

THEATRE AS A PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTION TOOL FOR DE-ADDICTION PROGRAMMES

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Abstract: Man is a social animal as well as pleasure seeking one. The existence of harmonious social relations also based on the balance of the pleasure and pain. The way to pleasure is many folds, may or may not desirable, for sustainability and progress of both individual and society. The substances are one of the ways for pleasure or happiness, a non-desirable one. So, for the sake of the individual and society need to correct them, those are in wrong path of pleasure. Applied theatre is umbrella term that cover the wide applications of theatre, such as in education, in organizational development, in community development etc...And theatre can use an intervention tool in de-addiction programmes. While one in addiction the personality of the individual and his interaction with society should not be in normal pace, that should affect in his social roles and duties, his behaviour should be collapsed. The making up of his personality and bring back the individual to the society is very primary end of deaddiction programmes. Theatre based therapy or activities are proved, as a tool to improve and change behaviour of the individual. This paper discussed why and how theatre can use as an intervention tool, based on the various reported studies on applied theatre and art-based therapy programmes.

Keywords: theatre intervention, alternate theatre, theatre for de-addiction, theatre for CBT

Introduction

The oxford dictionary gives the meaning to addiction as “The fact or condition of being addicted to a particular substance or activity”. The substance addiction is a disease, that caused by the use or consumption of alternative ways to pleasure. In 1987, the American Medical Association and other medical organizations officially termed addiction a disease [1]. In this view addiction is defined as the ongoing use of mood-altering substances, such as alcohol and drugs, despite adverse consequences. Genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influence the development and manifestations of the disease [2]. Addiction become severe one when the use of the substance compulsive as other survival behaviours and affect the cognitive and social behaviour, the uncontrollable craving for the substance.

The adverse effect of addiction includes the physical problems, personal problems and social problems. The side effects of use and excessive intake of the substance caused in physical and mental health problems of the addict. The breakdown of the personal will reflects upon the, relations of family, friends, career. The treatment of the addiction includes the medication break the drug dependency and psychosocial intervention with Cognitive therapy and behavioural therapy to meant for mend the person personally and reintegrate the victim to the society, the problems the person facing are physical, psychological and sociological so a de addiction program should consider all three. This paper confined to the psychological and sociological aspect of the treatment, by analysing theatre as a psychosocial intervention tool.

Methodology

This paper is conceptual based on the experience in various process of theatre, reported studies on applied theatre and theatre-based substance de addiction programmes.

Theoretical background

The psychological intervention very basically intended to recreate the person who suffered with addiction and reintegrate the person to his social life. A sound personal would have a rational mind, emotional balance, confidence, motivation...and his behaviour also societal accepted and harmonial. But all those characters or abilities or social skills make a person perfect and acceptable are achieved over time of his life through learning from different sources and experience of past life and the society around. Richard Shechner observed the concept as ‘every action from the smallest to the most encompassing is made of twice-behaved behaviours’ [3]. Theatre imitates life a metaphor of life, the preparation for theatre or a performance in theatre have simile. The performance elements of the theatre are not unfamiliar to any one because the performances are as the part our life or very near

and around of our life, that may extend from a child play to a receiving smile of a receptionist. And the theatre performance or acting not only a physical action but it happens with an integration of psychophysical process. So, the personal recreation and social reintegration of substance addict would be possible with theatre based psychosocial intervention. And theatre could perform as a simulator mechanism to re-entry to the social roles and to develop skills for intra personal relations.

Theatre as a Tool

The meta entertainment function and practice of theatre is not a new concept, Aristotle in Poetics states the function of tragedy is purgation of emotions of audience, termed as Catharsis and the Sage Bharatha in Natyashastra accounts the creation of the art Natya with the end to create a medium for instruct and entertain alike. The meta entertainment form of theatre practices are range a wide spectrum that includes, drama therapy, theatre therapy, community theatre, participatory theatre, devised theatre, theatre-based learning, oppressed theatre, forum theatre, etc... The term Alternative Theatre Practices[4] or Applied theatre [5] is use to collectively call the interdisciplinary theatre approaches and practises for different purposes. The theatrical methods commonly in use are role play, improvisation, storytelling, etc... The very basic of the all forms and methods is all are action based. Action, which create the whole drama of life and which imitate in drama according to Poetics and Natyashastra.

Theatre as a Psychosocial Intervention Tool

The individual life and social life of reality demands same qualities which an actor/ performer required over the fictional space. The training for the actor is mostly from his real life, may by his observation and imitation. Theatre as an intervention tool attempt to achieve the personal and social skills those lost. The theatre-based therapy or drama therapy will provide option to develop new skills and transform the individual [6] [7]. The theatre techniques those includes character-building, role-play, image theatre etc...are meant to develop their social skills, discover new behavioural approaches and promote personal change [8][9][10][11][12]. Schechner [3] proposes that the seven functions of performance are:

1. to entertain
2. to make something that is beautiful
3. to mark or change identity
4. to make or foster community
5. to heal
6. to teach, persuade or convince
7. to deal with the sacred and/or the demonic.

The imaginary roles of psycho drama and drama therapy provides a layer of emotional distance relatively safe and controlled ways to uncover and address deeply felt issues [13]. That would help to self-realization and reformation and help to learn from past experience.

The substance dependence is socially excluded with discrimination, prejudice and stigmatisation, it ends in the demonization problem. The confidence and interest of accessing public places and engaged in group activities will disappear from dependence. The intervention should address to invoke the interpersonal capabilities of the dependence. The potentiality of the theatre includes foster communities, an assumption that was based on the fact that theatre is an activity which involves the qualities of collaboration, solidarity and affiliation [14][15]. The participatory forms of theatre have been used as powerful tools in promoting the rediscovery or reconnection of individuals with their communities [16][17]. The potentiality of the theatre is extended from to build a community to generate a hope or desire for community in individual, it has the power to increase the participants' desire for community by encouraging them to find their "voice, meaning [substance of their life] and connectedness".

Drama offers a more participatory process that generates fun from within, a more wholesome way to get "high" (...) Improvising opens the mind to the continuing flow of imagery and inspirations from the creative subconscious. Discovering that one has this ability to tap into rich resources of inspiration deepens identity and increases creative potential – Adam Blatner [18]

Theatre intervention offers other than participation a creative engagement demanding dependence contribution in the part of the intervention activities. The creative contribution may be narration of stories, from different sources including experience of own life. But such creative activities appealed to imagination and emotions of the creator that will liberate the creative energy of the dependence, and resulted in wonder and excitement. Csiksentmihalyi [19] points out that the act of creation is a fascinating experience since it provides us with feelings of fulfilment and excitement which are essential for our wellbeing.

Theatre is facilitating opportunity to transform by performances, Schechner's the concept of transport and transformation of performance he concludes 'repeatable experiences of transportation can potentially lead to a transformation' [20]. In theatre-based intervention theatre can act as transformative agent, for promoting personal and social change. The engagement in theatre demands certain roles inside it, a performer or actor otherwise a spectator. The theatre-based intervention programmes provide opportunity to enact the personal experience, to understand the past crisis situation and to provide emotional release. Also, such enactment alternative behavioural choices that invokes decision making, imagination. And the enactments provide opportunity to learn and train new behavioural skills with in the group that will help him to connect to groups and society. Drug users often use

drugs as a way of escaping from the pressures of reality – they want to ‘get out of it’ – this is a strategy that is used as a way of dealing with situations that become too much in the real world.

Theatre provide with performance an alternative form of escapism and expression by taking the participants “on some kind of journey – psychological, emotional” [21]. The different experiences of the individuals’ spiritual and psychological transportations might result in some kind of transformation alongside involvement in a creative activity. Nicholson, [22] a dependence engaged in creative process of performances more, the importance of substance will replace to the creative process and engagement, that will result in behavioural change and attitude.

Conclusion

Theatre than any other intervention methods simultaneously work as a method/mode of therapy and medium of creativity. Throughout the life of an individual the shaping and reshaping of behaviour is going continuously, from birth to end. So, the theatre could work as a simulative ground to the individuals to shape and reshape their character and social faculties. Structure of theatre conventionally divided into two as audience space and actors’ space but the theatre while engaged with curative end there is not such divisions all people/ all participants are take part in the creative process as performer and audience. So, the in-intervention theatre feature of the theatre is process oriented one than performance oriented one. The participants are important to this theatre, it meant to make them in part of the team, make them involve in group actions, to take decisions and implementations of actions inside the play that may a metaphor to the real world so it will act as learning or training process and also would give confidence to face / or act such situations with emotional balance and confidence.

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