

THEATRE AS A TOOL OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION: A MEDIA AESTHETICS STUDY

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Abstract-In *Theatre for Development* (TfD), drama scripts are improvised on a certain developmental issue and presented according to the need of the people and area. The Koraput-Balangir-Kalahandi (KBK) region of Odisha, a state in Eastern India, is undoubtedly one of the most-backward, underdeveloped and poverty-stricken areas of the country. So, alternative forms of communication like theatre find relevance in formulating communication strategies in this area. The present study is based on enquires into the existing approaches of TfD, the aesthetic challenges it faces and attempts to explore the correct approach to TfD practice with respect to KBK. The findings hint at the use of aesthetically inappropriate methods to incorporate development messages in theatre and gross negligence to preparations of theatre. It is concluded that although applied in nature, a theatre should conform to its aesthetic principles to effectively communicate development messages.

Keywords: Theatre for Development, Koraput-Balangir-Kalahandi, Communication for Development (CFD), Media Aesthetics

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Introduction

Theatre is not only an art form that puts the principle of participatory communication to practice, it is also a collective effort which establishes a field of communication between the performers and spectators. It persuades the audience to think and appeals for change from within. This quality of theatre addresses the cultural and socio-psychological constraints to change—"It is more than entertainment, it is a complete emotional experience and creates a state of receptivity in which messages can be most effectively transmitted."(Malik, 1982, p.29). Theatre for Development (TfD) has become one of the most effective approaches of using theatre to disseminate the messages of development especially in the areas challenged in terms of health-hygiene, education, modernisation, and mass media accessibility and media literacy. The success of this idiom in India has been sparing and has been undergoing considerable experimentation with substantive contribution from international theorists and practitioners, U.N. agencies and contribution from the country's own practitioners. The use of folk forms in rural area campaigns is also an important factor. Theatre, primarily an art form, is going the applied way and therefore the question of aesthetics is extremely vital. The present paper studies the effectiveness of Theatre as a form of communication in the light of media aesthetics.

Significance

KBK stands for Koraput, Balangir and Kalahandi districts of Odisha. The erstwhile undivided Koraput district was fragmented into new districts of a smaller Koraput, Rayagada, Navarangpur, and Malkangiri. Similarly, Balangir was bifurcated into Balangir and Subarnapur. As per the data of the 55th Round of NSS in 1999-2000, the incidence of rural poverty was as high as 87.14 percent (1). The entire region is characterised by the existence of a sizeable tribal population comprising various tribes with forests and scheduled area of land. As per the latest reports of the *Deendayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana*, the state-wise figures show that the cumulative achievements in intensive electrification of villages are at 14 percent for Kalahandi, 9 percent for Koraput, 15 percent for Malkangiri, 26 percent for Nabarangpur, 4 percent for Rayagada and 37 percent for Subarnapur.

The BPL household connection achievement is 15 percent for Subarnapur, 9 percent for Rayagada, 14 percent for Nabarangpur, 11 percent for Malkangiri (2). With electrification not reaching the region properly the

penetration of electricity- based media namely television, cinema, video, and internet-based social media are significantly restricted.

It is, therefore, likely that a communication initiative through these media would reach only a handful of people. Practically, that has been happening as the governmental agencies and NGOs are increasingly adopting the electronic and new media for communication campaigns.

The All India Radio stations in Balangir and Jeypore cater to Balangir and Sonapur to some extent, and Jeypore with a couple of other blocks in the Koraput district, respectively. There is no FM transmission in the entire KBK region. However, in recently, some NGOs like SOVA *and* Ekta (Koraput) have started their own Community Radio Stations.

The Bhawanipatna Doordarshan Kendra covers the two districts of Kalahandi and Nuapada. Cable TV has significantly made inroads followed by digital television but their presence is felt in urban centers and district headquarters only. As per the 2011 Census figures, the literacy rates of KBK districts are as follows: Balangir 64 percent, Kalahandi 59 percent, Koraput 49 percent, Nabarangpur 46 percent, Rayagada 49 percent, Malkangiri 48 percent. Nuapada and Subarnapur are highly placed at 57 percent and 74 percent respectively (3). Although the newspapers and magazines will never give out their sales figures it may be easily inferred from the above figures that in KBK, the average literacy rate is below 50 percent and therefore it is less likely that people will read newspapers and magazines.

The KBK region is characterised by a strong presence of tribal population and therefore the existence of a popular indigenous culture being carried over through tradition. Each district has its own signature folk idiom which is theatrical in nature resplendent with elements of dance, music, and action. The Koraput, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, and Malkangiri districts specialise in tribal theatre form in an indigenous language known as *Desia Naat* and a tribal dance form known as *Dhemsā*. Kalahandi and Nuapada have *Ghumra* and *Bajasal* and the Balangir-Sonpur region has *Dhaap* and *Rasarkeli* as major folk forms. The big question is, how to use these forms in Theatre to spread the message of development or awareness? This poses a huge aesthetic challenge before the communicators.

Purpose and Questions

The present study is an aesthetic inquiry into the process of making of developmental drama which is being performed in the KBK region of Odisha

for spreading awareness about issues ranging from health, education to government schemes etc. In the light of theories and concepts of theatre, especially applied theatre, the study wants to analyse whether the existing practices are aesthetic in nature and are effective to serve the purpose of communication for which they are being made.

Thereafter, the study also wishes to make suggestions and recommendations about how to make these plays effective.

There have been several accounts of the impact of TfD on the audience but the present study is not about impact assessment rather the aesthetics of creation of content involving all elements of a theatre viz. script, acting, compositions, music, costumes, makeup, etc.

As the broad objective of the paper is to explore the possibilities of using theatre to spread the messages of development and awareness, the study will strive to search the answers to the following questions:

1. *What has been the ICE approach in India with regards to Theatre?*
2. *What are the aesthetic challenges for TfD which leads to its success or failure?*
3. *What should be the proper approach of TfD for the KBK region of Odisha?*

Review of relevant literature

IEC and Participatory Approach in Development Communication

The Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) activities have become an integral part of all the development campaigns in India as, being a third world nation, literacy, education and awareness levels are challenged. IEC is a broad term comprising a range of approaches, activities, and outputs. One of the important functions of IEC is to use media to inform or establish positive norms among the general population to the use of targeted communication to help those at particular risk evaluate their own behavior and develop new personal skills. Although the development process post-second world war followed the Top-Down Approach prescribed by Bretton Woods School of thought, leading to prolific use of mass media and established itself as the Dominant Paradigm of Communication, it was critiqued heavily by the Frankfurt School of thought after the former failed to bring about any significant change in the third world countries.

The latter strongly advocated an alternative paradigm of development based on Participatory Approach, emphasising on the involvement of people in their own process of development. The focus now shifted back from mass media to human communication-*“In many developing nations the mass media in*

their present form are not suited for the kinds of development tasks they have to perform....” (Melkote and Steeves, 2001, p.220).

Culture-based traditional forms of Communication like Theatre, Puppetry, Folk Music and Dance, etc. regained relevance. Introduced by United Nations through its well thought Communication Policy, Communication for Development (CfD) which advocates ‘*communication systems based on dialogue and that allows communities to speak out*’ (UNDP, 2009, p.5) has already been successfully implemented in many third world countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia in combating issues of health, literacy, hygiene, population and other developmental areas.

Awareness Theatre in India and Odisha

The original theatre of India is the indigenous folk forms which have been practiced since ages and still exists in the tribal and rural parts of India. Apart from that India also has a very rich culture of Classical Sanskrit Theatre which like European proscenium theatre has its own set of aesthetics derived from Bharat Muni’s *Natyashastra*, a much older manual of theatre than Aristotle’s *Poetics* which is followed in Europe.

In all forms of Indian Theatre, the principles of awareness and education are embedded in the text. The literary and oral traditions of our country, the Panchatantra, Jataka tales, epics like Ramayana, Mahabharata, the four Vedas are all sources of theatre plots and they carry the essence of moral education in them. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the great religious philosopher, after watching a play directed by Girish Chandra Ghosh blessed him and her lead actress Vinodini Dasi and famously said, “*Theatre e loko shikkhe hoi*” (Theatre is a medium of mass education).

[The Indian People’s Theatre Association, a cultural wing of the Communist Party was the first institution which organised systematic shows of their model of Street Theatre to spread their ideological stand which was anti-establishment in nature. Although its own artists left the organisation due to its alleged ignoring of aesthetics and increasing emphasis on direct dissemination of messages. The model of the theatre was adopted by the Government of India’s Song and Drama Division.] The first government attempt to use theatre in developmental process has its seeds in the document of the First Five Year Plan (Chapter VIII) which heavily advocates the use of folk and traditional forms for awareness campaigns: All available methods of communication have to be developed and the people approached

through written and spoken word, no less than through radio, film, song, and drama. Above all, steps have to be taken to provide literature and information for the people in simple language (PCI, 1952). Accordingly, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting used its Song and Drama Division as a nodal agency to impanel ethnic cultural troupes who would carry the messages of development to the remotest corners of the country.

In its recent report on the division, the parliamentary standing committee on Information and Broadcasting reiterates in introducing it as follows: The Division was set with an objective of “*Jan Kala Se Jan Chetna*” and for propagating various Policies, Programmes and Schemes of the Government. It engages in interpersonal communication through live media utilising the wide range of performing arts such as drama, dance-drama, composite programme, puppetry, ballets, operas, folk and traditional recitals, mythological recital, magic and other local folk and traditional forms. The main function of the Division is to create awareness and emotional receptivity among the general public regarding social, economic, and democratic ideals, which are very conducive to the progress of the nation through live entertainment. (SCIandB, 2018, p.1)

However, in subsequent stages it was accused of converting these awareness campaigns from an artistic process to a commercial process where awareness was put in a formula and messages were forcibly inducted on folk forms, or vice versa, thereby giving rise to a form devoid of any aesthetics. The committee criticised the functioning of the division and raised concern in its report echoing the same as the Committee observed that each and every programme has a definite message to be conveyed and also it has a target group of audience. Therefore, its effective dissemination to the masses is as important as the quality of the contents of the programmes.

The Committee, therefore, recommend the Ministry to ensure that the programmes of Song and Drama Division are tailored in such a manner which could suit the needs of the different sections of the society and particularly the target group of audience. (SCIandB, 2018. p.24)

However, the situation improved with the advent of UNESCO, UNICEF and the National School of Drama’s ‘Back to Roots’ movement. In Odisha, the two major phenomenon in this area was the *Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya* whose students trained in Theatre and later took up development drama as full-time work. One such important organisation was *Natyachetana*, theatre of consciousness in the very name of the group, led by

Subodh Patnaik, who trained further from Badal Sircar and added an ideological perspective to their developmental drama. Sircar inspired from foreign concepts of applied theatre shunned the proscenium theatre and developed his model of Third Theatre which could be performed at any space in minimalist form but keeping aesthetics intact.

Natyachetana's idea is to do 'modern Indian theatre' with contemporary content but building upon the locally existing modes of theatrical expression. Within these parameters, the group has developed two different performance formats, cyco-theatre for rural audiences and intimate theatre for urban, largely middle-class audiences. Cyco-theatre tours are done by bicycles, whereas intimate theatre, which usually has slightly more complicated stage solutions, needs a lorry or a bus to move around. The principle is that the plays have to be portable so that they can be brought to the people and not the other way around. Further, they must have relevance for ordinary people. Both types of plays are grounded in local stories and events, as well as background research, and are built up through a participatory process. Most of the plays have a climbing action and end in the middle of a crisis in the storyline. Thematically, Natyachetana's plays center on structural violence and unmet basic needs. (Ranta-Tyrkko, 2010, p.924).

Natyachetana tied up with various NGOs and presented plays based on local problems in the KBK region during the '90s. One of their acclaimed productions was *Tangia Chaap* (written and directed by Subodh Patnaik) which addresses the issue of forest cutting and subsequent displacement of tribals. The play exposed the corrupt practices of the timber traders and advocated for the Forest Rights of the tribals.

Dhuan and *Nian* are also similar dramatic presentations voicing the rights of tribals in the backdrop of left-wing extremism in KBK. In early 90's UNICEF began its TFD operations in Koraput and efforts were made to form theatre groups in various parts of the district.

During 2010-12, UNICEF in collaboration with IAEET, an NGO based in Koraput briefly ran a Community Theatre project in the lines of Augusto Boal's *Forum Theatre* methodology which was acclaimed and was successful to mobilize government intervention in certain matters of deprivation. In 2011 when Government of Odisha's Culture Department started a platform for folk artists known as Artist Federation where folk artists were impaneled in Song and Drama Division style and used in promotion of government awareness scheme. Excerpts from a report on one of its recent programme

go like: A two-day sensitisation programme for the officials of Nagar Kala Sanskruti Sangha is being hosted by the state culture department here. The centers will assist folk artists in the state to find a livelihood, find out ways to preserve their art forms and provide platforms to showcase their art forms. The participants are being guided to prepare micro plans of activity, script writing, prepare a calendar of activities at the *Sangha* level for smooth implementation of plans and programmes.

The centers have been set up in the municipal corporations of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack and the Municipalities of Puri, Brahmapur, Rourkela, Baripada, Bhadrak, Balasore and Sambalpur. The officers are being oriented on the basics of communication, community dialogue tools and effective mechanism to interact with the artists. A group of resource persons from Unicef is conducting the sessions.

The fundamental question which arises in an aesthetic sense is do the local artists deserve a sensitisation on their own problems from urban government officers? The report informs that officers are being oriented to interact with artists but what about artists' interaction with the target audience? It seems that the Federation is going the Song and Drama Division way of doing the mistake of over-emphasising on dissemination of information without really making any serious effort to discourse the aesthetics of the art forms which is so central to its communicative abilities. Here, another important issue of using the folk and traditional forms for communication also surfaces. The KBK region is characterised by the prevalence of different folk forms like *Desia Nata* and *Dhemsas* in Koraput, Malkangiri and Rayagada, *Ghumra* and *Bajasal* in Kalahandi, Nuapada, *Dhaap* in Balangir-Sonepur etc. However, an analysis of the features of these folk forms reveal that all the folk forms are not suited for the dissemination of messages and the incorporation of messages in a folk form is a matter of fine aesthetic sense which demands practice and intellectual discourse.

Historically, folk media have played a role in informing, instructing and motivating specific audiences. Folk media are flexible, portable and generally inexpensive. However, a careful balance must be maintained in using folk media to guard against the possibilities of the destruction of the folk media form and the use of folk media solely for development purposes. (Valvuen, 1988). The All India Radio Station at Jeypore, Koraput, Radio Dhemsas, a community radio station in Koraput and Doordarshan center at Bhawanipatna, Kalahandi have also chipped in with drama programmes on

various developmental issues. The plays have adhered to a mundane formula and struggle to achieve the aesthetic balance between art and communication which *Natyachetana* has exemplified.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Natyashastra

The *Natyashastra* describes the art and aesthetics of making of theatre, right from the conceptual stage to applied form on the stage.

It elucidates different kinds of *Rasas* and *Bhavas* as aesthetic expressions in theatre. The 6th and 7th chapters of the *Natyashastra*, known as the *Rasadhyaya* and *Bhavaadhyaya* respectively, together bring out the concept of the *Bhava-Rasa* theory of Bharata, and have hence become the bedrock for all deliberations on aesthetics, including the most brilliant contribution of Abhinavaguptacharya, whose *Abhinavabharati* remains till date the best commentary on the *Natyashastra*. 'Bhava' is derived from the root '*bhu*'-*bhavati*, that is, 'to become', 'to come into existence'.

Bharata gives a causal quality to *Bhava*, saying '*bhavayanti iti bhava*', that is, a thing or mental state that brings its awareness or makes one conscious of it, which pervades one like a particular smell. Bharata says that *Bhava* and *Rasa* are mutually dependent. The performer or producer, be it an actor, dancer, singer, instrumentalist, or stage craftsmen, should be conscious of the *sthayi bhava* and the *rasa* that they are striving to establish. This will help them realize their '*siddhi*' through '*Rasotpatti*'.

Aesthetic Theory-Theodor Adorno

In *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno is concerned not only with such standard aesthetic preoccupations as the function of beauty and sublimity in art but with the relations between art and society. He feels that modern art's freedom from such restrictions as a cult and imperial functions that had plagued previous eras of art has led to art's expanded critical capacity and increased formal autonomy. With this expanded autonomy comes art's increased responsibility for societal commentary. However, Adorno does not feel that overtly politicized content is art's greatest critical strength: rather, he champions a more abstracted type of "truth-content" (*Wahrheitsgehalt*).

Unlike Kantian or idealist aesthetics, Adorno's aesthetics locates truth-content in the art object, rather than in the perception of the subject. Such content is, however, affected by art's self-consciousness at the hands of

its necessary distance from society, which is perceptible in such instances as the dissonances inherent in modern art.

Theories for the Oppressed-Paulo Freire, Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal

The philosophical principles of applied theatre are credited to two pioneers namely Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal. Freire started in the late 1960s and early 1970s to develop a pedagogy of liberation with peasants in Brazil. Since then, his methodology and techniques of political mobilisation have served other purposes, for example, awareness raising on issues concerning the environment, health, and family planning. In Freire's idea, the oppressed illiterates must be offered the opportunity to become conscious of the fact they can change their own situation.

Later, influenced by Paulo Freire's critical pedagogies, Augusto Boal developed a didactics of progressive theatre techniques, experimenting with the use of Theatre as a rehearsal of social interventions. He viewed theatre as a laboratory and platform for conscientization, awareness raising and problem-solving. In elaborating his seminal work, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal combined the didactics developed by Freire and the theatre skills and techniques developed by Bertolt Brecht. As a result, he developed a wide range of dramatic strategies and games.

Research Methodology

Methodology-Media Aesthetics

The present study introduces Media Aesthetics as a robust research methodology. Media Aesthetics refers to the broad aesthetic aspects of media content creation. How is the content generated out of an idea, encoded in a script with the help of linguistic and non-verbal semiotics, how it is presented with the help of human and technological faculties in an aesthetic manner is the area of inquiry of Media Aesthetics.

This branch of research has been associated with media studies in studying technological aspects of Television. Theatre, being another audio-visual medium and bearing a lot of resemblance with Television in programme presentation may be subjected to Media Aesthetics methodology to inquire what makes a *good theatre*? A *good theatre* here means a theatre which will effectively communicate the messages to its audience. The justification for choosing Media Aesthetics may be summed up in the following lines: "The shift from media sensitive textual theory and analysis to

media aesthetics represented a shift from text to medium, from an interest in how the materiality of the text influenced the way the text made meaning, to an interest in the sensuous qualities of the experience.”(8)

The components of communication and idioms of theatre viz. script, dialogues, action, acting, sound, music, choreography, costume, make up are all aesthetic decisions taken by a communicator, a director and playwright, actor and designer in Theatre. The study aims to inquire into these decisions of quality, quantity, and beauty which prepares the content of the communication and the mode of its communication also.

The presupposition, in this case, is that if the communication process is not aesthetic, it is not effective and that aesthetics has no grammar as such, it relies more on senses.

Data Collection-Observation, Interview and Focused Group Discussion

As stated earlier, using theatre in awareness campaigns in KBK region of Odisha has been in practice since the mid-80s with Natya Chetana and it gained momentum with Unicef efforts since 1992. Secondary Data has been collected by observation of some of the recordings of the plays (10 nos.) which were performed during this period.

Books, research papers and research dissertations of similar subject and related topics have also been used as literature for the present study. For primary data, the district administration officers like DIPRO, DCO, PD and DMO and officers of different NGOs (10 nos.) working with theatre in the region have been interviewed to know the briefings given to the theatre troupes and the points of importance of different issues and projects. 20 playwrights and directors of Theatre whose scripts have been performed in the region or under whose direction the productions have been performed, including urban and rural have been interviewed to understand the scriptwriting process, rehearsal process and production process of a play. The group members of 10 such teams have been arranged together for a Focused Group Discussion to find out the aesthetic involvement of artists in building/mounting of a play. Live performances of these troops (05 nos.) have been observed and notes were taken down for analysis.

Data Analysis- Qualitative Analysis, Discourse Analysis and Coding

The plays (both performance and rehearsal) which have been observed live and recorded have been analysed with the principles of Qualitative Analysis

of moving image and Discourse Analysis, emphasizing on the aesthetic elements. Interviews which form the important part of primary data have been codified qualitatively and issue-based keywords brings out the trends of opinion expressed on various aesthetic questions of theatre-making.

Analysis, Findings and Recommendations

Approach Analysis

The most vital part of the study has been on the correct approach to preparing an awareness drama. It is indeed the most conflicting part also.

The findings on this area have been arrived at by analyzing the ancient prevalent approaches to Indian Theatre, the modern approaches to applied theatre and the opinions expressed by the past and present Indian theatre directors. A range of conflicting ideas, concepts and processes tell us about so many approaches. It was imperative to weigh the logic behind these approaches with the quality of the outcome of the theatre and its aesthetic appreciation. The elements of theatre have been broken down for individual examination as regards to respective approaches to come to a conclusion. There is no 'one' way to a theatre.

Coding Chart

Sl no.	Category/Issue	Codes from interviews/FGD	Remarks/Code Number
1.	Organising campaigns	a) Govt. guidelines b) The launch of new schemes/projects c) Budgetary provision d) Region/area	Aesthetic consideration is minimum.....1A Theatre considered being an alternative for mass media when the budget is low.....1B
2.	Making Scripts	a) Govt workshops b) IEC materials c) Budgetary provision d) Formula script	Dramaturgy is not followed.....2A Creativity is not exercised, the script is centered round information advocated by non-artists i.e. govt. officers.....2B Plot, no. of characters depends on budget and the stereotype formula.....2C

3.	Production	a) Role of director b) Elements of theatre c) Budgetary provision	Stand and deliver a model of theatre.....3A Emphasis on music and dance.....3B Attempt to spend less.....3C
4.	Performance	a) Time and space b) Interactivity c) Communication	Street theatre format.....4A Minimum use of space.....4B No fixed real-time show.....4C One sided dissemination of information.....4D Audience is not actively involved.....4E
5.	Use of folk media	a) Folk based communication b) Compatibility of the folk form	Positions of placing elements of folk.....5A Incorporation of message.....5B Form as structure or ornament.....5C
6.	Approaches to TfD	a) Street Theatre Model (IPTA/Song and Drama division/Artist Federation) b) Third Theatre Model (Badal Sircar/Subodh Patnaik) c) Forum/CBT Model (Augusto Boal/Janasamskriti/ALT)	Local language is an advantage.....6A Well rehearsed and artistic theatre likely to make impact.....6B Community Engagement and participation is a must.....6C Theatre should be a Theatre first....6D
7.	Recommended approach to TfD	a) Approach and Policy b) Making of Theatre	Minimum government intervention.....7A Freedom to artists.....7B Performance Text.....7C Facilitation.....7D

Interviews of IEC specialists, government officials related to health, education etc. reveal an instant agreement for using theatre in the region with some anguish pertaining to non-availability of artists and teams due to lack of human resource and poor finance. That the use of electronic media is much more convenient is a point that may influence decisions of using theatre in coming days. This section of respondents is far more interested in stuffing a play with information and are not at all concerned about how they may be communicated aesthetically. The lack of concern regarding aesthetic

issues of these officials has had a concurrent effect on the artists and directors of theatre as well. (1A-B) Codification of interviews of theatre artists and focused group discussions of theatre teams lead us to the facts that creativity, which is the lifeline of an art form like Theatre has taken a back seat in the developmental plays performed by the theatre groups impanelled under the Song and Drama Division, Artist Federation and the NGOs primarily due to two reasons. One, they are being dictated by officials who are not competent about theatre and two, due to the show string budget which is compelling them to compromise on aesthetic aspects like number of characters, settings etc. (2A-C)

The street theatre model which these groups have followed is not compatible to effectively communicate the messages of development as the art is compromised and does not impact people.

The balance of art with communication may be achieved either by following the Third Theatre model of Natyachetana or by following the community theatre model of Janasanskriti followed in Koraput by IAEET. Community participation and facilitation should be the model of Tfd in underdeveloped regions like KBK. (3A-D,4A-E,6A-D).

Production Analysis

A Specific Example-Play: 'Dekhile Janibe' (Subject: Dengue/Mosquito Net awareness) by Koraput Cultural Society at Koraput. The play *Dekhile Janibe* narrates the story of a family where the husband takes his malaria-afflicted wife to the local priest, *Dishari* for treatment and later, when her health worsens further, upon rebuked by neighbour, he takes her to the hospital. The local health counselor, Ashadidi, advises them to use mosquito nets, describes the symptoms, asks not to allow water to strangle and consult doctors on time. The objective of the play was to make the people of Koraput aware about the causes, symptoms of Malaria and Dengue, tell them about the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito, motivate them to use a mosquito net and take the patients to health centers and hospitals instead of taking them to the Dishari. Starting with the textual and linguistic analysis first, the biggest strength of the play is that the dialogues are in Koraputia Desia language which is extremely familiar to the audience and through it, the play immediately creates an atmosphere of acceptance with them. Another aspect of the introductory part is the *Dhemsā* dance which is a favorite mode of entertainment of the people of Koraput region. The Desia language and the

dhemsa immediately capture the imagination of the audience and they play in a positive frame of mind, i.e. a state of cognitive consonance is created. The theatrical trick of starting the play with loud music followed by Dhemsa is appropriate as it is necessary for the beginning to pull the crowd. As the performance is taking place in the open air the crowd pulling techniques have to take assistance from loud music and dance.

As the play takes off with the narrative the acting gets derailed in places where the action of all the co-actors do not match the efficiency and due to poor acting, especially, verbal acting (delivery of dialogues) suffers and many important dialogues containing the symptoms are not communicated to the audience. However, the entry of the Dishari has an electrifying impact on the audience and everybody is hooked back onto the play at once. The colourful costume, make up (long wig and a dominating mustache) of the Dishari and the elaborate rituals present an audio-visual theatrical treat to the audience. Most importantly, another factor was nicely added in this scene, the use of humor, which was extremely effective.

The use of funny colloquial slangs and actions comprising weird facial expressions and pelvic thrusts, occasionally laughing in a bizarre way and beating and slapping made the audience rolling in laughter.

However, in the latter part of the play, as the story took a serious turn, the acting seemed to deteriorate in pace and quality and the plot became predictable. The audience was losing interest and looking here and there instead of the acting space. The time taken for the transition from one scene to another was sometimes too long as the actor playing more than one role had to change his makeup and dresses.

This time lag contributed to harming the tempo of the performance to a great extent. Eventually, the play became mundane as it was left with no dramatic climax but only a verbal description of Do's and Don'ts was dictated to the audience. The Dhemsa is repeated but it is not as effective as it was in the beginning as by that time the performance has lost the grip over the audience which has begun disintegrating. (3A-C, 4A-E and 5A-C)

Findings

1. *The environment for acceptance of awareness drama is very much present in the region as people are highly interested to see a play.*
2. *The use of Desia language and proficiency of artists in it are the strength and positive of the script and the performance.*

3. *The starting of the play with music and dhensa is appropriate and excellently used to gather the crowd. For this region, it is the correct measure.*
4. *The team of performers had almost all local artists which helped to remove the distance between the performers and audience.*
5. *The script establishes a 'Good' vs. 'Bad' model where the Dishari is represented as an evil bad character who does no treatment of the patient except certain rituals juxtaposed opposite the 'Ashadidi' who sermons good advice about symptoms and asks the patients to be taken to health centers.*
6. *The script focuses more on staying away from the Dishari and going to health centers. But the portions containing awareness regarding symptoms and utility of mosquito net have not been demonstrated properly through theatre.*
7. *Vital information regarding Aedes Aegypti mosquito has not been said with emphasis.*
8. *The urge to people to use mosquito nets have been said through a speech at the end of the play rather than incorporating it creatively in the play.*
9. *The script has tried to impose the issue on the audience rather than the plot creating the realization within the thought process of the audience.*
10. *The tools of theatre like makeup costume music dance have been used but as separate items. They did not seam effortlessly within the production. Also, there was the scope of using some more tools like choreography, settings within the scenes which could have added some visual treat, was not explored.*
11. *The pace of the production was inconsistent due to which it was dropping at places and audience was losing interest. Long scene transitions were also adding to the loss of interest.*
12. *The musical hands were underutilised. They played only at the start and at the end. They had no role to play during the performance.*
13. *The acting was inconsistent. The body language and the voice of actors were not in sync with each other. The difference in capabilities of Damru with others was very evident. The acting teamwork was absent. Most of the artists, especially women artists, were not well versed with the subject neither well trained. More rehearsals are needed.*
14. *The dialogues lack the philosophical thrust and depth. There was not a single memorable dialogue in the entire play.*
15. *Due to a good starting and subsequent interesting storyline the play could influence the audience for the initial stage but as the narrative moved ahead it lost its control over the audience.*

Recommendations

1. The Rehearsal process is extremely important. The team must include performers from affected regions after thorough community interaction in the lines of participatory approach as Freire had proposed. Only then the people will feel that this reflection of their genuine problems rather than watching from a distance.
2. There is need of rewriting the script and addition of proper reflection of life in Koraput has to be added, preferably centered around the victim, so that people can relate themselves with his pains and sufferings rather than sympathizing from a distance. The proper form of a dramaturg namely introduction, synthesis, climax, anti-climax, catharsis has to be there. The Dramatis Personae may be explored and the play may be shifted at times from hard realism to surrealism and fantasy for eg. *Edis Egyptai* may be brought in as antagonist character.
3. With regards to production, creative exploration of space and the human body has to be done so that the open air theatre becomes an aesthetically visual treat in a limited budget. The variations in space and levels of space add to the visual beauty and people of boredom. Site-specific improvisations are necessary.
4. Songs and rhymes from literature and folk repository may be used in the script.
5. The Director must think of using participatory approaches in the play so that the audience also get involved. Otherwise, the entire exercise is turning out to be one-way communication. Methods like Forum Theatre may be used for this purpose.

Conclusion

There is no specific formula which can guarantee the success of a Tfd campaign in any part of the world. But there is no doubt about the fact that Theatre is an art first and tool second. As it is evident after the study that a Theatre has to be a proper Theatre in order to be an effective communicator. A Theatre which has not maintained its aesthetic principles cannot communicate messages of development. The aesthetics of a theatre depends on, among many things, its objectives. The quality of script and production depend on the playwright and the directorial team. How it may become aesthetic depends on their sensibilities and beauty-consciousness. The sense

and consciousness generate from creativity, practice, thought and knowledge. There are two kinds of theatre-Good and Bad. A good theatre will be remembered and realized by the audience, the bad one will be rejected and this will happen irrespective of the intellect of the audience. Theatre should be made by keeping the sensibilities and wisdom of audience at the same, if not, a higher level than of the creators. If a theatrician can meet the aesthetic challenges of building up a theatre which conveys the messages of development, he/she is more likely to affect a behavior change.

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