

Theatre-Seed Centre for Social Transformations



Drama

KEYWORDS:

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ABSTRACT

Theatre is not only a team-art but also an audio-visual medium. Theatre activity provides an opportunity to build a dialogue with many people at a time. Theatre has the capacity to change the minds of the audience through dialogues, situations touching their hearts. Direct communication is the strength of the Theatre.

Indian society is caste-based. There are disputes amongst the castes, males-females, philosophy, psychology etc. In other words, inequality is the base of Indian Society and is a serious problem as well. It's a grief of multi-religious, multi-strata Indian society.

The low literacy rate minimizes the scope for exchange of thoughts. We understand all the problems but are unable to construe. Still in the era of revolution & changes, it was given a though by every field. Moreover appropriate remedial measures were also found. Folk forms of art like Satyashodhaki Jalase, Ambedkari Jalase, Tamasha, Kalapathake etc were used as a medium and they seem to have made a significant impact on the masses. Literature, Picture, Dramatization, Dance, Sculpture all these arts have thick bondage with human life. Arts serve the purpose of propagation & spreading Indian Culture, Philosophy. The sovereign socialistic constitution adopted by India is also depicted in the Theatre. Broadly if the era is divided into pre-independence and post-independence, then we can say that the play-scripts contained the prevailing social, political, educational, familial situations. Scrip writers such as G.B. Deval, Mama V. Arerker, M.G. Ranganekar, Ram Ganesh Gadkari, P.K. Atrre made Theatre a medium for bringing about social changes. Tiritiya Ratna was the first social and realistic play written by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. After the independence, the subjects of play-scripts started changing. The contents of the plays were relevant to the prevailing circumstances. The audience started liking these plays. Theatre became the medium for transforming constructive ideas into reality. Play-writers like Ratnakar Matkari, C.T. Khanolkar, Vijay Tendulkar, Jayant Dalvi, Mohan Rakesh, Shyam Manohar, V.V. Shirwadkar, Girish Karnad, Satyadev Dubey touched the roots of the social problems and generated enthusiasm with food for thought amongst the socially conscious people.

Keeping the social obligations, national, family interests in view the plays became one of the most acceptable forms and Theatre proved to be the most influential medium. Theatre thus became the centre for revolutions.

Portraying the real picture, meaningful content through the script is presented very effectively by Theatre. The dialogues, body language & expressions impressively convey the message. The extract of acting potentials is spread over the journey towards change.

Outset:-

Honorable Members of the Presidium, the Organizing Committee Members, Dignitaries, Distinguished Faculty from various Countries Regions, States and others in the Audience – My Greetings to you all and wishing you “A Happy & Prosperous New Year”. It is a matter of great fortune & pleasure for me that I am the ‘First & Opening Speaker’ in this International Event. I feel overwhelmed with joy & request your attention and co-operation in strengthening our fraternity through exchange of our thoughts from this August Dais.

Preamble:-

India is fundamentally a pro-democratic country. Indian is the only country wherein many streams, religions & language co-exist. Unity in diversity is our distinguished identity. Equality, Brotherhood & Justice are not only the fundamentals of democracy but also are philosophical principles of sovereignty.

India became independent on 15th August 1947 and from 26th January 1950 it started functioning of the principle- “All religions are equal”.

With passage of time, many appreciable changes took place in the social, educational, cultural, political fields. The rulers brought about these changes and the common population accepted them. Changes were accepted as the need of time & means of overall progress. This attitude & approach helped to win over the newer and newer challenges. It is to be accepted that the success thus gained is certainly attributable to the democratic lifestyle adopted.

In the Indian democracy, right from the president of the nation to the Member of Village Panchayat, the role of democracy is undisputed. Different rulers came to rule, different parties came to power and quite a few constitutional amendments & legal changes were made. But one thing is certain that whatever changes have taken place, they all were for the benefit of common man, who always remains at the centre point and the democracy revolves around him.

Social change is the need of the hour. While facing the future, the transformations were accepted to deal with the challenges ahead. In the process, even though some newer difficulties came to the surface, the path towards success was ultimately paved. It was realized that there is no alternative than to accept the changes & Indian population complied by adopting such inevitable changes.

Social change means change in the everyday routine of common masses. Any change is a change in the lifestyle & accepted as a need of the time. Adverse effects of any changes are anticipated as these changes not only decide the current status but also have implications on the future, the psychology & nature of the population.

Transformation of change is nature's law. Accepting change helps to develop maturity of thinking. It means the same when we say that flowing water is better than pond water. But we must remember that we should remain with the flow instead of getting driven away.

Philosophical changes need to be accepted with caution. In a vast country like India, the fundamental problems due to illiteracy, illiterate behavior of literate persons, unemployment, inadequate and deficient health care facilities, slow industrial progress etc. have created a grave situation. Even though India is an agro-based country, the lack of vision for future has resulted in less than desired development of the sector. Furthermore, basic needs like food, clothing & shelter are not fulfilled. This is a distorted & disturbing picture.

We know that the human cultural development takes place because of the inter-personal relationship, concern for each other and ultimately for the society at large. Such efforts directed at the fulfillment of the needs sow the seeds of revolution. Changes due to social consciousness & concern have great influence in all sectors & Theatre is no exception to that.

India is backed by the rich heritage of old culture & traditions,

which have an impact on the everyday life. We have followed these customs & traditions and in the course of time, we have given up some of them intentionally & accepted the newer & better ones. This happened in all sectors.

The great philosophy of Bharatmuni has gifted us 'Dramatics'-the science of Theatre. It gave us a new vision towards life. The Indian Theatre can't be separated from Bharatmuni's philosophical principles. Yet some changes in the guiding principles were obvious and inevitable. We enjoy the freedom of changes without disturbing the original frame. Of course, we always evaluate the rationality of such changes.

We must realize that Today's Theatre is different from Yesterday's Tomorrow's Theatre is going to differ from Today's.

Theatre:-

Theatre means a building or an area outside specially designed for the performance of plays & opera. (Dictionary meaning)

Theatre is such a place from where we directly visualize the experiences, which are similar to the values, meanings of life. We also experience the situations depicted in the plays.

- Learning from the vents that have happened
..... PAST
- Thinking rationally on the vents practically happening
is.....PRESENT
- Remaining alert for future by means of experience is
.....FUTURE

This is a journey through Theatre and the performing artists & the audience is the witness. The Theatre plays have widened our thinking & psychological limits. Our realizations have matured & we have developed a new vision. We experience that event. Situations, subjects, contents, problems etc shown in the Theatre Plays have different angles & dimensions. At times, the way of thinking of audience changes radically. Theatre teaches about how to make life beautiful, how to enjoy beauty of life. This is the magic of Theatre.

Theatre in our Marathi language is called Rangabhoomi & it beautifully signifies Rang-Make up Bhoo-Ground or Platform, Me-Self. So, when the Actor applies Make up on the face & enters the Ground or Platform, he forgets Me-Self. Theatre gives you a Rhythm of life, the pace & case of life and the texture of interpersonal relationships.

"Art" is beyond the differences in language, religion, caste, region etc. Moreover, Theatre brings people together.

Bryham Young-founder of Mormon faith in USA in 19th century said that-

If I am left on an island of Cannibal, give me a stage & moth's time, I will convert them to civilized beings.

This is the strength of Theatre, this is how Theatre inspires. Hence, I would state that Theatre is the Cultural Centre, which offers, "Training on Transformation".

Democracy Transformation Theatre:-

Democracy means a form of government in which, the people govern themselves or elect representatives to govern them.

Democratic Lifestyle is the foundation of Indian Social Structure and I feel that it is also the Principle of Theatre. When we have a glance at the phases of development of Theatre, we gather that in the initial period folk forms were the means entertainment & education. The folk performances used to preach about trust, customs, traditions, rituals etc. The style of performances made

use of the daily happenings, smaller events that have happened in the nearby areas and reactions, comments of people on them. The language was colloquial & hence all these efforts created substantial impact on the masses.

To exemplify, Vasudeo, Gondhali, Bharude, Satyashodhaki Jalase, Ambedkari Jalase, Folk-performing Group, Poets not only started getting importance but also they became the most impressive means & measures to raise the burning problems, issues & attract the attention of all concerned for resolving. Thus t Theatre gave the platform for art performances & also for persuasion of the problem. Theatre inducted discipline & neatness in the form & performance of play.

We know that Drama is a group art & also a means of audio-visual communication with many at-a-time. Theatre has the capacity of touching the hearts through dialogues & scenes.

Indian society is caste-based. Inequality is their grave problem. There are disputes amongst the castes, males-females, philosophy, psychology etc. in other words, inequality is the base of Indian Society and is a serious problem as well. It's unfortunate, miserable & detrimental for democracy. Here, I would like to mention that even today, when we are in the 21st century, there are communal riots. The danger of terrorism is hovering mainly due to our inactiveness & inertia. We have to accept this bitter truth. It's a grief & failure of multi-religious, multi-strata Indian society. But it is ridiculous that in spite of knowing all this, we are behaving like illiterates.

When it comes to human existence-the future is dark, feeling of insecurity is mind-boggling, pains of helplessness are making people mute & life is becoming miserable, human values are endangered. When such inactiveness peeps into human life, survival appears like a 'mirage', During the process of exploring the truth, man tries to find realities, he tries to understand the beauty of life & its philosophical values through various ways & means. But when you think neutrally about these possibilities. You ultimately realize that all this is applicable in totality to the field of art.

On one side

Your desire, anodyne nature, effort to ensure existence & bright future and the preparedness to march ahead is 'human' Whereas on the other are The Everlasting art.

They are just like two sides of a coin. If you think minutely, time & transformation provide the solution to these aspects.

Drama, dance, music, literature, drawing, painting etc are the arts associated with human life. They impress the human life. In the production of arts, the artist forgets everything around and enjoys the performance. If this holds true, then Theatre is no exception & can't be isolated from the means of transformation.

Propagation and spread of Indian culture, philosophy, and thoughts is the intention & contention of arts.

After India became independent, we started realizing the meaning of democracy. Changes were evident during the socio-economical, political, educational revolutions. In all these activities, the role & share of 'Arts' has been very significant.

Consistent & direct communication on all situations & subjects was achieved through Theatre. Many play-writers impressively scripted on all familial, social, political matters and Theatre & plays became popular means for the people.

Beginning of the Change:-

The beginning of change in Theatre, particularly Marathi

Theatre in India started late in 1882 with musical plays (Sangeet Natak). The first Drama show of Sangeet Soubhadra written by Annasaheb Kirloskar was staged on 18-11-1882. It was a fully developed, independent & complete art presentation. The prevailing familial feelings were presented in the form of a stage-play.

Thereafter the play titled Sangeet Samshayakallol written by Govind Ballal Deval further consolidated the tradition of happy & soulful theme-plays. Another play Sangeet Sharda was based on Marriage of a teenager girl with old aged man. This was the beginning of problem-based Theatre Plays.

Plays scripted by Krishnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar widened the limits of Marathi Theatre. With many plays written by him, the era of Political Drama began. Use Epic for determining the present structure of political constitution was made in the script of drama titled 'Kihak Vadh'. The then British Rulers had imposed ban on this play.

Mama Varerkar used this medium to criticize on social problems like dowry demand in marriages.

After 1920, use of epics & historical subjects in play-scripts was replaced by social problems. Realization of consciousness about facts established close relation between Drama & Theatre. M.G.Ranganekar's plays were based on the problems in the life of urban and middle-class population. Concern for the then prevailing issues got reflected in his plays. Pralhad Keshav Atré handled the social issues in both humorous and serious manner.

After India's independence, the era of epic, historical, musical plays slowly faded. P.L.Deshpande through his familial & social satires proved the strength of Drama & Theatre in generating attitude for introspection along with entertainment value.

Play-writers like Vijay Tendulkar, P.L.Deshpande, V.V.Shirwadkar, Vasant Kanetkar, Satish Alekar, Jaywant Dalvi, Mahesh Elkunchwar, Girish Karnad, Badal Sarkar, Mohan Rakesh, Shankar Shesh, Shambhu Mitra, Jagdishchandra Mathur, Rangacharya and many others offered new dimensions & direction to the Theatre. C.T.Khanolkar, Satyadev Dubey, Ratnakar Matkari widened the scope introduced a different 'Yard-Stick' & consolidated the foundation and development.

There are many such plays and play-writer that induced 'New Zeal' in the Theatre. The contribution of many Directors, Artists, and Technos etc is phenomenal and valuable. Naming them all is essential but I salute their work & contributions rather than mentioning names.

Other Theatres in India have come up through more or less similar phase & stages and are marching ahead on the uniform principles of Theatre.

During 1960-1980, there was qualitative and quantitative progress in the field of Dramas. Regional languages like Kannad, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Gujrathi, Bengali, Hindi, Assamee, Pun-

jabi, and Oriya were used to bring their respective problems in the limelight. This helped in resolving the problems before they reached to an aggravated stage. This important task was performed by Theatre & hence I strongly recognize Theatre as the platform and means for social transformations. For proposing Constructive and Legitimate solutions, I believe and accept Theatre as the best avenue.

By touching the roots of socio-economic, political, cultural, familial issues, Theatre has awakened and inspired the people. In other words, it has proved to be a useful tool for public education.

Remembering the social obligation and keeping welfare of country, society, family in view, Theatre has in an impressive manner, helped to deviate people from ill thinking & intentions, demolishing the destructive ideas and prevent them from detrimental acts etc.

Conclusion:-

When society needs newer and better thoughts, the 'Art' start working. If you aim at greater success in a short span of time, Theatre is the most influential medium. IN the journey towards newer reforms, Theatre binds & weaves people together. Hence, I would again and again reiterate, emphasize that Theatre is the Seed Centre, which cultures people for Transformation in a Democratic manner.

REFERENCE

- 1) Thesis for Ph.D of Dr.Jayant Shevtekar | 2) Notes on Theatre Activities by Dr.Jayant Shevtekar | 3) Marathi Vishwakosh- Rangbhoomi (Encyclopedia vol 14, pg 264-309)