

Social Transformation through Theatre-Role of Street Theatre in India

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Theatre is a collaborative form of performing arts that uses live performances, typically actors, acts to present the experience of a real or imagined event before a live audience in a specific place, often a stage. The performers may communicate this experience to the audience through combinations of gesture, speech, song, music and dance. The fact that theatre is a cheap and predominantly oral medium also widens its audience group to include the poorest groups and classes. Social change can be closely associated with theatre. Earlier political form of theatre was used for “Agitation” and “Propaganda”.

Street theatre as a form of communication is deeply rooted in Indian tradition. In recent times street theatre form has been used to create socio-political awareness among the people of India, it also spreads message about burning issues. Street theatre breaks the formal barriers and reaches people directly. The performances/ as demonstrations could be seen in most places like market place, park, bus stop, railway stations, in front of commercial buildings, malls, schools, colleges and in other public places (Badal Sarkar). The term street theatre refers to social and political protests that take the form of dramatization in public places.

In India, street theatre activists see themselves as a part of social or political movements. In urban semi-urban areas, street theatre is an established tool for political agitation and protests. It has achieved a high degree of accomplishment as an art form. In rural areas street theatre is used to create awareness. The performances are seen as a vital means of developing awareness on social, cultural, educational, political and health issues. For them, they are means of reaching people of all social strata to educate them and call them to change the social element. NGO's, social activities, theatre personalities and other volunteers all over the country increasingly used street theatre as a means of social change.

Indian Peoples Theatre Association (IPTA) that sought to raise social and political issues through theatre and other art forms. It formed as an all India organisation in Mumbai in 1943. The IPTA along with the progressive writer's Association in (1930) provided the model of organised cultural activism and continues to be an inspiration even today, after decades of its initial glory that has faded away. The play that voiced anti-racist sentiments were staged that displayed the sentiments of the peasantry and the working class. “Samndaya” which was established in 1975 by prasanna in Bengaluru, Karnataka, was involved in staging various political issues through Kala Jaata. Nowadays the group is concentrating on farmers and youth issues.

JANAM i.e, Jana Natya Munch (People's Theatre Front) established by Satdar Hashmi in 1973, performed plays related to socio-political issues, effectively exposed, issues and emotions related to social and political issues.

Indian street theatre developed as an art form to illustrate the feelings of common man. Grass root amateur street theatre productions have become popular in community organising, education campaigns, and public health initiatives across the country. The street theatre in India has been dealing with the issues of capitalism, farmers problems, labour, environment, communalism, domestic violence, sexual harassment of women, child labour, bonded labour, corruption HIV/AIDS. In the recent years several NGO's and other groups of actors and activists performed the street plays on the following contemporary issues of India, they are, Demonetization, Environment, Superstitions, Ego, Sex education, LGBT, Terrorism, Drug addiction, Women empowerment, Save energy, Conservation of resources, Human Trafficking, Family relationship, Motivational, Save

girl child and etc. with the impact of above mention topics there will be awareness amongst people.

Street play is gradually but firmly establishing itself as the pivot of change going on in the society. The voice of the street play represents the voice of society. The voice says that we do not stay calm whenever injustice and atrocities are going on in the society; it's a kind of revolt against socio-economic imbalance. Street play is the spark for the ignites numerous fires in the hearts, minds and the soul of Indian multitude. As youth is a country's tomorrow making them the target audience and the great idea for being about the change, through these street plays the society slowly getting into netter place to live in.