

CHENNAI

The Dravidian movement and the art of story-telling



STAFF REPORTER

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A group of passionate Chennai residents met at a restaurant by Marina beach on Wednesday evening to discuss: 'Ways in which the Dravidian movement uses stories'.

Chairing the discussion was well-known story-teller Dr. Eric Miller, director, World Storytelling Institute, who began the session by focussing on how the Dravidian movement looked at ancient Tamil literature and literary figures such as Avvaiyar and Kannagi.

Many of the participants agreed that the Dravidian movement ensured that Tamil literary works were popularised, instilling interest in the Tamil epics and Tamil culture among people.

The discussion revolved around the works of Dravidian leaders, especially late Chief Minister and DMK president M. Karunanidhi. “Why was *Parasakthi* such a massive success? Was it Karunanidhi's dialogues or actor Sivaji Ganesan's acting?” The responses were varied – some said that it was Karunanidhi’s dialogues while others attributed the film’s success to Sivaji’s histrionics. The session ended with a discussion on whether the oft-stated criticisms of the Dravidian movement – which is primarily a non-Brahmin movement questioning upper caste hegemony – were still valid and the future of the political movement. The majority appeared to agree that as long as caste inequalities continued to exist, the Dravidian movement would remain relevant.

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