



# VIKALP

*A Festival of Performing Arts*



VIKALP - a three day programme on “songs stories and conversations” was organized by Xavier School of communications (XCOMM) in collaboration with X-Stage and Spic-Macay of the faculty of management, Xavier University Bhubaneswar from October 20-22, 2016. The central theme of VIKALP is to celebrate the spirit of diversity and plurality weaving together a series of traditional and contemporary art forms of India. It was a humble effort to provide a platform to some less familiar art forms practiced across different regions of the land. It was also an effort to relocate the resilient, undying ethos of plurality through music, melody and dialogue. The spirit behind such a novel idea was Prof. Dr. Paul Fernandes SJ, the Vice Chancellor of Xavier University Bhubaneswar.

## Opening of VIKALP:

The emblem of VIKALP is an old ancient banyan tree, whose branches and roots become one, and the centre and periphery are almost indistinguishable. VIKALP focuses to challenge the present binary of margin and the center in favor of a diversified culture as old and as variegated as the banyan tree. The banyan tree stands as an emblem of the rich legacy of the diversity and plurality of this nation. The set of VIKALP also reflected a sense of harmony with nature. It was created by the XCOMM student artists under the leadership of Ms. Mansa, art director from Bangalore.



The inauguration of Vikalp began with lighting of the lamp, by the chief guest Shabnam Virmani, the renowned film maker, Fr. Augustine SJ, the Registrar of Xavier University Bhubaneswar (XUB), Prof. S. Peppin, dean of the School of Sustainability and Lourduraj Ignacimuthu.SJ, dean of Xavier School of Communications. Prof. Lourduraj Ignacimuthu SJ welcomed the gathering and explained the dynamics of “Vikalp.” Fr. Augustine spoke on cultural diversity connecting to the national perspective.

## Performance and discussions:

The series of performance and dialogue were open to all on the three days, and the participants were engaged in critical discussions and serious reflections on the topics. They reflected pluralistic expressions of beauty and diversity of culture. Besides the artists, writers, musicians, academicians and filmmakers and students of XUB, a few interested people from



different walks of life participated in this new venture. The event took place under the collective leadership of Prof Lourduraj Ignacimuthu SJ, Subrat Beura and Satyajit Puhan (both members of Strategic Academic Advisory Body (SAAB) of XCOMM).

The three-day performance began with *Raavan Chaaya*, a Puppet show from Odisha, taken from Vichitra Ramayana,



performed by prof Gourang Charan Das and other artists from Srirama Institute of Shadow Theatre and Research. Later there was a discussion on the relevance of Ramayana in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The other performance of the day was *Daastan Goi*, a unique form of storytelling, dating back to 9<sup>th</sup> century Persia by an young talent Ankit Chadda who strung tales of kabir and Ram prevalent across cultures. Some documentary films of renowned film makers were screened on the Vikalp stage as

well. Of these *Had Anhad* by Shabnam Virmani was screened on the first day. It depicts her journey through Malwa, Rajasthan and Pakistan following the folk renditions of Kabir – the 15<sup>th</sup> century mystic poet in a quest for the spiritual and socio-political resonances of his deeply inclusive philosophy in the present day. Mahesh Ramji & co sang Kabir Bhajans for the audience. It was a prayerful performance where the audience were shown “Ram” and the folk artists lived up to their

international standing as entertaining and living the spiritual experience of this land.



The second day began with *Rasan Piya* - another film screened at VIKALP, was directed by Niharika Popli. It is based on the life of the well-known Hindustani Classical Vocalist, Ustad Abdul Rashid Khan. *The Other Song* by Saba Dewan travels through Varanasi, Lucknow and Muzzafarpur in Bihar in search of the forgotten song. This journey is a search for the enigmatic figure of the *tawaif*,

courtesan, and the *Bai ji* and the contested terrain of her art form and lifestyle threatened by a more respectable notion of music and art that pushes her and her genre into oblivion. The evening had Guru Ganeswar Swain performing “Tala Vadya”

for the audience. 16 instrumentalists gave a scintillating display of harmony and cohesion with different “rhythms.” The mixing of sound by Mr. Hudson Taylor, sound engineer from Hyderabad and our visiting faculty gave the audience professional sound quality. Ustad Irshad Khan, the grandson of Ustad Vilayat Khan, a Sitar player from Canada entertained



the audience some fantastic variations with raag Jog.

VIKALP also staged discussions on Communalism and Peoples movements by social activists from Odisha and Gujrat. There were also songs on the struggle of people and their journey.

The third day had the film “*Construction of Self-hood*” by Anjali Monterio and KP Jayasanakar and *Ram ke Nam* (In the Name of God), a documentary film by Anant Patwardhan. These were followed by discussions led by Mr. Satyajit Puhan, the film maker and the organizing team member from Odisha.



The three-day cultural festival ended with the musical performance - *Ruhaniyat* by Tajdar Junaid and group based on Bengali mystical poetry and folk songs. The festival truly lived up to the expectations of the University as one celebrating diversity, plurality and gender. The students of XCOMM anchored the entire program besides participating in audio and video production of all 3-days with the help of the technical staff of XCOMM. It was a collective effort that made Vikalp a memorable one.

