

CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore

IKN: 3

KANNADA SANGHA

Special Guest Lecture Series -6

General Information

Type of Activity	Kannada Sangha Golden Jubilee Celebration
Title of the Activity	Special Guest Lecture on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee celebrations
Date/s	18 August 2023
Time	3:15 to 05:15 pm
Venue	802, Syndicate Room, Central Campus, Bangalore
Collaboration/Sponsor (if any)	-----

Speaker Details

Name	Akshara K V
Title/Position	Eminent theatre personality and a social thinker
Organization	Ninasam, Sagara, Heggodu, Shimoga District
Title of Presentation	<i>Theatre in Context</i>

(Add/repeat above rows if there is more than one Speaker)

Participants profile

Type of Participants	Academicians, Faculty, UG & PG students, Research Scholars & Invitees
No. of Participants	130

Synopsis of the Activity (Description)

Highlights of the Activity	He explained how the basis of Ninasam's work in theatre was based on one important potential of theatre which is that theatre can be seen as an activity. Theatre can be done in various ways. Theatre can be done as art like many artist groups do or it can be done as an activity. In Karnataka in almost every village they enact certain plays by dividing the roles among themselves, they don't do it for the sake of art they just want to do it together as an activity and because of that theatre is sustained for a long period. Towards the end of his lecture, he talked about Ninasam and how its Tirugaata took elements from different categories of theatre companies and formed its own kind of theatre. He also talked about the new form of colonization of our minds by today's digital era and social media. He elaborated on how it turns spectators into mere onlookers and thus kills the essence of art and how resurrecting the audience will ensure a future for theatre.
Key Takeaways	The relationship between theatre and context Theater produces various repercussions in society. The theatre practitioners in Karnataka adopted realism from the West. The ever-growing relationship between Kannada theatre and the Kannada language and how they are interrelated

Summary of the Activity	Kannada Sangha Central Campus, Bangalore, conducted a special guest lecture on the topic "Theatre in Context" by Akshara K.V. The session ended after a short Q&A session between Sri. Akshara K.V and the audience. After the Q&A session on behalf of Kannada Sangha Dr. Anil Joseph Pinto, Registrar CHRIST(Deemed to be University) felicitated the speaker and presented a memento. Dr. Shilpa from the School of Law proposed the vote of thanks. Dr. Mukund Naragund from the department of Physics and Electronics proposed M C for the program. Vijayashankara S R, Viveka Shanabhaaga, Faculty members, Students and academicians witnessed the program. Dr. Rathi M T, Coordinator of Kannada Sangha organized the whole program successfully.
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Rapporteur

Name of the Rapporteur	Dr. Rathi M T, Coordinator, Kannada Sangha.
Email and Contact No	rathi.mt@christuniversity.in 9880495712

Descriptive Report

In order to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Kannada Sangha a special lecture was delivered by Akshara K.V, an eminent theatre personality and a social thinker on 18th August, 2023. The topic of the lecture was "Theatre in Context". He was given a very warm welcome by Dr. Abhaya from the School of Arts and Humanities. She mentioned how his work is a combination of traditional and Contemporary art. She briefly described Ninasam and how their 21 days' workshop which is conducted every year offers multiple perspectives to engage with ideas of dissent and resistance in a critical manner.

Sri. Akshara K.V started the talk with some humor. He mentioned how the first duty of a theatre practitioner is to make people sit and prevent them from walking out and hence he would be mostly using English for the lecture. He first began talking about the relationship between theatre and context and posed a very interesting question: is theatre constituted by context or is context defined by theatre? Normally it is assumed that context defines theatre as that is how history is usually written. But it's not always the case as theater also produces various repercussions in society. To explain his point further he took the example of the famous actor Balagandharva and how his portrayal of female characters made an impact on Marathi society as he became a role model for many women.

Sri. Akshara K.V further explained how theatre companies back in the day operated from villages and were not exposed to Western ideas and thoughts. They learnt about the concept of realism through the influence of the West as western theatre houses would stay in India on their way back from Australia and hold a few shows here. The theatre practitioners in Karnataka adopted realism from them and tried to emulate it in one scene of Ramayana where lord Hanuman comes to visit Sita when she was held captive in Lanka. In order to create a 3D tree in the middle of the stage to capture the essence of Realism, the practitioners tried various methods and finally succeeded wherein a new scene was added to enhance the realistic aspect. This scene involved Hanuman eating a banana and drinking tender coconut water after reaching Ashoka Vana.

He further discussed how Shakespeare's plays were adapted but his tragedies were given a happy ending to suit the taste of the Indian audience. Many Sanskrit plays were also localized. These all highlighted the modern era Kannada theatre was heading towards. It also brought to light how

adaptation happened not only to Shakespearean plays but to Indian plays as well. In this way when theatre confronted the context it also changed it in the process and vice versa.

Sri. Akshara K.V discussed the ever-growing relationship between Kannada theatre and the Kannada language and how they are interrelated. He also mentioned the slow decay of Kannada theatre with the advent of Kannada cinema. But he also mentioned how Kannada theatre took its revenge as the strong effects of Kannada theatre and its characteristics are very visible in Kannada cinema. According to him that's how theatre survived and will continue to survive.

He explained how the basis of Ninasam's work in theatre was based on one important potential of theatre which is that theatre can be seen as an activity. Theatre can be done in various ways. Theatre can be done as art like many artist groups do or it can be done as an activity. In Karnataka in almost every village they enact certain plays by dividing the roles among themselves, they don't do it for the sake of art they just want to do it together as an activity and because of that theatre is sustained for a long period. Towards the end of his lecture, he talked about Ninasam and how its Tirugaata took elements from different categories of theatre companies and formed its own kind of theatre. He also talked about the new form of colonization of our minds by today's digital era and social media. He elaborated on how it turns spectators into mere onlookers and thus kills the essence of art and how resurrecting the audience will ensure a future for theatre.

Speaker profile

Akshara K.V is a director, playwright and writer in the Kannada language. He is the son of writer K V Subbanna. He is a prominent figure in contemporary Kannada theatre.

Akshar presently heads Neelakaneshwara Nataka Sangha (Ninasam), the theatre group and cultural complex in Heggodu, Sagara, Shimoga district Karnataka, founded by his father K V Subbanna. He is also the treasurer of "Ninasam" society.

After his primary education at Heggodu village and Sagar town, he studied theatre at National School of Drama, New Delhi and at Workshop Theatre, University of Leeds in the United Kingdom.

He has awarded and recognized Sangeet Natak Academy award, Karnataka Sahitya Academy award and Karnataka Nataka Academy fellowship.

Akshara K.V has written more than 15 books in Kannada on Drama, theatre and performing arts and translated books on theatre to Kannada language. He has translated and directed dramas written by William Shakespeare.

