

TAMIL NADU

Nurturing the art of spinning yarn



Sunitha Sekar

CHENNAI:, JANUARY 28, 2013 00:00 IST

UPDATED: JANUARY 28, 2013 05:00 IST

Four days from now, the city will host a storytelling festival.

Organised by the World Storytelling Institute, the Chennai Storytelling Festival 2013 begins on February 1.

A three-day event, it will feature sessions on aspects of storytelling including 'Storytelling and Child Development', 'Storytelling and Tourism' and 'Storytelling and Education'.

The World Storytelling Institute, started in 2007, conducts storytelling workshops for adults and children and trains them to be storytellers.

Ask Eric Miller, director of the institute, about the relevance of storytelling today, and he says, "It is the need of the hour. It enables people to articulate their feelings and thoughts better through a story. Most importantly, it helps one with critical thinking and analyse an issue from all sides. This, in turn changes their personal qualities for the better."

Mr. Miller says the institute uses stories that have been passed down through generations, stories composed by individual people and also narrations from events in everyday life.

“While ‘Modern Storytelling’ is geared towards education, the ‘Traditional Storytelling’ segment tends to veer towards religion. When we tell ancient stories we modify them so that people of all backgrounds can enjoy them,” says Mr. Miller who has a Ph.D in folklore from the University of Pennsylvania.

Apart from the workshops, he says, the participants will be taken on a tour to the countryside. They won’t be just listening to stories in the countryside but also be trained by locals to tell stories in a certain style.

Mr. Miller says, “I’m working on developing storytelling therapy with Chennai’s Centre for Counselling. Modern forms of storytelling will only grow as people realise the skills involved in it are as important and enjoyable now as ever.”

To know more about the schedule of Chennai Storytelling Festival 2013, check out the website:www.storytellinginstitute.org