows little concern about the hard realities around it; that the idealism and activism exhibited by the youth in many parts of the world just a few decades ago have either dissipated or transmogrified themselves into soulless materialism and rapacious consumerism of today. Having lost their links with their traditions and communities, today's youth, another observation goes, falls easy prey to manipulators of minds like terror-teachers, lifestyle gurus, market messiahs, or proponents of pure individualism.

What really is 'youth'? Is it a stage of life or a state of mind? Does it relate to the body or reside in the spirit? How far is 'youth' an autonomous category and how much is it attached to other categories? How much does or can 'youth' derive from tradition and how much would tradition be a drag upon it? How accurate are the abovementioned

observations and conceptualisations made about ‘youth’? What are the challenges that today’s youth face, what is unique about them, and what are the possible ways of engaging with them? These were some of the questions that prompted Ninasam to choose ‘Youth Today’ as the focal point of this Conference.

LECTURES

In her inaugural address Rajni Bakshi, activist and writer of acclaimed books like *Baapukuti* and *Bazaars, Conversations, and Freedom*, outlined some of the challenges and choices before the youth today. At a time when an ecological crisis and a socio-economic crisis seem to be impending, she said, one had to have clarity about one’s aspirations and find a via media between the extremes of asceticism and hedonism, two unnatural approaches that some equally foolish groups are peddling today. Using the song *Kisiki muskuraaton pe ho nisaar, kisiki dard mil sake to le udhaar* from the Raj Kapoor film as an emblematic antithesis of the philosophy of pure self-advancement and greed projected by the honcho of the film *Wall Street*, where he says that he will never be content unless he is making more and more money forever, Bakshi pointed out that we cannot make the world a better place even for our own selves without making it so for others, too. Competition, which market economy used for purposes of capture of others and self-gain, she suggested, should rather be used for creativity and sharing of the fruits of creativity. There already were encouraging signs that such a paradigm shift was taking place in many spheres of life. The insistence of the Greens movement upon a cradle-to-grave responsibility in the case of manufacturers of modern goods was one such instance. Another was the voluntary simplicity movement, which has a strong following even in a country like the USA. Similar signs were evident in some capitalism-driven sectors, too, and there was no better illustration of this than in the approach adopted by such open-source software proponents as the Linux group which was in sharp contrast to the monopoly mentality of Microsoft. Further, the Internet and the World Wide Web, initially created to serve secretive military systems and having now broken their shackles, were now showing unmistakable signs of their democratising potential. They were helping in an unprecedented exchange of information and knowledge across the globe, and were instrumental in an increasing reclamation of the creative commons by the common people. It was true, she admitted, that there were many fundamental problems with the internet revolution, but then, she observed, all technologies were promethean in nature, generating as many dilemmas as the boons they bring to us. It was, therefore, up to us to make discriminating, positive use of them. The youth was, and had to be, an integral part of this exploration of alternatives, said Bakshi, ending with a quotation from a poem by American farmer, poet, and activist Wendell Berry where he says that the job of saving our planet will be humble and humbling, demanding of love and pleasing, where everyone and every act will be too small to be rich or famous.

In his lecture titled ‘Youth and Revolution’ Sundar Sarukkai, who specialises in the philosophy of science and social sciences, offered an analysis of the history of the relationship between youth and revolutions, in particular over the last one hundred years. The biological young, he said, had allowed their youthfulness to be harnessed for both constructive and destructive purposes in the last century, as testified by transformative events such as the French students’ uprising, the anti-Vietnam war protests in American

universities, the fight against racism in South Africa, or the several revolutions in South America on the one hand and violent events like the two world wars, the innumerable other little wars, and the countless acts of terrorism, on the other. Even by a conservative estimate, a massive 160 million youngsters had lost their lives in these incidents, fighting for establishments they had little control over and for causes of which they had no full understanding. It was true in a general sense, Sarukkai said, that to be young was to be revolutionary, but its sad inversion was that being young also meant dying young in the case of those unfortunate youth. In recent years, one particular aspect of youth was being highlighted in its different dimensions by different people for diverse purposes. The entertainment and consumer goods industries loved to equate youth with 'idiocy' and supremacy of heart over brain (witness the success of films like *3 Idiots* and the Diesel jeans advertisement campaign which invites one to 'be stupid'). The arts and scientific communities liked to relate the 'stupidity' of youth with uninhibited creativity. Some political sections preferred to read it as a mental disposition that is fresh and unburdened by the past, as reflected in the Indian Home Minister's statement when the Allahabad High Court delivered its recent, controversial judgement in the Ayodhya case where he said that the Indian youth, which now makes up about 70% percent of the nation's population, liked to move beyond the dispute, for the simple reason that, having been born after the Babri Masjid demolition, it carried no memories of the bitter past but dreams about the future. At the same time, however, the idea of 'revolution' itself was getting commercialised, thanks to the growth of consumer culture. Thus, Che Guevara, arguably the most celebrated youthful revolutionary of our times, was found more on the t-shirts of our youngsters than in their hearts and minds. Another danger came from our educational system which by forcing youth into becoming unquestioning, robot-like pupils and careerists reduced their natural 'revolutionary' potential and made shift from being 'youthful' to 'useful'. Further, in the particular case of India, where youth had still not freed themselves of the influence of parents, family, and tradition to the degree that many other youth of the world had done, it was a point open to debate whether Indian youth could not match the levels reached by their counterparts elsewhere, whether they had to be viewed as a different, unique set of youth or to be measured by the standards set by those others, and whether we Indians as a whole continue to be conservative, Sarukkai concluded.

Manu Chakravarthy, teacher and culture critic from Bangalore, in his lecture on 'Culture Discourse and Youth', provided the participants a perspective on the complexities involved in defining the phenomenon of culture. An inherent problem with most theorisations about culture today, he said, was that, subtly controlled by power relations, they did not pay attention to the multiple dimensions of culture and tended to endorse and promote hierarchic structures. Approaches to culture that attempted to privilege one or the other among the categories of the past and the present, the classical and the folk, the traditional and the modern were all fraught with peril. One has bear in mind that culture is as much a product of discordance and conflict between collectives and individuals as of harmony between them, as indicated in the history of creative acts and processes all over the world where later artists have constantly critiqued, rewritten and reinterpreted long-accepted classics of their communities in order to better articulate the experiences and challenges of their own times. And the challenge of our times, a very new kind of

challenge that has emerged post-1990s, Chakravarthy pointed out, was that state, capital, corporate powers were all becoming highly depersonalised and culture had to evolve new means of resisting their attempts to devalue and appropriate it.

Speaking on 'Contemporary Indian Theatre & Young Directors and Artistes', Shamik Bandopadhyaya, a Kolkatta-based scholar with diverse interests, dwelt at length upon the challenges facing young Indian theatre workers today and the ways in which these could be met. The first such challenge, he said, was the increasing homogenisation of theatre forms today. On one side, theatre in pre-colonial and colonial India was characterised by the co-existence of a diversity of forms that had no hierarchy among them; they were all unique but not inferior or superior to one another. On the other side, the distinct variety of modern Indian theatre co-evolved with the Indian freedom struggle, and was therefore, imbued with a sense of national pride and driven by a desire to assert one's cultural identity. Certain developments over the last few decades, however, were threatening to erode the foundations of the above two edifices. First, attempts are being made at the international level to privilege metropolitan theatre over other forms, forcing the latter to try and fit themselves into a standardised format. Second, state agencies and corporate powers have taken to projecting only some theatre forms on both domestic and world stages, thereby turning theatre from being an interactive, interrogative activity into pleasurable spectacle, a commodity of consumption. Such severing of the ties that theatre forms had with their local context, language, and community in order to make them products of global saleability now puts the very soul of the art form in peril. The attempt to convert theatre into a form of business investment, a capitalist enterprise that began in 18th century England now find a continuation in the migration in hordes of the graduates of India's most prestigious state institution, the National School of Drama, to Bollywood and television. Hastening this sad decline is the shocking attitude towards culture shown by the Indian state, as found in the much-trumpeted report of its National Knowledge Commission. The Commission, entrusted with the responsibility of identifying various forms of knowledge and suggesting ways and means of preserving and strengthening them, leave alone consider culture as a possible form and source of knowledge, does not even give it a separate entry. Instead, it lists it under the section title 'tourism', and goes on to discuss it as 'creative industry', a manufacturer of entertainment products that could be commercially exploited. The only way out of this depressing context, Bandopadhyaya passionately argued, was for committed young theatre workers to return to their communitarian sources, their local bases, much as most acknowledged masters of modern Indian theatre had done when faced with similar crises. The political neutralisation of theatre effected by state and corporate powers could best be reversed through cultural means, he concluded.

In his lecture titled 'Today's Youth: Possibilities and Potentialities', Shiv Visvanathan, social scientist and activist, argued that virtually every knowledge discipline today had utterly failed to understand 'youth' both as a concept and a form of spirit and offered pointers as to how 'youth' could be used to extend the frontiers of human experience and experimentation. 'Youth', Visvanathan lamented, had been hijacked by a set of forces, which were backed either by corporate powers or by fundamentalist outfits, and reduced to being merely a hyphen, a prefix or a suffix. In total disregard for its right to an

autonomous existence, 'youth' was increasingly being used as a substitute for or counter to 'age', as a category of consumers, or a source of terror. The 'poverty of times', which is one of the direst forms of poverty of our times (in that it gives us no option but to live with only one, standardised idea of time) was forcing 'youth' to live in a reductionist world that celebrates the ideas of linearity of time, indisputable progress, innovation but denies, even denigrates, a sense of ethics, sense of history, sense of civilisation, and ethics of memory. It was this impoverishment of the imagination that lay, directly or indirectly, behind the tragedies of our times like the Gujarat pogrom or the unbridled consumerism. Such appropriation of 'youth', Visvanathan argued, could be reversed only by giving 'youth' a new hermeneutics, a new set of meanings that go beyond the dictionary meanings and a space where irony and ambiguity are relished and inventiveness and playfulness revered. Further, the fact that 'youth' and 'youthfulness', far from being the preserve of the physically young, manifested themselves even in the aged, often more potently than in the former, should compel us to redefine the very concept of 'youth'. Since 'youth' was not just a stage in life but an incorporation of a variety of aspects like body, time, and language, 'youth' should be encouraged to write its own 'constitution' – a document that would map out its anxieties as well as aspirations, its material preferences as well as ethical concerns, in its own idiom and on its own terms. This process, involving as it would, not only one's imagination but one's imaginary, too, Visvanathan concluded, would teach us all the value of 'multi-verse', a space where life, livelihood, lifecycle, lifeworld, lifestyle, and life-vision would all become interconnected.

UR Ananthamurthy, director of the Conference right from its beginning, typified, at the age of 78, youthful vitality in a manner that no teenager could hope to match, both through his two lectures and his interventions at other sessions. While his interventions forced the speakers and the audience to dig deeper into their resources, his lectures set standards that no intellectual-ethical enquiry could ignore. His lecture on *Koopamandooka*, a celebrated poem by Gopalakrishna Adiga, a great modernist Kannada poet was a master class in both practical criticism and culture studies. Adiga, Ananthamurthy recalled, was facing a deep crisis of creativity when he came to write the poem, which even as it represented utter powerlessness and bitter self-criticism also dug a way towards self-diagnosis and self-regeneration. It was this capacity for self-rejuvenation even in the most frustrating circumstances that made writers like Adiga relevant to youth of all ages, said Ananthamurthy. In his valedictory address, referring to the several crises afflicting our times, Ananthamurthy observed that these were not just social, economic, and political crises but civilisational, cultural and ethical crises. With utilitarianism taking hold of India now, every sphere of life was being desacralised. Corruption and criminalisation were leading to a progressive depoliticisation of politics; consumerism was forcing an irreversible degradation of the environment; the unchecked rise of corporate power was threatening to devalue both agriculture and culture; and the commercialisation of religion was turning us into vacuous spirits. With the state itself playing agent to global financial forces, the very fabric of democracy and autonomy were in peril. The demons of fundamentalism, communalism, and terrorism were denying even the most basic dignity of life to the common people. Still, not all hope was lost, Ananthamurthy observed, because certain civil society initiatives were raising hopes of

renewing our old battles with anti-democratic, anti-life forces. The youth, he said, had to shoulder a major responsibility in this fight, and also in reinventing and reshaping our common future. Youthful zest and idealism had shown just such a capacity for social transformation in many instances in the last century, but they had also degenerated after a period of promise. Yet, despite all its roughness and blundering, youth had the kind of immense dynamism that was beyond the wise, but mostly static age. Today's youth, Ananthamurthy concluded, had to season its raw energy and spontaneous action with an understanding of the shortcomings of those failed revolutions, so that it could better contribute to the cyclical evolution of the human, and a humane, civilisation.

LECTURE-DEMONSTRATIONS

There was one lec-dem session at the Conference this year. TM Krishna from Chennai, who gave an outstanding Carnatic vocal recital at the cultural festival, interacted with the participants the following morning in what turned out to be an equally remarkable session. Sharing some most interesting anecdotes and personal experiences with regard to music and musicians, Krishna offered brilliant insights into the way generations of youth can, and have negotiated with the tradition of classical music and the manner in which an old performing art keeps revivifying itself through the infusion of young blood.

OTHER THEME-SPECIFIC SESSIONS

Beside the lecture-and-discussions on the theme of the Conference, there were three other sessions focusing on the same theme but in a different way. They were panel sessions where young writers, all under forty years of age, read some of their creations or parts of them and responded to questions and observations from the participants and resource persons. These were

- Ja. Naa. Tejashree, Arif Raja, 'Phoenix' Ravi, all Kannada poets
- Ram Ganesh Kamatham, Indian English playwright and Asaram Lomte, Marathi short story writer
- Raghunatha Cha. Ha., Kannada writer and journalist and Anindita Sengupta, Bengali writer

All the three sessions were moderated by Vivek Shanbhag, a well-known Kannada writer and editor of 'Deshakaala', a Kannada literary quarterly

(Even a majority of the performers/directors/filmmakers featured at the Conference were consciously chosen on the basis of their being under forty. For instance, Manjunatha Badiger and Jehan Maneckshaw, who directed, respectively, 'Shoodratapaswi' and 'Othello', two of the three plays put up by Tirugata, the Ninasam theatre repertory, were both sub-forty. So were T M Krishna, Carnatic vocalist and Nagabhooshan Hegde, Hindustani singer, who performed at the festival. Abhaya Simha, director of the award-winning Kannada feature film 'Gubbachchigalu', belonged to the same age-category while the short documentary films that Gowtham Sonti and Sanjay Mattu, both filmmakers and film teachers screened and discussed at the Conference were all made by artists/activists below forty.)

THEATRE SESSIONS

In addition to the plays performed at the evening-time cultural festival, three other plays were presented during the day-schedule of the Conference. These were

- 1) *Oorukeri*, a production based on the autobiography of Dr. Siddalingayya, one of the most acclaimed Dalit writers in Kannada and performed by Janamanadaata, a theatre group based in Heggodu;
- 2) *Copenhagen*, a play by Michael Freyn and performed by CFD, Bangalore; and
- 3) *Kira Kolambu*, enacted by PERCH, Chennai.

FILM SESSIONS

The film segment had two components. The first one consisted of a screening and discussion of a Kannada feature film, *Gubbachchigalu* (Sparrows), a best children's film national award winning work by Sri Abhaya Simha, a young director. The second component focused on non-fiction films made by very young, upcoming Indian artists/activists. Filmmakers and film teachers Dr. Sanjay Mattoo and Sri Gowtam Sonti, who handled this session, presented four short films made by amateurs as well as professionals. These works dealt with some of the basic issues of today's youth, like student body elections; violence that cynical, entrenched politicians unleash against student leaders who are growing into public fighters; the sense of liberation that even an ordinary trekking trip can bring to a group of young middle- and lower-middle class girls, so far confined to their homes, domestic chores, and tradition-imposed personality modes; the immense suffering and hesitation that a boy experiences when he decides to reveal to his mother that he has homosexual preferences and the initial shock and anguish and the later reconciliation and acceptance of a new reality on the part of the mother. The films about students-and-politics, in particular, generated an engrossing debate about issue. While there was divided opinion amongst the participants, who, to repeat yet again, came from different age-groups, over such questions as whether students should restrict themselves to academics or engage actively in politics or try to evolve an alternative mode of cultural politics, over such apparently negative developments as the criminalisation of politics, the exploitation of students for selfish ends by politicians, the creeping in of corruption even in high academic institutions, the whole debate was given another, larger perspective by resource persons Sanjay Mattoo and Shamik Bandopadhyaya, who located not only the films shown at the Conference but also the entire genre of independent and documentary films on sensitive issues in the wider socio-political context.

PHOTO EXHIBITION

There was also, as with last year, a photo exhibition, titled 'Young Photographers' held on the sidelines of the Conference.

INTERACTIVE SESSIONS

(1) **EARLY MORNING SESSIONS:** The early morning sessions, added to the regular schedule of the Conference last year, where participants got to spend the time more creatively than merely taking a constitutional or enjoying the rural scenery or stretching their limbs upon cold, drizzly mornings were continued with this year too. Here the delegates had a chance to sharpen their skills in three different fields of activity according

to their passion—theatre, dance, and photography. Experts KS Rajaram and AN Mukunda (photography), Channakeshava (theatre), and Charan (dance and movement) volunteered their services at these sessions whose informality itself proved to be their great strength. As has been the case with most of the sessions at all our Culture Conferences, these sessions, too, lasted longer than the stipulated period, spilling over into the breakfast time, lunch and tea breaks, and leisure hours. Also, each of the three groups put up a performance/exhibition showcasing what it had imbibed over the week.

(2) DISCUSSION OF PLAYS: As every year, the Conference had specific time-slots where the plays put up at the evening cultural festival were discussed in an open-house session the following morning. As always, these sessions were some of the liveliest and enriching ones, mainly because of the completely manner in which they were conducted. Participants – forming one of the most heterogeneous groups to be found anywhere at such courses – were invited to share their responses to the plays, to pose questions or seek clarifications about them in a free manner; knowledgeable moderators controlled the proceedings with as much good humour as discrimination; resource persons and special invitees contributed with their own observations and questions at nodal points of the discussion. All this made for an invigorating blend of spontaneity and variety, innocence and experience, youthful zest and mellowed wisdom.

(3) FEEDBACK SESSION

In keeping with the regular practice, on the last day of the Conference an entire session was made available to the participants to share with the organisers, resource persons, guests, and observers their views on the Conference and their suggestions towards improving its quality. Some of the most important and most commonly articulated observations of the participants this year are as follows:

- Most delegates felt that the Conference had stimulated new interests, made them aware of complexities of thought and diversity of expression that they had never known before; that it had broadened their intellectual and aesthetic horizons considerably
- Most appreciated the rare commitment and easy accessibility of the community of resource persons, all renowned artists and thinkers; they also had special praise for the format of the entire programme which created a perfectly natural environment where the experts and the humble could live, eat, walk, and talk together, all as an extended family, for about a week. Some of the delegates intended to develop these newly formed bonds beyond the Conference. Indeed, such a thing has happened quite often in the past, much to the fulfilment of Ninasam
- Some of the participants termed the Culture Conference a very significant model of non-formal education and wished that all general education institutions were run along similar lines
- Many said they would make attending the Conference a regular feature on their annual calendar
- Some felt there was a disproportionately high use of English at the Conference, but this was quickly countered by some of the other participants who pointed out that English was only used by the non-Kannada resource persons – who never matched the Kannada resource persons in numbers – and even there Kannada translations

were provided live, that questions asked in Kannada were immediately translated into English and the answers rendered into Kannada for the benefit of both the speakers and the audience. The use of English at activities of the present kind, the latter group argued, should be looked at more from the angle of knowledge dissemination rather than that of linguistic identity assertion.

- This particular point about the medium of communication prompted two of our resource persons, Manu Chakravarthy and Shamik Bandopadhyaya, both renowned teachers of English, to further elaborate on it while responding to the views of the participants at the feedback session. Chakravarthy, who teaches in Bangalore, drew the attention of the group to the fact that such questions concerning the medium of communication, especially in the case of English in the Indian context, stemmed from deeper historical reasons than were apparent. For a long time, English in countries like India had, naturally, been regarded with a deep ambivalence, but this ambivalence had also resulted in a highly creative and critical engagement with that foreign tongue as well as our own native tongues. The English that was a part of our social and educational systems so far was a comprehensive one that encompassed many varieties and registers. Over the past decade or so, however, one particular, extremely limited variety of English, the ‘spoken’ or ‘functional’ English, was being almost fanatically promoted over the more comprehensive form. Such merely instrumental use of English was leading to a tragic disconnect between language on one side and consciousness, ethics, culture, and history on the other side. And this disconnect lay at the basis of the uncritical fascination for English on the one hand and a resistance – both in hard and soft variants – to it on the other hand in our society today. We needed, Chakravarthy argued, to move beyond such limited responses if we were to make sense of our times.
- Developing the point along a different direction, Bandopadhyaya, who has taught not only in Bengal but in many parts of India, pointed out that communication went beyond mere verbal language, encompassing as it did the whole gamut of human powers of reception. There being no common language available to us in India today other than English, any excessive insistence upon the exclusive use of the local language, he observed, would debar non-Kannadigas like him from entering the Kannada world and likewise, people of one Indian linguistic community from entering the world of other linguistic communities. Recounting his own experience of attending the Ninasam Culture Conference for about fifteen years without any knowledge of the Kannada language, he described how he had learnt to follow and appreciate the proceedings and programmes in Kannada not only through summary-translations provided to him but also, in fact, more through soaking in the entire ambience. The richly polysensory, integrated experience of reading, listening, watching plays, recitals, films, and discussing them more than compensated his lack of knowledge of Kannada, he said, adding that thanks to the Ninasam experience, he could today claim to be as much a Kannadiga as any of the native Kannadigas.
- Also, in keeping with Ninasam’s regular practice at the feedback session, broad details of the income and expenditure figures of the Conference were presented to the entire group consisting of the participants, resource persons, guests, mediapersons, and Ninasam volunteers.

OTHER MEANS OF GETTING FEEDBACK:

Apart from the feedback session on the last day of the Conference, every year Ninasam makes it a point to collect feedback from participants, resource persons, visiting artists, patrons, and Ninasam workers concerning all aspects of the Conference and it does this through informal as well as formal means. The same mode was followed this year, too. While at the informal level Ninasam workers solicited the views of the participants and the resource persons at every stage of the Conference, they were also requested to communicate their views in more detail upon returning home, through mail or e-mail. Many obliged us and some participants, in fact, published little articles about their Conference experience in both state-level and local newspapers and magazines.

CULTURAL FESTIVAL

The programmes presented as part of the cultural festival held in the evenings of the Conference were as follows:

1. *Shoodratapasvi*, a Ninasam Tirugata theatre production of the play by Kuvempu, one of the foremost writers and thinkers of modern Kannada; directed by Manjunatha Badiger, an alumnus of the Ninasam Theatre Institute,
2. *Othello*, a Ninasam Tirugata production of William Shakespeare's play, directed by Jehan Maneckshaw, Mumbai,
3. *Agalida Alake*, a theatre production based on a composite form of selected portions from several Kalidasa plays, performed by the Ninasam amateurs troupe, scripted and directed by BR Venkataramana Aithala, an alumnus of the Ninasam Theatre Institute and presently a teacher there,
4. *Miss Meena*, a production by PERCH, Chennai, based on Durenmat's *The Visit*, directed by Rajiv Krishnan,
5. Carnatic vocal recital, by Vidwan TM Krishna, Chennai,
6. Hindustani vocal recital, by Pandit Nagabhooshana Hegde, Sagara,
7. Kuchipudi dance, by Smt. Vyjayanthi Kashi and troupe, Bangalore,

A statistical overview of the people involved in the Conference:

- Total number of Participants: 171
- Male 103; female 68
- Students 121; Teachers 16; Professionals 24; Others 10
- Resource Persons: 30 (male 25; female 5)
- Performing Artists: 41 (male 29; female 12)

RESOURCE PERSONS AND SPECIAL INVITEES

1. UR Ananthamurthy, (Director), eminent writer and thinker,
2. Rajani Bakshi, writer and social activist,
3. Shiv Visvanathan, social scientist and activist,
4. Gopal Guru, social scientist,
5. Shamik Bandopadhyaya, culture critic,
6. Manu Chakravarthy, culture critic and teacher,
7. Sundar Sarukkai, philosopher of science and social sciences,
8. Sharat Ananthamurthy, scientist,
9. Shrikanth Shastry, scientist,

10. Vaishali KS, teacher and classical singer,
11. Atul Tiwari, theatre and film person and social activist,
12. OL Nagabhushana Swamy, literary scholar,
13. HS Venkateshamurthy, poet and teacher,
14. Vivek Shanbhag, writer and editor of a literary journal, and software engineer,
15. Deepa Ganesh, journalist and classical musician,
16. Rajaram KS, photographer and engineer,
17. Mukunda AN, photographer and engineer,
18. TM Krishna, classical musician,
19. Gowtam Sonti, filmmaker and teacher,
20. Sanjay Mattoo, filmmaker and teacher,
21. Channakeshava, theatre worker and visual artist,
22. Charan, theatre worker and dancer,
23. Arif Raja, poet,
24. Tejashree JN, poet,
25. 'Phoenix' Ravi, poet,
26. Ramganesha Kamatham, theatre worker and playwright,
27. Asaram Lomte, writer,
28. Raghunath CH, writer,
29. Anindita Sengupta, writer,
30. Prakash Belawadi, theatre and film person, and journalist,