

Channakeshava: Now I will present about active theatre spaces in Karnataka. In the 70s in Kannada, there was a lot of theatre movement because of the Emergency. Street plays by Samudaya and other theatre groups. They were all taking the street plays to all the villages and taluk centres of Karnataka. In the 80s Ninasam started its theatre institute and then Ninasam wanted to take the plays to the different places of Karnataka. Then Ninasam started Tirugatha. Tirugatha started taking the shows, different plays – one western, one Indian and one Kannada. Three plays.

They started taking the plays to the rural places, taluk places, of Karnataka. We faced a different kind of problem then. The play was designed for a kind of proscenium theatre, and we used to carry our curtains and such things. But the places where we go, the rural places – the places will be very different from each other. Some places we have to give a show in a school, sometimes in a kalyana mandapa (where marriage happens) and sometime in the bus stand, sometimes in godowns, and in taluk offices, college quadrangles, like that. Then we started collecting information about the spaces where Tirugatha will happen. The actors will carry a questionnaire, and they used to fill up which place they are having the show – what is the measurement of that, and how much people will be coming to the play, etc. And after some years, we wanted to bring that data together.

In 1991-92, Ninasam planned to make a theatre survey, and 20 Ninasam old students were sent to different places, and they have made a theatre survey. After that, we wanted to update that survey last year. And with our experience with Tirugatha, we made six categories of the spaces – Open air theatre, intimate spaces, open stage, proscenium theatre, multipurpose hall, and open stage. I will explain our understanding of these theatres.

Open air theatre, where theatre will be like Greek theatre, with the auditorium. Intimate spaces will be halls. Open stage is just a stage with a shelter. Proscenium theatre – it is a proscenium like theatre with the curtain, side wings, green room etc. Multipurpose halls are where multiple activities happen, like political activities or cultural activities. And another is actually open space ... Enclosed platform is with the shelter, open stage is just a platform.

More than 20 students – we have given training to them to make a survey. We have trained them to measure the theatre space and to make the plan. To make the elevation drawing. And to collect the information about the equipment, about the green room, toilets, space available around the theatre, parking spaces, food availability, etc. We gave them 3 months time to survey in a particular district allotted to that student. And they went to each important space where performances will be taking place – active space. And all the information which was collected by the students, they have brought after three months and we have gone through a detailed discussion with the surveyor. Me and Akshara have interviewed them ...

I will now give you some statistical information. We have surveyed nearly 500 theatres, which are active theatres, all over Karnataka. Open air theatres, we have surveyed 21 total. Government theatres, 8. And private bodies, 12. In that we have rated the theatre with our practice. All the students who went there were trained in the Ninasam theatre institute so that they can judge the quality of the theatre space. So they have rated 'good', 'average', 'below average' and 'very

good'. In the 21 theatres, there are only 4 'good' theatres. And 'below average' and 'average' is 19. And only 4 theatres are engaged more than 100 days a year.

In the intimate spaces, there are totally 12 spaces. Government bodies 4, private 8. 'Good' – 4 theatres, and these 4 theatres are in Bangalore. 'Average' and 'below average' – 8. Number of days engaged – 100 to 150 days, only 2. 150 to 200 – 3. 200 to 300 – 1. And 365 engaged, three active centres – that is in Bangalore. We have surveyed only theatre activities and cultural activities. Including dance, music.

[Seems to be answering someone from audience]

That is for the space, infrastructure and the maintenance of the space. We have rated for the equipment separately, and for overall maintenance and only for the space. Not for the activities.

[Seems to be answering someone from audience]

Actually, interestingly, these open stages are very much active in North Karnataka. Open stage is just a platform – in the school centre or a taluk centre, or near a bus stand, near panchayat, like that. They used to have a temporary shelter, a temporary shamiana. Company dramas will be performed.

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This is the proscenium theatre. We have called it a proscenium-like theatre because we don't have full-fledged proscenium theatre. There are only 4 or 5 theatres in Karnataka that are fully equipped. In the 59 proscenium-like theatres, 29 are handled by government. And government has built a distinct theatre centre, which looks like a godown! They used to have a huge auditorium and a very small stage. With a small greenroom, which will be the office of the Culture Department. And one will be the godown of some PWD or something like that. No toilet. If there is a toilet, that will be the public toilet. In very bad condition. There are only 3 or 4 good government theatres – one is in Mysore, one is in Bagalkot ...

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And this is a multipurpose hall. Very interestingly, most of the theatre activities will be held in this kind of multipurpose hall. That will be handled mostly by private bodies. They will maintain it very neatly, because they used to have marriage ceremonies ... that will be paid spaces. And now some multipurpose halls, like the choultries – while building, they have a notion of making a kind of a proscenium choultry. Because marriage will be happening like a proscenium. Audience will be sitting here and marriage will be happening there. There will be two green rooms, given to the bridegroom and ... And it was very helpful for the theatre people to have a show there.

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These are the enclosed platforms with a base stage / platform, and with a shelter. Actually, Culture Department have a kind of budget, that if you have a platform, they will provide you the railings for the curtain. They will give 25,000/- or something for that. They used to have that wing space, but those are all very bad ...because most of that kind of platforms will be in the school campuses, that are used for the cultural activities of the school mainly. And it will be very

unplanned. That will be around 20 feet by 15 feet. If you go after the 15 feet, you will be falling 6 feet down. That kind of spaces.

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The total ownership statistics is : the government is handling 128 theatre spaces and private is 178. And the total rating of all kinds of theatre space : there are only 8 'very good' spaces in Karnataka. 'Good' 69, 'average' 121 and 'below average' is 64. And some spaces are very interesting but there is no activity. And total number of engagement – 9 spaces are 'good' spaces, but there is no activity.

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And ...these are the days engaged every year :

1 to 50 days	199 spaces
1 to 150	65
150 to 200	80
200 to 250	4
250 to 300	8
365	7

That will be not only theatre activities, but also cultural activities, like music, dance, etc.

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I would like to show you our final database programme. This is actually an incomplete programme I am showing you. The final programme is better than this. In this homepage we had information about the survey, and about Ninasam, and methodology. And we have divided into three columns for the districts – A to B, C to H, and K to Z. We can go like this – if you go to Shimoga district, you will be having these kind of taluk centres. If you go to Sagar – theatre spaces of Sagar will be displayed here. You click on Shivarama Karantha Ranga Mandira, this kind of general information will be up here. In this, general information – type of theatre, the place and how to reach and number of days engaged, how many shows of theatre and other cultural activity, how much Kannada shows, other functions, management address, body address, renting details. Access before the show, maintenance details, what will be provided within the rent – electricity, generator, sound, equipment. The contact address for that. And the building details – the space around the building, total area of the campus. If there is any problem with the theatre – like a visibility problem or an acoustic problem, details about that. Kind of seating, capacity, auditorium kind – permanent or temporary. Foyer dimensions, green room dimensions, and other components like canteen, space for exhibition, green rooms, size of the green rooms, size of the toilets, number of toilets, and facilities in the green room and toilet. And building _____. And the stage details, stage dimensions, nature of floor, wings, length of wings, side wing spaces, equipment details – sound, lighting and other effects equipment. Floor plan – these are the plans drawn by the students who went. Drawings were brought and this is the recreated ...

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We can access by these kind of categories also. If you go to the proscenium theatre, all proscenium theatres of Karnataka will be appearing here.

Actually, our website is not working because of some technical problem. That will be ready by this week. If you log into www.ninasamtheatresurvey.org – you will be having this kind of theatre information of different spaces, and also notes about those spaces by our students. They have collected information about the groups involved in that space, and the kind of activities that will be happening in those spaces. And overall information about the taluk – how it is situated in the theatre ...

And interestingly, most of theatre activities is happening in the school and college campus, educational institution campus. Quadrangle, hall, seminar halls. Most of the amateur play is working with the help of local educational institution ... they used to have rehearsals in that kind of halls, quadrangles, classrooms, and after the rehearsal, they used to have a performance in the district proscenium theatre built by Cultural Department or some other multipurpose hall. This is how most of the amateur troupes will be rehearsing in the rural places of Karnataka. But in Bangalore, we have a good proscenium theatre – 3, 4 – and other good theatre spaces also. But if we compare to the rural places of Karnataka, Bangalore is facing the problem of rehearsal. We don't have proper rehearsal spaces in Bangalore. But still some college is sharing with the local troupes, their spaces, like National College, Jainagar. But other amateur troupes are facing the problem of rehearsal spaces. In the rural spaces, I don't think they have a severe problem of rehearsal spaces. They will have the available spaces in the school. Because most of the villages have a primary school, and there'll be a classroom. And some schools used to give some rooms for the local troupes to keep their properties and costumes also. That is very interesting.