

COMMUNICATION THROUGH DRAMA

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Abstract:

Drama is the most powerful medium of communication. Unlike cinema, it is a two-way communication as there is direct eye contact with the audience and also immediate response or feedback. Entertainment maybe there but through drama, social, political, cultural and ethical messages can be conveyed to the audience and from them to the common people with a very deep and long lasting impact. Theatre, as a communication medium, has significantly contributed in expressing the huge diversity that prevails in the society, and also different incidents going on about which the common people are not aware of. Drama, which in India was anciently known as “Bharata’sNatyasastra”, has always been a paradise for art lovers and with time it has steadily evolved in content, form as well as quality. From Shakespeare to Tagore and so on, drama has always been a very strong medium to create an influence on the audience and hence the society.

Introduction:

From time immemorial, during Greek civilization, drama has flourished in a big way and has spread in many countries in Europe. The content and the form changed throughout the years and also the stage craft was modified. Experiments were done on both social and political basis. Next greatest dramatist Shakespeare has an all-time mesmerizing effect on the audience throughout the world. Brechtian drama, with his theory of alienation had great worldwide impact and it governed Drama movement in Bengal for a few decades. . In our Indian scenario the greatest genius of literature Rabindranath Tagore with his drama like Raktakarabi and many others energized our Indian drama groups and audience to very high levels. In India the journey from jatra-pala, classical theatre and professional theatre to group theatre and third theatre is an ongoing process but there have been obstacles, ups and downs, financial crisis and many other problems. Group Theatre has played a very significant role. It is a theatre which cannot be called professional or commercial. It was intended as a base for the kind of theatre that people believed in— a forceful, naturalistic and highly disciplined artistry.

Method:

Drama is a creative expression of a tension that the playwright feels in their society. Some themes, like in Antigone of individual and state are timeless. It speaks to us as well as to the classical Greeks, subjective to judgment based on unquantifiable information, A BRAND’s image, a playwright’s concern can divert and prod thoughts, and reflect the ages in which they live. This is a qualitative method to remark the above written topic. Here, out of hundreds of drama in Bengali, we have been able to select only nine, chronologically as far as possible. We have also mentioned about a few plays by each playwright/dramatist in the remarks column.

1. NABANNA(1944)

(BY “I.P.T.A” DRAMA BY _BIJAN BHATTACHARYA)

About the Drama:

The drama is about the Bengal famine of 1943 in which more than 2 million people died of starvation, malnutrition and disease. The main character is PradhanSamaddar, a peasant in Bengal. The play presents the intensity of famine through the starvation of PradhanSamaddar's family.

Remarks:

Nabanna was staged before packed house for seven days and created unprecedented enthusiasm. The play and the production had germinal ingredients of the New Theatre movement. It created a lot of influence on the audience and made them understand the impacts of famine on the lower class people of the society.

2.RAKTOKARABI

(DRAMA BY _RABINDRANATH TAGORE STAGED BY “BOHURUPEE” IN 1954
DIRCTED BY _SHAMBHU MITRA)

The play depicts how human greed denies the beauties and naturalness of life, makes it a mere machine and a necessary ingredient for production, and what shapes human protests take against such a state.

Remarks:

In Raktokarabi, Nandini is a rebellion spirit of common people and she requests the Raja time and again to break the shackles of “yakshapuri”. And at last we find that Raja makes himself free from his own made captivity and he accompanies Nandini to the “mukti” that is the freedom of the common people. Other plays by him are Achalayatan, Balmiki Prativa, Nataraj, Muktheadhara, Bissarjan, Sodhbodh, Taser Desh, Dakghar.

3.EBONG INDRAJIT (1967)

(BY “SHATABDI” PLAYWRIGHT & DIRECTOR _BADAL SARKAR)

About the Drama:

The story of EbongIndrajit focuses on a writer, who narrates the story without ever being given a firm identity of his own. The actors often chose their roles from performance to performance and even exchange them in the middle of the play. Audience participation is encouraged and hence the audience can connect more to the drama. EbongIndrajit is an abstract play. Indrajit finally finds inspiration of writing in a woman named Manasi.

Remarks:

Bada Sarkar was the leading exponent of Third Theatre. He strongly believed that to reach the common mass, the drama has to come out from the Proscenium. Audience participation played a vital role in conveying the message of the drama and also increasing mass involvement.

4.OEDIPUS

BY “BOHURUPEE” (IN BENGALI_1963) _SOMBHU MITRA _TRIPTI MITRA ORIGINAL
GREEK DRAMA BY **SOPHOCLES**

Oedipus, in Greek Mythology, is the king of Thebes who unwillingly and unknowingly killed his father and married his mother. Oedipus's wife and mother hanged herself when the truth was revealed.

Remarks:

The original Greek drama was written by SOPHOCLES. In this drama, what truth comes out is each and every person is a puppet in the hands of destiny. He was the pioneer in Bengali theater. He has many famous dramas. One of them is "Chand Baniker Pala".

5. TIN POISAR PALA (1969)

(BY "NANDIKAR") _AJITESH BONDOPADHAY _RUDRAPRASAD SENGUPTA FROM ORIGINAL GERMAN DRAMA "THREE PENNY OPERA"

Die Dreigroschenoper

About the Drama:

Conflict between self-interest and love has been depicted in this drama. With many songs, it has been tried to prove that the Bourgeois and the thieves and beggars basically belong to the same category with different external appearance.

Remarks:

In this drama, Brecht has successfully implemented his theory of Alienation, and in Tin Poisar Pala an environment of scientific neutrality was established in the mind of the audience. Some of other Brechtian drama staged in Bengali: Khorir Gondi, Gallileo, schiweikgelojuddhe.

6. CHAK BHANGA MADHU (1972)

BY _ "THEATER WORKSHOP" PLAYWRIGHT _MANOJ MITRA

About the Drama:

The drama is about a family of Ojhas who had magical powers to cure snake bite. An ojha named Matla had to cure the snake bite of a Jotdar or money lenders. Now the play focuses on the dilemma that whether he should do his duty or let him die as the person was an oppressors to the people of Matla's society and his death could probably bring them salvation and his people might get some relief from the oppression that they had to face.

Remarks:

It is one of the finest examples of socio-political drama. It deals with the oppression of peasants and class conflict in the Sunderban area of West Bengal. Other remarkable play by ManojMitra: SajanoBagan, Narak Guljar, etc.

7. TINER TALOWAR (1964)

BY _ P.L.T DRAMA WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY _UTPAL DUTTA

About the Drama:

A group of theatre-loving people, who look at realistic drama as the true mirror of society, have to face tremendous opposition and oppression from the upper class people who control the society. The central character Benimadhav picks up a girl from a red-light area for the central character who marvelously depicts her role.

Remarks:

The passion and commitment of the drama group for realistic theater gives the courage to face all opposition. The name signifies the lack of proper strength to oppose yet they showed the courage to fight against oppression.

Other remarkable play by Utpal Dutta: Barricade, Kallol, Angar, Ferari Fauj, Ajker Shah Jahan.

8.ASALEEN (1996)

BY "PURAB PASCHIM" PLAYWRIGHT _BRATYA BASU
DIRECTION _BIPLAB BANDOPADHYAY

About the Drama

The problem of miscommunication between individuals especially when we try our best to convey a thought process through the medium of words or a sentence is the main theme of this drama.

Remarks

Because a sentence or phrase consists of words not enough expressive leads to misunderstandings and miscommunication. The play also dealt with the concept of the value system of a society, the idea of decent and indecent, the appropriate language and the abusive language, concept of subversive language. 'Shobdo-brohmoo' – A word can make or mar a situation. This message was aptly communicated through "Asaleen".

Other notable play by Bratya Basu: Hemlat- The Prince of Garanhata, Cinemar Mawto, Ruddhasangeet.

9.AMAL SYNDROME(2014)

By "SONGLAP KOLKATA"
PLAYWRIGHT & DIRECTOR _KUNTAL MUKHOPADHYAY

About the Drama:

The pressure of contemporary life has left Professor Amal Sen feeling secluded from everyone. He shelters himself within the creative works of Rabindranath Tagore. He soon starts hallucinating and visualizing dead people or characters of Tagore's Dakghar. This becomes an embarrassment for Amal's family and neighbors. This behavioral pattern is called Amal syndrome. Amal perceives that Rabindranath himself has arrived to help him recover.

Remarks:

Tagore himself helped Amal to recover from his unstable mental state and made him agog to face life with renewed vigor. This created a huge influence on the people in the locality to try leading a simpler life.

Other notable play by Kuntal Mukhopadhyay: Ispat, Sudrayan, Gharephera.

Discussion:

Bengal theatre has a great history. Great theatrical personalities like Girish Ghosh, Sisir Bhaduri, Shambhu Mitra, Bijon Bhattacharya, Mohit Chattopadhyay, Utpal Dutta, Manoj Mitra, Badal Sakar, Ajitesh, Rudraprasad, are few of the mention-worthy creators who work has kept drama alive and improved the standards to a great extent.

- **Different groups:** Chetna, Sayak, Charvak, Nandikar and Nandimukh, LTG, Sundaram, Theatre commune, Theatre centre, Sudrak, Jatrik (Naihati), Alt. (Madhyamgram), Chandik and Prantik (Behrampore), Behrampore Repertory Theatre, Classic (Chandannagore), and many others are groups who have been creating an impact.
- **Leading Theatrical personalities:** Arun Mukharjee, Meghnad Bhattacharya, Debasis Majumdar, Nilkantha Sengupta, Bivas Chakrabarty, Debshankar Halder, Bratya Basu, Shaoli Mitra, Soumitra Chatterjee, Goutam Halder, Kuntal Mukhopadhyay, are some of the famous names in the Theatre world.
- **Famous plays:** Marich Songbad, Jagannath, Shweykgelo Yuddhey, Dansagar, Pap- Punya, Amitakkhar, Bhalo Manush, Nachni, just to name a few.
- **Path Natika (Nukkar Drama):** Street theatre is a form of theatrical performance and it is presented at the outdoors in public spaces without a paying audience. It comprises of widely varied topics and are of short durations.

Conclusion:

Balancing between Content and Form of a drama by proper experimentation can effectively communicate a message to the audience and general mass.

Social media influence has created a challenging impact on the drama culture to create more good quality dramas. Another very significant aspect is the huge improvement in the culture of educating the youth in a proper way about the drama in a professional level from various institutions so that they can perform and convey the necessary messages and reach out to the society. To make a long-lasting impact on the audience great importance is given through eye-contact, movement and other means, and also on stage-craft including light and sound.