



5th March 2018

From

Kalakshetra Alumni Association

To

Respected Sir,

Sub: Kalakshetra Foundation – Urgent plea and prayer to :

- 1) Post only an Alumni from Kalakshetra as Director**
- 2) Kalakshetra Board to have 50% members from Kalakshetra Alumni**
- 3) To conduct a detailed enquiry and review into the policy of renting out the premises of Kalakshetra, and its recent desecration**

Sir, we represent the Kalakshetra Alumni Association - a registered association, of distinguished alumni of Kalakshetra, comprising Padma awardees, SNA awardees, internationally recognised and awarded artistes, spanning almost 8 decades and spread across the world. Our contributions to the classical arts of India, has seen national and international recognition as outstanding artists, dedicated Gurus and choreographers, academicians, dance scholars, and path breakers, in arts in digital technology; all because of our training at Kalakshetra that included extraordinary value systems and ethos.

Sir, we wish to bring to your kind attention, certain urgent matters concerning the Kalakshetra Foundation - a desecration of the sacred spaces, classes, and even the most revered space of the banyan tree, by those to whom, these spaces were rented out by the Kalakshetra management, leaving artistes across the world, very distraught and shocked

Sir as you are aware, Kalakshetra, now an institution of National importance under the Ministry of Culture, was established by Smt Rukmini Devi Arundale in 1936, "with the sole purpose of resuscitating in modern India recognition of the priceless artistic traditions of our country and of imparting to the young the true spirit of Art, **devoid of vulgarity and commercialism.**"

The objectives of the Kalakshetra Foundation , as enshrined in The Kalakshetra Foundation Act 1993 Chapter III (9) :

KALAKSHETRA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (Regd)

Registration no: 221 of 2014 dated 19th March 2014, of the Registrar of Societies

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(iii) To maintain the highest traditions of art and culture in their pristine purity and in conformity with traditions

(v) To ensure that the principles of education without fear and art without vulgarity are adhered to in the activities of the Foundation and not to permit any deviation from these high ideals

Recently, these very tenets were flouted, when an NGO that rented the place conducted activities such as a crass flash mob, real estate and vegetable markets sales at the Kalakshetra premises, that included the **sacred banyan tree (a hallowed and revered temple for all of us)**

We are deeply concerned that Kalakshetra, such a historical and National institution, now under the Ministry of Culture, should be managed in such a cavalier and irresponsible manner

As such we seek the following:

I) A detailed enquiry and review into the policy of renting out the premises of Kalakshetra, comprising these questions that arise thereof

1. Should Kalakshetra, a national institution be subjected to monetising of resources? Even if funds need to be raised, should that not be aligned to the values enshrined in the Act?
2. What are the approvals/sanctions/contracts in place for renting out a National Institution?
3. How and when was the sacred banyan tree and class rooms added to the list of properties available for rent? Was it passed by the board? If yes, who were the members? And on what justification was it approved? If not approved by the board then who is responsible for this kind of travesty?
4. Since when have such kind of rental activities been allowed, and what are the kind of activities being permitted?
5. This is the National institution that is visited by Heads of State. When it is so important, can it be so trivialised? Can Kalakshetra, be seen as a mere exhibition space?

II) A Larger Alumni inclusion in the Board and Management of Kalakshetra to help ensure that the philosophy and values of the Founders and the Kalakshetra Act are adhered to

Sir, the instant case of renting out of sacred places and activities incongruent to the Act, may have happened out of ignorance and illiteracy of the intangible ethos of Kalakshetra. A strong alumni presence, will provide guidance on values and ethos to the Kalakshetra Board



And therefore we request an urgent review of the present systems and criteria of appointments/selections/nominations to positions of the Management and Board of Kalakshetra, and set in place a robust system that draws in equal numbers, on the strength of the very successful Alumni, spread across the globe, even as it maintains openness to drawing from the knowledge of renowned persons, who are not Alumni.

IIa) Simply put – We seek an equal representation of the Alumni, on the Board and in the Management by

1. Reviewing the present composition of Board Members
2. Setting in place a transparent process, for incorporating equal number of alumni (elected members of the Kalakshetra Alumni Association) into the Kalakshetra Board
3. Incorporating equal representation of Alumni into the Executive and working Management structure of Kalakshetra
4. Reviewing and establishing clear and transparent criteria and processes for the appointment of Kalakshetra Director

And thus in the light of the above we request urgently to :

III) Conduct a fresh selection, that will enable appointment of a Kalakshetra Alumni as the Director

an important first step to resuscitate this 82 year old National Institution

We hope that the urgency of our plea in this matter, will be addressed at the earliest, with an enquiry into this desecration of the sacredness of Kalakshetra, even as we hope that you will examine our suggestions for change and accord it the urgency we believe is required

With Regards

Ananda Shankar Anita Ratnam Shangita Swagata Sen PT Narendran Archana
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