

Moderator - Panel 1



Dr Rohini Rau

Trustee, The Little Theatre,
Internal Medicine / Functional Medicine Doctor,
Asian Sailing Gold Medallist & TED Fellow

Dr Rohini Rau is India's former top woman sailor. Her best World ISAF Ranking was 94 and 5th in Asia. She created history by winning India's first international gold medal by a women's youth team at the Asian Sailing Championship in 2004. She has participated in 9 World Championships, winning 6 international medals and 32 National Medals including 8 Consecutive National titles in the Laser Radial. She campaigned for the 2012 Olympic Games.

She completed her medical degree (MBBS) at Chengalpeta Govt. Medical College and her MSc Internal Medicine (University of Edinburgh). She worked as a Senior Resident Doctor at Kauvery Hospital, Chennai. She is a certified Functional Medicine Practitioner (AFMCP) by Institute of Functional Medicine, USA 2021 and has begun her own practice.

She is the Outgoing Curator of the Chennai Hub Global Shapers Community (an initiative of the World Economic Forum) and a 2009 TED Fellow.

Rohini is India's first Medical Clown and trainer. She has worked with The Little Theatre's Hospital Clowns Troupe since 2015. She heads the cEnter for Creative Therapy by The Little Theatre at the Government Childrens Hospital, Chennai.

Moderator - Panel 2



Krishnakumar B

Artistic Director of The Little Theatre,
Head Trainer - Hospital Clown,
Theatre & Film Actor, Director, Producer,
Playwright, Set & Light Designer,
Stunt Choreographer

Krishnakumar Balasubramanian (KK) is the Artistic Director of The Little Theatre, Chennai.

He played the role of Captain Che in the Tamil feature film 'Soorai Pottru'. He plays the lead actor in the feature film 'Walking, Talking, Strawberry Ice cream' produced by Rowdy Pictures to be released. He played inspector Arjun in the Tamil feature film 'Maaran' and is now currently featuring in a Bollywood film.

He was voted one of the 37 Young Indians of Tomorrow by 'India Today' in its 37th anniversary issue giving him the title 'Theatre Technocrat' 2012.

KK leads India's first hospital clown troupe by The Little Theatre for which he was awarded "The Creative Arts Therapy Award" by "Sancheti Health Care Academy" in April 2018.

He is an alumnus of the Global Shapers Community, an initiative of the World Economic Forum, (2012). He was a panelist at the World Economic Forum on India 2012. He is a TEDx speaker, a trained martial artist and a fitness enthusiast.

Since 2007 he has created, written, produced, directed and acted in numerous critically acclaimed and commercially successful theatre productions, with over 20 original home productions by The Little Theatre. His shows played in Iran and Malaysia to standing ovations.



PANEL DISCUSSION

The importance of Arts post COVID

July 5, 2022

6 to 7:30pm

@ Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan,
Chennai





“the little festival”

is a wonderful platform,
a small world stage
for countries to strengthen ties
with the youth of India.
An opportunity to present new and
exciting work for young audiences.

Forging bonds through the performing arts.

Theatre is an amazing tool to
help youngsters develop self-confidence,
self-esteem and a global understanding
of one another.

It is also a great way to promote peace,
understanding and empathy in
an otherwise intolerant world.

The need for Arts to promote
positive mental health
has only intensified post covid.
This is a much needed conversation.



PANEL 1

ARTS IN HEALTHCARE

PANELISTS

Dr Aravindan Selvaraj
Co-Founder & Executive Director of Kauvery Hospitals

Dr Arasar Seeralar
Retd Director ICH, Paediatrician, Neonatal Specialist

P W C Davidar
IAS (retired) Advisor to TNeGA

Ashrita Keshav
Kuchipudi Dancer, Psychologist & Expressive Art Therapist

MODERATOR
Dr Rohini Rau
Trustee, The Little Theatre
Internal Medicine / Functional Medicine Doctor & TED Fellow

PANEL 2

ARTS IN EDUCATION

PANELISTS

Dr Rathii Jafer
Director, InKo Center

Dr S Bhavanishankar
Director, Strategy, Research & Innovation
Lalaji Memorial Omega International School, Chennai

Divakar Subramaniam
Musician, Composer, Music Educator & Ethnomusicologist

Pa Ranjith
Director & Producer Tamil Film Industry

Janaka Pushpanathan
Director South India, British Council

MODERATOR
Krishnakumar B (KK)
Artistic Director, The Little Theatre
Theatre & Film Actor



Dr Aravindan Selvaraj
Co-Founder &
Executive Director of Kauvery Hospitals

A Gold Medalist in Orthopaedic Surgery, Dr Aravindan Selvaraj is the Co-Founder & Executive Director of the Kauvery Group of Hospitals.

He practiced Orthopaedic Surgery for 15 years in the world's best hospitals in Ireland and UK since 1995. He returned to India in 2010 with a vision of setting up a world-class hospital in Chennai and thus the Kauvery Hospital at Alwarpet, Chennai was born. Today, Kauvery hospitals group has more than 1500 beds with a presence in eight locations in Tamil Nadu & Karnataka.

He has been awarded 'Best Doctor' by Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR Medical University & 'Pride of Tamil Nadu' for his achievements in the healthcare industry. In 2022, he was awarded Sir M Visvesvaraya award for 'Excellence in Healthcare' instituted by AIMO from the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in recognition of Kauvery Hospital's contribution to the healthcare sector in terms of service to the general public, creation of jobs for the underprivileged and the scientific advancement of medical care.

- Chairman of ASSOCHAM Tamil Nadu State Development Council
- CII Southern Region Health Industry Committee Co-Chairman
- TIE Governing Council Member
- Set up the Innovation and Incubation Center at Kauvery Hospital
- Founded Healthcare Capital, an NBFC to invest in Health Tech Startups



Dr Arasar Seeralar A T
Retd Director, ICH-Egmore,
Paediatrician, Neonatal Specialist

Dr Arasar Seeralar A T is a Paediatrician with 36 years of experience. Dr Arasar Seeralar A T retired as Director of Children's Government Hospital (ICH) in Egmore in 2019. He was instrumental in setting up the cEnter for Creative Therapy at ICH in collaboration with The Little Theatre. Dr Arasar Seeralar practices at MGM Healthcare in Chennai. He completed MBBS from University Of Madras in 1986, Diploma in Child Health (DCH) from University Of Madras in 1993 and MD-Paediatrics from The Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR Medical University (TNMGRMU) in 1993. He is a specialist in neonatal medicine.



PWC Davidar IAS
Advisor to TneGA

PWC Davidar, who retired from the IAS has been appointed Advisor (Digital and Simplified Governance) to Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency (TNeGA). A government order issued in this regard said the appointment had been made to meet the need for a senior person having administrative experience in various departments, including the Information Technology department, to aid in fulfilling the government's vision of offering "anytime, anywhere" services to citizens through digital transformation.



Ashrita Keshav
Kuchipudi Dancer
Psychologist & Expressive Art Therapist

Ashrita Keshav is an accomplished Kuchipudi dancer and teacher, as well as a qualified Counselling psychologist and Expressive Art therapist. She works primarily with children, adolescents and young adults. With a state rank in psychology in her 12th grade, she went on to pass out with distinction in her BSc Psychology from WCC, and her Masters in Counselling Psychology from MSSW. She has worked as a child therapist privately and in the school setting for over a decade. She integrates her experience in dance with counselling techniques, in her work with children.

Ashrita has done many successful solo dance tours of America and has performed in many of the prestigious Indian stages since she began her career as a professional dancer in 2009. She has been an integral member of her Guru's dance ensemble for the past decade, performing in renowned festivals including the Konark dance festival, the Madras Music Academy, the Serendipity Arts Goa, and NCPA Mumbai.

She has done workshops on dance as an extension of life, teaching expats and lay people how to decode Indian classical dance in all its aspects, to understand its components - rhythm patterns, hand gestures and expressions.



Dr Rathi Jafer
Director, InKo Center
(The Indo-Korean Cultural and
Information Centre) Chennai

Over 30 years' experience in conceptualizing, managing and monitoring the delivery of large-scale education and arts projects involving diverse groups in South India, the UK and more recently, South Korea.

A gold-medallist in English Literature from Stella Maris College; a Glasgow University and Overseas Research Scholarship awarded Ph.D holder in English Literature from the University of Glasgow, UK and a certified examiner and trainer for the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES). Awarded the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for academic excellence (1981); the Overseas Research Award (ORS) for research in the UK (1989); the Glasgow University Scholarship for Ph.D research in English Literature (1989). Awarded the Certificate of Merit from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, for dedicated assistance and outstanding contribution to developing Indo-Korean relations (2020). Awarded a Citation by the Prime Minister of Korea for outstanding contribution to the development of Hangul through research and dissemination of the Korean language (2020). State and National level gold-medallist for Sporting Excellence, particularly in Field events such as Shotput, Javelin and Discus throw and represented India at the Asian Games Trial Meet in New Delhi in 1982. Published poetry in the Lines Review in UK and presented papers at several academic conferences in the UK, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Japan, Korea and India.

Following a stint as Consultant and Co-ordinator for the Students' Book Fair in Chennai in 1988-89, was Editor for Higher Education textbooks for British India Publications in 1996-97; English Studies Officer, British Council, South India from 1997-2000 and was from 2000-2006, Head, Arts, British Council, South India. Currently, (from 2006 to date) Director, InKo Centre (the Indo-Korean Cultural and Information Centre), India.


Dr S Bhavanishankar

Director - Strategy, Research & Innovation
Lalaji Memorial Omega International School,
Chennai

Dr Bhavanishankar is a passionate and experienced educationalist with a proven track record of success, working across organizations engaged in academic research, post-secondary and K-12 education. An accomplished academic with research and management qualifications, teaching and training certifications and keen leadership capabilities he brings with him strategic skills to seed, nurture and manage the change continuum in education. Hugely committed to building capacity across academic verticals, he currently leads a team of dedicated educators and actively engages in progressing curricular and instructional designs, pedagogical practices, cross-curricular transactions, Professional training, teaching-coaching-mentoring, ideation and innovations, inquiry and experiential research.


Divakar Subramaniam

Musician, Composer,
Music Educator & Ethnomusicologist

Divakar is the founder and academic director of the School of Indian Film Music - a dedicated institution for India's film music practises. He also works as a music composer and producer in India's advertising and film music industries. Concerts across India, United States of America, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom, and collaborative work with musicians and artists from Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Ireland, Hungary, England, Wales, Scotland, Nigeria and the USA, have had a significant influence on his compositions. He is one of the few privileged Indians to have performed at United Nations, New York. His most recent work is in the film "Rocketry" which is an international multilingual film directed by the Bollywood actor R. Madhavan. Divakar holds post graduate and research degrees in music, from the University of Glamorgan. He is also attached to the Skillset Screen Academy, Wales, member of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology and the Association of British Scholars in India.


Pa Ranjith

Director & Producer Tamil Film Industry
(Neelam Productions)

Pa Ranjith, a fine arts graduate from Government College of Fine Arts, started his career in films working as an assistant director in four feature length films. After his period as an assistant director he wrote and directed his first feature length film named 'ATTAKATHI - 2012' which was appreciated for its light heartedness yet genuine portrayal of subaltern culture, a very rare element in the mainstream. The film went on to become a commercial success.

Then it was 'MADRAS' in 2014. Madras was a high voltage drama with a strong political overtone. The film was praised by critics and audience alike for its emotional appeal and lively portrayal of characters and North Madras landscape which till then was shown in mainstream as an area of shady criminals and dehumanizing violence.

'KABALI' - 2016 which starred Rajnikanth in the lead role was a stylish gangster story set in Malaysia. It had a strong social commentary about the sub culture and oppressed classes among the Tamils in Malaysia. The film earned critical acclaim and was a box office blockbuster.

After the success of Kabali, Ranjith and Rajnikanth collaborated again for KAALA which released in 2018. Kaala was set in Dharavi - Mumbai one of the largest slums in the world, telling the story of Karikaalan who ultimately leads his fellow residents, who are being tormented by greedy corporate builders, to struggle to retain the land that they created.

Apart from writing and directing films Ranjith is also a socially committed artist who has produced documentaries. LADIES AND GENTLEWOMEN (a documentary on the lesbian history of Tamilnadu) DR.SHOE MAKER (about a dedicated sports shoe mender), BEWARE OF CASTE (on the Mirchpur violence) are all documentaries he produced. He also produced a play MANJAL (The colour yellow) a play on manual scavenging.

He is the founder of THE CASTELESS COLLECTIVE - an energetic gaana-rap band giving base to talented artists whose voices weren't heard so powerfully in mainstream. Koogai, a film movement and a library and NEELAM CULTURAL CENTER, a cultural organization are also his ventures that take forward his vision of people's cinema and art. His first film as a Producer was 'Pariyerum Perumal' - 2018 under his banner NEELAM PRODUCTIONS. This film became a huge box office success.


Janaka Pushpanathan

Director, British Council, South India

Janaka Pushpanathan currently leads British Council's work in South India, and she has over 25 years of experience in the Arts, Education & Enterprise sectors. Prior to this, she has co-founded education, learning & development, and Ed tech start-ups, which have won the Red Herring Top 100 and the NASSCOM Top 50 awards in the innovation category. Janaka has been a part of British Council's think tank on Intercultural Dialogue and was also the Regional Head of the United States India Education Foundation (USIEF) for South India.

As the Director of British Council in South India, Janaka leads the Council's work, in the five southern states: this includes partnerships with schools and higher education institutions, leading on government to government bilateral relations between UK and India, managing advocacy initiatives for English language teaching & training; working with partners to strengthen the creative economy for arts, crafts, festivals and major programmes in South India and promoting educational and cultural exchange between UK and India through the British Council teaching centre, examinations services and library & information services.

Janaka has a Master of Science degree in Physics & Applied Mathematics from the Madras Christian College, a hundred- and eighty-five-year-old institution that traces its history to Scottish connections in the Madras Presidency (now called Chennai). Also, an alumna of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore and Project Zero at Harvard University, Janaka is among the top 100 most influential in building UK-India relations and she's part of the India Inc. 2019 list, which is the first ever all women's power list to celebrate the immense contribution of women from all walks of life driving a glorious future relationship between UK and India.