



## Student Theatre of Unifest: An Analytical Glance

### KEYWORDS

University, Youth Festival, Student, Theatre

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**ABSTRACT** *Theatre is a real and vital experience. University Youth Festivals known as 'UNIFEST' is a bigger platform for promotion of Indian arts and culture and national integration. The plays presented by students here are about contemporary social evils and issues. They are satirical in tone and didactic in purpose. These plays are very creative and responsive and have social concern. It can also become a medium of social awareness. Public performances of some selected successful plays can educate the people of the country.*

University Youth Festivals known as 'UNIFEST' is a bigger platform for promotion of Indian arts and culture and national integration. With an aim to bring out the talent of the students' and give them a platform for exposure AIU, New Delhi organizes Youth Festivals every year. It is sponsored by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India. Association of Indian Universities, Delhi known as AIU organizes Zonal Youth Festivals at inter-state levels and a National Youth Festival for last 31 years. Most of the universities organize University Youth Festival in the month of September-October that is inter-college level youth festival. The first winners of respective events participate in zonal inter university youth festivals, held in west, east, south, north and central zones of India. First and second winners of various events at zonal inter Uni Fests participate in National University Youth Festival. South Asian Universities Festival 'SAUFEST' is also organized for last nine years.

UNIFESTS are a reflection of great diverse culture of India and symbol of dynamism of youth power. It reflects creativity and also sensitivity of our youth. It is representation their enthusiasm and talent. The writer of this article has participated twice as student and lead the contingents of KSKV Kachchhh University as team manager for consecutive seven years in the west zone inter university youth festivals. This has given a chance to analyze this mega youth event. There are total 26 items in main five events, Music, Dance, Literary, Theatre and Fine Arts. Theatre includes mimicry, mime, skit and one-act-play.

Theatre is a living art and there is no substitute for experiencing a live performance. Theatre is a real and vital experience. The word 'theatre' comes from the Greek word which means 'the seeing place'. It is the place where people come to see the truth about life and social situation. Theatre is a source of entertainment and inspiration and has the ability to create social awareness. Theatre art is slowly dying. Today there are very few keen theatre lovers in our country. Many auditoriums are being closed or converted into shopping malls. The regular plays are now gradually shifting to seasonal shows. Moreover people prefer multiplexes for movies over theatre. We can divide the theatre mainly in two sections, professional and non-professional which is also called amateur. The amateur means non paid artists performing just for the hobby and competitions. The student theatre falls in the second category of amateur.

The most of the plays presented in UNIFESTS are about contemporary social evils and issues. They are satirical in tone and sometimes didactic in purpose. They focus on topics from media's role in society to farmers' suicide issues. They throw light on all major issues of the country. They have the themes on corruption, terrorism, communal disharmony, unemployment, population explosion, poverty, vernacularism, provincialism, educational issues, global warming, women issues and women empowerment etc. They also present regional issues but their main focus is national interest and unity. All contemporary burning issues of the time are always seen on the stage. These plays are never without moral values. These plays show that our youth are very sensitive and have social concern. They are artistic and with innovative presentation techniques. These plays are never given serious attention by academicians, media or government. Even the organizers of the UNIFESTS take them lightly as competition performances only. These plays can be a topic of independent research.

It is said that a drama is combination of various kinds of sixty four arts. The students are seen exposing many skills and arts together here. Their onstage and backstage efforts prove that drama is a collective creation. Their 'team spirit' is experienced here. Their spirit and zeal is enormous. Their interest in national issues provides evidence that they are not irresponsible at all. Sometimes, the presentations of some brutal issues like rape on stage are so artistic and heart touching that we may have no words to praise their talent and guts. Their talent and creativity have no boundaries. They have lot of originality and novelty. Unfortunately, their zeal and concern is taken as contest performances only.

Mathew Arnold said, 'Literature is mirror of society.' In every part of the world, literature has been more or less, mirror of society. Drama is a mirror of society. The drama is partly a creation of imagination and partly of real life. The drama is a tale of action put upon the stage, and naturally, it must contain some elements of real life. Leaving aside the historical dramas, most of the other dramas throw considerable light upon the social, political, moral and even economic life of the time and the people. The plays are to a great extent a mirror of the society of the modern times which deal particularly with the problem of social, economic and political life of a country. It is done by the Students Theatre in an artistic and innovative way on the stages of university auditoriums.

Thus, Theatre has the capacity to move the audience. Audience is carried away by the emotions. Movies are full of entertainment but lack in values. Theatre has the potential to change lives and create awareness for burning social and national issues. The government should promote plays that educate people by holding workshops in schools and colleges and staging performances. The youth should be given more chances of recognition. Efforts should be made to make the Student Theatre still better and more popular. It can also become a medium of social awareness. The public performances of such selected successful plays can educate the people of the country. Their capability and creativity should be given a more constructive and positive direction so that it can become a great national human resource.

**References:**

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