

NINASAM CULTURE COURSE 2005 FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

1. OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT

The Culture Course is one of Ninasam's major attempts at evolving and sustaining a forum of interaction between the best minds of contemporary India and culture enthusiasts of Karnataka. Held at Heggodu over seven days every October, the Course is designed as a multi-form activity. One half of the Course is structured round a specific theme every year, and the other half focuses on helping the participants gain a more nuanced awareness of art production and art appreciation. The day sessions are marked for special lectures, discussions and lec-dems on the chosen theme, and the evening sessions make up a general cultural festival consisting of such diverse activities as theatre productions, music and dance recitals, and poetry readings.

The theme this year was 'Violence: Left and Right'. The choice was made virtually imperative by two factors, which were more than interrelated. First, at a macro-level, violence seems to have acquired a highly, and frighteningly disproportionate presence in most areas of our contemporary world, especially through a variety of its modern forms. Secondly, and more importantly, at the micro-level, it has recently begun to vitiate Ninasam's own surroundings, turning a distant entity into an immediate and unignorable reality. While communalism has been gradually gaining power in Ninasam's spatial and temporal location over the past decade or so, naxalism recently made a dramatic debut in the same area. Archrivals at one level, at another, however, they have together appropriated the general socio-political debate in the region, forcing upon local communities an inflexible choice of an 'either-or' kind. Differentiated as 'Right' and 'Left' in terms of everyday politics, they have, however, so much monopolised our life-and thought-worlds that the space at, and of the 'Centre' is now no longer only marginalized, but actually shrinking. Consequently, violence today confronts us not only from two flanks but surrounds us on all sides, a fact that the theme, phrased more idiomatically than literally, readily acknowledges. Such reduction of our life-choices, and such impoverishment of the political imagination, Ninasam felt, had urgently to be responded to, and countered. Hence, the theme for this Course.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Course were broadly the same as those of the previous editions: to open-mindedly explore and more sensitively understand our local and global realities through a sharper focus on a particular aspect of theirs; to bring together for a reasonably long period of time certain eminent thinkers, artists, writers and activists of our times and a widely representative group of committed social and cultural workers as well as lay-people of our state, so that the sustained interaction between the two would help the community in general in developing a more meaningful and enriching blend of theory and practice; and, to achieve all this not through a dry, academic mode but through a festival of ideas and of cultural performances.

3. EXECUTION

(A) PUBLICITY

Publicity was done through announcements in the culture pages of all the major dailies and weeklies in the local language of Kannada as well as our little house journal, as also through information sent through the large network of all our past participants, patrons and friends.

(B) SELECTION

Since Ninasam firmly believes that everyone has a unique innate capacity to appreciate and learn the best elements of culture, it does not make a selection as such. Thus, open to anyone with genuine interests, with no discrimination made on the basis of age, background or academic qualification, the Course attracted a wide variety of participants from almost every walk of life, the heterogeneity of the group probably unmatched by any other programme anywhere in India. Moreover, experience has shown us that this is by far the better way of taking in participants, especially at an activity such as this one.

(C) PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

Participants came from all walks and stages of life, and from all parts of Karnataka state. They ranged from university academics to young students, from writers, social activists, and journalists to clerks and housewives, from doctors, engineers, and lawyers to mechanics, shopkeepers and farmers. Many of these had taken part in one or the other of the several outreach activities that Ninasam has been conducting in different places for the past couple of decades, and also in the previous editions of the Culture Course. In fact, many have been coming back to the Course year after year.

PARTICIPANTS THIS YEAR:

Total number of participants: 154

Male: 104, Female: 50

Districts represented: 19 (out of a total of 27 in the state), Regions represented: All,

Age-groupwise breakup: -20: 42, 21-30: 71, 31-40: 23, 41-50: 9, 50+: 9,

Profession-wise breakup: Students:78, Teachers: 23, Professionals and Service: 18, Media: 7, Housewives: 4, Agriculturists: 7, Others: 17

(D) RESOURCE PERSONS

Resource Persons for the Course are drawn from a large pool of persons of national and international eminence-writers, thinkers, activists, and artists-a pool of friends and guides that Ninasam has built up over decades. These come not only from Ninasam's native state of Karnataka but also other states of India, and sometimes other countries of the world.

4. EVENTS/ EVENING PROGRAMMES/RESOURCE PERSONS

DAY SESSIONS (9.30am-1pm, 2.30pm-6pm)

Oct:	Pre-lunch	1	Welcome, Introduction	9th
			2	Keynote, Responses & Discussion On the theme of the Course: Violence Chiranjeevi Singh, UR Anantha Murthy, Shiv Vishwanathan
	Post-lunch	1	Panel Discussion Acts of Violence in Today's Karnataka Rajashekhar G., Giraddi Govindaraj	
			2	Panel Discussion Violence and Social Equity J.S. Sadanand
	Evening		Performance by Ninasam Tirugata	

Pataragitti Pakka
based on Fedarico Garcia Lorca's Shoemaker's
Prodigious Wife, and poems by D.R. Bendre
Directed by Akshara K.V.

Oct:	Pre-lunch	1	Discussion/ Feedback on the performance seen on 9th Oct. evening - Pataragitti Pakka	10th
		2	Presentation: Science and Violence Sundar Sarukkai	
	Post-lunch	1	Panel Discussion: Science and Violence Srikanth Sastry, Sharath Anantha Murthy, Shiv Vishwanathan	
		2	Presentation: Violence of Mnemonics Venkat Rao	
	Evening		Performance by Ninasam Tirugata Romeo-Juliet Translation of Shakespeare by K.V. Tirumalesh Directed by Atul Tiwari	

Oct:	Pre-lunch	1	Discussion/ Feedback on the performance seen on 10th Oct. evening - Romeo-Juliet	11th
		2	Presentation: Structures of Violence - 1 Shiv Vishwanathan	
	Post-lunch	1	Presentation of a Play by Ninasam: Shraddha Mattu Hanathe	
		2	Violence as depicted in Jaina Literature: Ki. Ram. Nagaraj	
	Evening		Performance by Ninasam Talakadugonda Kannada play by Sametanahalli Ramaraya Directed by B.R. Venkataramana Aithala	

Oct:	Pre-lunch	1	Discussion/ Feedback on the performance seen on 11th Oct. evening - Talakadugonda	12th
		2	Presentation: Memory, Violence and Partition Shiv Vishwanathan	
	Post-lunch	1	Gandhi's response to Violence A lecture with exerpts from screenings By Mark Lindley	
		2	Anand Patwardhan: Introduction to Documentaries	

			Evening	Hindustani Music Recital By Pt. Rajashekhara Mansoor	
-----					13th
Oct:	Pre-lunch	1		A Dialogue with Rajashekhara Mansoor conducted by Manu Chakravarthy	
				2 Anand Patwardhan: Documentary: 'Father Son and the Holy War'	
	Post-lunch	1		Anand Patwardhan: Documentary: 'Narmada Diary'	
				2 Panel Discussion: Violence & Women Vaidehi, Savitha Nagabhushana and M.S. Ashadevi	
			Evening	Anand Patwardhan: Documentary: 'War and Peace'	
-----					14th
Oct:	Pre-lunch	1		Discussion on the Documentary: 'War and Peace'	
				2 Presentation: Samik Bandopadhyay: Responses to Violence: Lear and Ran	
	Post-lunch	1		Violence and the Nation Viju Poonachaa	
				2 Cases of Violence Phaniraj	
			Evening	Performance by Working Title, Mumbai Mahadevbhai 1898-1942 One man performance by Jaimini Pathak Directed by Ramu Ramanathan	
-----					15th
Oct:	Pre-lunch	1		Discussion on the Documentary: 'Narmada Diary' and other films	
				2 Responding to Violence with theatre By Raghunandan S.	
	Post-lunch	1		Violence, Repression and the Nation Sadananda Menon	
				2 Concluding Remarks: Dr. U.R. Anantha Murty Other faculty members and Participants	
			Evening	Performance by Chandralekha's troupe, Chennai Sharira Directed by Chandralekha	

PART C: PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES

14. *A SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES AT THE COURSE*

The Course was structured in much the same way as every past year's. The day sessions devoted to lectures, discussions, and demonstrations were divided into two broad parts. Some sessions were exclusively on the theme of the Course, and the others were used for art appreciation. These two parts were judiciously intermixed everyday so as to avoid monotony. Each day had four sessions of 90 minutes each, with breaks for lunch and tea in between. Further, each session consisted of theoretical inputs in the form of lectures by resource persons in the first 45 minutes, followed by another 45 minutes of questions-and-answers, interventions by other resource persons, and finally a summing up by the Director of the Course. This component was complemented by a cultural festival in the evenings, a programme open to the general public, and consisting of a variety of events, such as four theatre productions, a Hindustani classical vocal recital, a film show, and an experimental dance recital. In the case of the theatre productions, each play was followed by an open house discussion the first session the next morning, and the vocal recital was supplemented with a demonstration the succeeding day.

Inaugurating the Course, Chiranjeevi Singh, retired IAS Officer and formerly Chief Secretary, Govt. of Karnataka, dwelt at length on the several forms of violence that have come to haunt us in the recent decades. Drawing upon his immense experience in the regard, both as an administrator and an individual, he voiced his anguish and concern at the unprecedented spread of violence in our times. Himself a person affected by two of the bloodiest chapters in modern Indian history-the Partition Riots of 1947-48 and the Delhi anti-Sikh Riots of 1984, he pointed out how the nature of violence had been changing for the worse in the past half century. From specific, identifiable sources violence, he remarked, had now moved to free-floating and abstract sources, and was exploiting them with terrifying results. Such alterations meant that the old modes of understanding and negotiating the problem were no longer valid or capable. But then, even the new modes that have been developed appeared to be hopelessly inadequate, chiefly because modern violence seems to be myriad in its manifestations, and bewildering in its complexity. For instance, attempts have been made recently at classifying violence along such lines as violence perpetrated by crooks and states, political violence, state-sponsored violence, structural violence (where different structures like political, social, economic ones themselves cause violence), ecological violence, liberative violence and so on, but no list has been exhaustive. Besides, though such divisions might hold good at a theoretical level, at the experiential level, however, it is impossible to draw unambiguous, demarcating lines between them, and the problem is compounded by the fact that each variety seems to contain within itself diverse sub-varieties.

A major challenge in this regard, as Singh put it, is the difficulty in identifying the true source of violence in our times. Was it 'frustration of expectations', or, he wondered, the 'romanticisation of violence' that was at the root of the problem. In older models, for example, persons directly affected by injustice, real or perceived, of one kind or another, used to resort to violence, whereas the present trends show that the non-affected have been doing so, on behalf of the former. This is amply evidenced by the developments in areas like Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, where naxalism has reared its head, paradoxically, not in pockets where destitution reigns but where there is relative prosperity. Further, one kind of violence has only bred other kinds, as in the specific case of naxalism and communalism, of Red Tigers and the Ranvir Sena, and the result has been a general violation of civilisational and societal ideals, and of ethical and

human norms. Retaliatory violence seems to have achieved nothing more than being replicatory violence, with religious fundamentalism and political extremism, to cite just two types, coming increasingly to look like mirror images. Singh concluded by referring to, what to him was, a better option in countering violence: increased decentralization of politico-economic power, which was more revolutionary, more progressive than any violent mode.

In the main lectures that followed, various scholars discussed other aspects of the theme.

Dr. Sundar Sarukkai, Professor, Dept. of Philosophy of Science, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, in his lecture 'Science and Violence' examined the questions concerning the relationship between the two phenomena. Beginning with an overview of the general debate so far concerning the source and location of violence (as to whether it exists in the makeup of the world itself, or in human beings, in political and societal structures or in science and technology) Dr. Sarukkai moved on to the paradoxes that confront us once we begin to define violence as either natural or unnatural, as human or inhuman. The very act of defining nature, naturalness, human nature, humanness and so on, is fraught with great pitfalls, he remarked, just as is the attempt to distinguish between acts of violence as being based on good intention or a bad one, as being necessary or unnecessary. In the case of modern science the task is made doubly difficult because we not only need to consider science as a creation of human beings but also the way in which science itself perceives and constructs the human personality. Modern science (along with technology), as many philosophers have already noted, in its driving ambition to vault over limits set by nature, serves precisely those desires of human beings that refuse to accept their mortal imperfections. In sharp contrast, traditional science forms, even while helping men extend their nature-given capacities, also made them deeply aware of the difference between transcendence and transgression, thus lending a metaphysical touch to material life. The violence of modern science springs from its unreflecting willingness to violate the finiteness of human life. This, in turn, raises other problematic questions such as whether our limitedness is natural to us; whether our drive to overcome our natural limitations is equally natural, and if so, whether the resulting violence is also natural; whether science is nothing but a natural progression of human thought, and if it is, whether the violence of science is nothing more than violence natural to human beings. And, finally, the more fundamental question as to whether it is possible for science to shed its hubris, reconcile itself to finite capacities, and thereby assume a non-violent form.

Dr. Shiv Visvanathan, sociologist, presently teaching at the Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology, Ahmedabad, in the course of the first of his two lectures titled 'Structures of Violence', argued that leave alone solving it, even comprehending and interpreting violence had become deeply problematic in the modern world. This, he said, was because of a certain paradox inherent in the way in which we have tried to make sense of violence in our times. For instance, even the strongest critiques of violence that our epoch has to offer -- works of figures like Kafka, Koestler, Solzhenitsyn, Arendt and Foucault, works that are exclusively meditations on violence -- genuinely critical of violence as they are, in representing it, though, they seem to do nothing more than mimic its own mode. Secondly, though literary texts, they depict violence in predominantly visual terms, as if reposing more faith in the pictorial rather than the verbal or written language. Such ambivalence seems to be the result of a particular development that took place during the transition between the medieval and the modern periods in European history, a shift in the mode of human perception that first shows up in the visual arts, but soon comes to manifest itself in other fields of human activity, too, with far-reaching consequences. This shift in visual perspective--from a non-linear one to the linear

one -- enlarged itself into a general shift in political and intellectual paradigms as well, by opening up a distance between the observer and the observed, and a divide between the eye and the body. Now onwards, the observer became exclusively the 'eye', and still further, the controlling eye, in the fashion of Bentham's idea of the 'panopticon'. The observed, in the meanwhile, continued to retain its identity as body, but in a fundamentally altered state, since the 'I' of the 'eye' then progressively reduced the status of the 'body' to an 'object', perverting, in the process, the 'self-other' relationship. This 'I' now placed, in visual arts terminology, the 'other' behind a window, against a grid, upon a graph, geometricising it, fragmenting it, and homogenizing it, so that its material reality could be moulded to match the preferred reality of the 'I'. This 'experiment', first performed on 'bodies' in aesthetic terms, was later forced upon communities and countries, too, but now in explicit, political terms that violated their autonomies. Such violation, which is nothing if not violence, now converted every act as well as object of violence into a visual, a spectacle. And the irony of 20th century has been that even its most committed and insightful studies of violence have not been able to free themselves from this visual paradigm of violence itself, a feature that makes the period, generally held as the most radical one in terms of dissent and resistance also, for the most part, spectacle-bound, and hence, arguably, voyeuristic. One reflection of this continuing violation of the body, Dr. Visvanathan, argued, is to be seen in the various ways in which modern science (itself a child of modernity) conceptualises the body, and then extends its forms. First it defines the body in counterpoint to the corpse, then as essentially a mechanical apparatus with certain biological signs, eventually it morphs the body into the robot, and the astronaut -- part man, part machine, and linked to the mother spaceship through a control-cable that visually echoes the umbilical cord.

'Memory, Violence, and Partition' was the theme of Dr. Visvanathan's second lecture, in which he outlined the different ways in which diverse forms of memory, dominant at different times, in different cultures and communities, handled the problem of violence. Since memory cannot survive without constructing narratives, the nature of narrative reveals the nature of memory, too, and in this respect, he observed, the contrasts between the Jewish Holocaust and the Indian Partition riots are truly remarkable. The narratives of the Holocaust display a centrality of the witnesses, and there is eagerness in the sufferers to build up a collective archive of the violence and commemorate its victims in its immediate wake. The Partition narratives, however, show no such characteristics, chiefly because the witnesses, victims, and survivors appear to have had a different attitude towards memory. In the utter absence of collective or statist memory and narrative, individuals were left to themselves to construct, evaluate, and perpetuate their memories. Saddled with this burden and the awareness, albeit an unconscious one, of the finiteness of individual consciousness, such personal constructions then became more self-explorations than accusations against others, where the survivors were affected with moral dilemma as to whether what they had actually done in the context of the violence was right or wrong, whether, if faced with the same situation again, they would make a completely different choice. More poignantly, many survivors remained silent about their trauma for as long as five decades, evidently because they were torn by guilt, regret, or ambivalence about their experience. In cases where they did share it, they did so by adding to the bitter memories 'sweet' memories, in which they fondly remembered the old, unpoisoned, undivided days; by acknowledging the reciprocity of the violence, and with no desire to demonise the others. Now, however, following a new surge of interest shown by social scientists in collating these chronicles, Dr. Visvanathan noted, their original nature has been undergoing a fundamental change, mainly due to the influence of the third generation members of these affected families,

who, never themselves direct victims, are introducing elements of voyeurism, ultra-nationalism and communalism into the narratives, are replacing their forebears' torn conscience and ethical questions with their own historical certitudes and untextured answers, for obvious political reasons.

Dr. Venkat Rao, University of Hyderabad, in his lecture 'Culture, Memory and Violence' drew freely from politics, poetics, linguistics, and philosophy in attempting to unravel the varied nature of violence, and the possible solutions to it. Speaking in a largely autobiographical vein, he recounted his experience of life in Andhra Pradesh, first as a boy coming of age in an ambience where mother's lullabies and Naxal revolutionary songs regularly intermingled, and then as a teacher of English confronting the consequences of the cultural politics that the colonial system had played on the traditions of his native land. One aspect of this politics was that colonialism, devaluing the largely memory-based, oral cultures of India, set up its own script-based, archival culture as an absolute standard, thereby effecting a serious disruption in the composition and continuity of the local modes of feeling, intellect and expression. Fortunately, this violence, at once epistemic, political, and cultural, has been countered by attempts by certain groups to reclaim and reinstate the subjugated forms of memory and transmission. And although one might not wholly endorse the overt political content of such counter-movements as Naxalism, one has to admit to the validity of their cultural effort, Dr. Venkat Rao, observed, as they seek to restore mnemonic forms of collective expression by retaining and revitalizing their links with marginalized oral traditions.

The centrality of Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts to the discussion was brought home with great force by Mark Lindley, a Gandhian scholar from the USA. Gandhi, Lindley noted, was not only an early but also the most comprehensive critic of the violence wrought by modernity through its arms of science and technology, progress and development. The modern civilisation, which favours an anthropocentric view of the world, has led to an unprecedented depletion of the natural systems, and deprivation of countless millions of human beings in just the last two centuries, and is now threatening to strip bare the entire earth. Concepts such as 'ecological audit' and 'ecological footprint' have now been brought into vogue to evaluate and resist the rapacity of the project of modernity, of course, but it was Gandhi, Lindley conclusively demonstrated, who first introduced them in seed form decades ago, and it was Gandhi's staunch disciple, the economist J.C. Kumarappa who lent them concrete form through his theory of 'Economics of Permanence'. If the world is to survive, and sustain itself in the days to come, it can only be through adapting the Gandhian vision of life in its essence, Lindley concluded.

Variety of discourse was provided by way of an audio-visual component, consisting of three full-length documentary films made by Anand Patwardhan, a pioneering artist-activist who has recorded in great detail some of the most significant issues and people's movements of our times, sometimes at great peril to his life, and always confronted by cynically dismissive social and governmental establishments. Present in person, Patwardhan interacted freely with the participants, providing valuable insights into the violence built into the construction of statist, nationalist narratives that had no thought or pang of conscience to spare for the millions of mortals whom they readily sacrificed at the altar of national development and security. His 'Father, Son, and Holy War' traced the trajectory of hyper-masculinity in modern India, from the Sati incident of Deorala through the rise of jingoist parties to the rising frequency of communal riots. 'War and Peace' portrayed how the race over the A-Bomb and the N-Bomb between India and Pakistan was conducted over an ethically and politically barren terrain, with people on each side seduced by rulers and technocrats into believing in the pride of their status as a nuclear

superpower, while at the same time their everyday life conditions were allowed to go to rot. Composed over ten years, 'Narmada Diary' was an elegy, as well as homage, to the fight, doomed yet undespairing, of the rural communities, gathered around Medha Patkar, to resist, without recourse to violence, their uprooting by the ruthless engine of modern development.

Patwardhan's oeuvre, and genre, served, also, as a point of entry for Shamik Bandopadhyaya who discussed, in rich detail, the history of documentary films in independent India, a history with its own episodes and epistemes of violence. Kolkata-based Bandopadhyaya, an authority on literature, theatre, film, and cultural politics, outlined the manner in which modern nation-states, for all their declared commitment to democratic ideals, have actually been attempting to manipulate forms and content of expression, through institutions of propaganda, censorship, coercion and cooption. With the virtual takeover of our governance systems by the military-industrial complex in recent decades, the problem has become aggravated as, world over, cultural capital, a natural component of societies, has been turned into symbolic capital, an artificial adjunct to the forces of commerce, and mass art has overpowered popular art. A revealing, yet unknown case in this regard is that the first expert who set the model for most of early Indian documentary films was a Nazi propaganda manager, who was engaged by the Indian Government to guide the Indian Films Division in its initial years. It is no wonder, then, that newsreels and documentaries made by the body came to project the official versions, particularly in relation to mega developmental programmes. The other side of the story remained largely untold, Bandopadhyaya observed, till the advent of courageous, independent filmmakers like Patwardhan, who began to document the violence, in various forms, unleashed upon unsuspecting subjects in the name of nationalistic goals. In interrogating this violence, which the establishment narratives had not only been silent about but also complicit in, Patwardhan and his ilk were reestablishing the old links between social capital, cultural capital, and cultural production. Also, extending his presentation in another direction, Bandopadhyaya demonstrated, through a screening of the great Japanese director Akira Kurosawa's 'Ran', an adaptation of Shakespeare's 'King Lear', the manner in which another artist, from another country and another genre of film, but of similar depth of conviction, attempts to restore his community's social capital to its rightful place in the process of cultural production, by creating, in a daring departure from the original, a different last scene, dense with foreboding and faith, fear and yearning, where two characters, the third daughter-in-law of the king and her blinded brother, reach out to the Buddha, despite themselves being the target of indescribable violence.

Sadanand Menon, Chennai-based journalist and art critic, dwelt on the problematics of non-violence, pointing out that even excessive tolerance can be repressive in its own way in our era of structural violence. Art cannot remain a mute witness in times of war, without risking its unique identity and compromising its integrity. Thus, it has to take a stand, but not an unnuanced one, in favour of revolutionary violence that the oppressed might have no choice but to resort to when resisting the oppressors' reactionary violence. At the same time, never losing memory Rabindranath Tagore's conception of nation both as an abstract and concrete entity, as a geographical as well as emotional reality, it has to be critical of the typical trajectory of many movements for self-determination in our days, where nationalist, sub-nationalist, and regional fights with the goal of self-assertion have eventually degenerated into being centralised power structures themselves. Further, art has to address itself to other facets of violence, too, such as economic violence, which deprives the masses of their humble means of livelihood through capitalistic consolidation; administrative violence, which causes such cruel ironies as national leaders sanctioning 2,000 crore rupees for battling Naxals and only 20 crore rupees for

developmental activities in the Naxal-affected areas; violence of law, where rules are framed in the mould of apartheid laws, outlawing the living in the central parts of cities of the very workers who toiled to build them. It is only by recognizing these diverse forms of violence, and countering them through an 'aesthetics of action', Menon argued, that art could hope to be its true self.

G. Rajashekhar, leftist thinker and trade union activist from Karnataka, delved into the way in which the very style of categorization and of language usage with regard to violence suffered from serious faults in that they not only do not aid solving the problem but actually exacerbate it by inflicting more violence through abstraction. The heartless exercise of differentiating between forms of violence, together with that of justifying one form against the other, emotionally or rationally by turns, an empty rhetorical exercise in which politicians, technocrats, bureaucrats, and media of all hues have been colluding, has achieved nothing but increasing degradation not only of humans but also of animals, plants, and natural resources, he lamented. Growing employment of statistics in modern life has contributed to this general impoverishment, too, by reducing avoidable tragedies and needless deaths to mere facts and figures. Such pervasive violence can be met with, Rajashekhar argued, only by adapting a holistic perspective, such as the one that Gandhi showed, when he declared that his last fast, protesting communal clashes, was against both India and Pakistan.

Three resource persons shared a panel discussion on 'Violence and Women'. Dr. Ashadevi, critic and teacher, expressed her anguish at the fact that women continue to be the prime victims in almost every episode of violence, that modernity, which once promised emancipation, has now, for the most part, only lured them into more forms of servility in a socio-economic system being increasingly appropriated by male chauvinist forces, ranging from religious bigots and fanatic nationalists to consumerists and criminals. Savita Nagabhushana, poetess, recited some of her poems reflecting on the bitter-sweet experience of being a woman in a traditional society like India. Vaidehi, writer and translator, read out a story of hers portraying the irrepressible spirit of Indian women, custom-bound, yet slyly evolving ever more ingenious ways of making a mockery of conventional male domination.

Dr. Giraddi Govindaraj, teacher and critic, shed light on how violence is found embedded even within everyday language, where labels of caste, class, profession, gender, geo-location and so on, are many times used as terms of abuse; on how, even in these days of legal and socio-political prohibition of derogatory use of such terms, language does continue to be used with intent of violence, especially when a self/other dichotomy is involved in a discourse. Phaniraj, engineering teacher and political activist, elaborated on a certain kind of reductionist discourse on violence, being propagated by the media and the establishment, that makes us insensitive to verbal, emotional forms of violence by a disproportionate highlighting of only the physical variety. The tragic irony of our strife-torn times, he remarked, is that, with all our minds made callous about basic human rights, not only the rights of the victims but even those of persecutors had to be protected from fading into oblivion. Dr. Sadanand J.S., political scientist, reviewed the changes in the ways in which human intellect has sought to define and classify violence over centuries; the changing manner of its perception of, and response to, the role of state in modern polities; and the swings in history between the preference for a strong order and for a free society. Viju Poonacha, historian, laid bare the complex strands and the complicated tangles of a movement in his native district of Kodagu, which has been demanding separate statehood on the basis of ethnic identity. Ki. Ram. Nagaraj, scholar from Bangalore, presented an overview of how old and medieval Kannada literature had addressed the problem of violence, not by ignoring

or glossing over it, but, as even the Jaina literary texts, generally acknowledged as upholders of the principle of non-violence, show, only after first depicting violence in its dense details and multitudinous forms. Manu Chakravarthy offered an analysis of the debate in modern literature and philosophy regarding the nature of violence, and the nature of human nature. G. K. Govinda Rao examined the ideological and material differences between communal violence and naxalite violence, in the context of Karnataka. Raghunandana brought into sharper focus the violence that the very medium of theatre was facing on account of a general shift of attention towards the more glittery modern media.

Then, of course, there was the directorial presence, suffusing the entire ambience, of Dr. U.R. Ananthamurthy, writer, teacher, Jnanapith awardee, who, as much through his interventions-in the form of guiding participants into framing their questions in more complex ways, extracting ever more valuable insights from resource persons, converting even commonplace observations into possible avenues of profound intellectual exploration-as through his luminous concluding address, ensured that the deliberations never slipped below a certain qualitative and creative level that Ninasam had desired the Course to maintain.