

YUVA SANGAM 2026

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

The Youth Festival, an annual gathering to celebrate the successful completion of the School for Social Change shivirs, was organised from 26th–28th March 2026 at Pragati Training Centre, Nagpur, Maharashtra. Nearly 250 people came together from 16 states — participants who had completed the SSC training, alongside their mentors, trainers, facilitators and friends who had been active parts of their journeys. Envisioned as a space to celebrate the country's youth, the diversity of cultures across this vast land, and the collective strength of young people coming together in the spirit of learning and expression, this year's festival was titled Kucch Toh Bolo: Your Voice Matters.

Coming Together, On Common Ground

Participants marched in with songs and banners, dressed in traditional attires, bringing the venue alive with a vibrant cultural procession. Maharashtra's group performed the Lezim, a traditional grapevine dance, welcoming everyone with its rhythmic energy. Stalls offered a vivid cross-section of India indigenous seed varieties, forest produce, grains and spices literature and local handicrafts like fans and baskets. A photo exhibition displayed posters on climate change, democratic values, social justice, and scientific awareness. The evenings ended with everyone dancing — energetic, unguarded, and shared.





Collective origins, distinct realities

In the sessions, participants spoke about the shivirs that had taken them through the origin of the earth, the rise of kingdoms and religion, the making of modern economies, caste, gender, and the society they live in today. Many spoke of unlearning social customs they had accepted without question, of understanding their communities in their historical, cultural and economic context for the first time, and of finding a sharper sense of where they stood and why.



Young Voices and Lived Wisdom

Participants split into groups, each moderated by a senior fellow, to discuss contemporary social issues identity, education, employment, and the everyday realities young people navigate. Everyone brought their own particular experiences to the table, articulating their realities while giving the senior fellows a direct window into their lives. The discussions reflected what young people are currently grappling with, alongside a clear belief in the possibility of change.

The senior fellows contextualised the discussions, drawing connections between participants' lived experiences and the larger social questions that brought everyone on common ground. A session by Ulka Mahajan on India's cultural diversity inspired a sense of responsibility towards our shared histories and traditions. Aradhana Bhargava noted the role of SSC, having been a participant once: "SSC contributes to bringing about change in society or within oneself", affirming the experience of learning together.



"In the Parivartan Shala, we don't just learn, we transform. Superstitions are shed, values built, and the village changes. The strength we carry is the strength of morals and values"--



AMULYA K. NAYAK,
SENIOR FELLOW



The festival closed with participants who had completed their SSC shivirs receiving their certificates, as acknowledgement of the people they had become through the shivirs. The ceremony was woven through with plays — the Tamil Nadu group performed a wordless piece on elephant deaths in forests, Selvaraj Anna providing a live soundscape of wind, leaves, and birds. Orissa brought their shivir learnings to the stage, performing what the past year had taught them.

On the last day, everyone stepped out to plant a tree and signify new beginnings. A small, deliberate act to carry things forward.

The festival brought together many voices, but more importantly, it sharpened how those voices locate themselves within larger social processes. The sessions echoed a renewed confidence in our collective futures, and a shared motivation to nurture common histories — celebrating the path of scientific temperament and empathy for all.



"I asked my father who made caste. He said the upper castes did. So I asked him, why do we still follow it? Why accept this inequality? SSC made me see that loving each other is the only dharma".



MAYURI, SSC PARTICIPANT FROM MAHARASHTRA

