



# STREET PLAY- A MEDIUM OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

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## **Abstract :**

In the early twentieth century, street theatre arose as a means of emancipating the working class and reinforcing the revolution against established power. Its journey began in India, primarily by left-wing theatre activists, during the anti-colonial struggle. Although street theatre is a type of performance art, it is also a type of performance art. It's more of a social communication process with a close relationship to folk theatre. The purpose of this study is to examine the function and possibilities of street theatre as a community development instrument that tries to bring about social change. The West Street theatre is not a one-off presentation. It's a participative style of narration that uses fictional narratives to communicate important societal issues. It encourages people to express themselves in their own unique manner. The option to participate is always present. The study concentrated on, titled "Street Theatre as a Social Communication Medium: In Maharashtra, a participatory research work with youth and audience was carried out with the active participation of young people who formed Street Theatre to deliver messages to audiences. The perspectives of participants from various Maharashtra colleges on street theatre were also gathered.

**Keywords :** Street theater, Social communication Medium, folk theater, community development tool.

## **Introduction**

After 75 years of independence, a country that is home to nearly one-third of the world's poorest people (Nelson, 2013) and is still struggling to meet the world's average education rate to ensure literacy for all, can hardly visualise using print media or technological advancements for modern communication. Therefore, communities' stories should always be told loud and clear, facts that impact them (or may influence them) must be discussed in an open forum, information must be shared, and communication must be encouraged for inclusive social development.

By utilising the visual form, expressive presentation, and easy re-enactment, street theatre, as a specific kind of performing art, supports the process of social development. During the war for independence, street theatre took on a distinct form for expressing patriotism and generating a surge of nationalism. The history of the street theatre movement in India began with IPTA, which later spread throughout the country despite boundaries and cultural barriers. Women's issues, children's health and education, communism, and economic liberation have all been important facets of street plays.

### Street Theatre



Street Theatre is a method of theatrical performance and presentation that takes place in open public spaces without a paid audience. It is used as a means of communication to disseminate social and political messages, as well as to raise awareness among the general public about pressing social concerns. Grassroots, amateur street theater shows have gained popularity around the world in community organizing, education campaigns, and public health programmes. Themes of street plays have evolved with time, from national awareness to capitalism, peasant and labour movements, environmental issues, communalism, sexual harassment of women, domestic violence, issues related to children's rights, child abuse, HIV/AIDS, corruption, etc.

### Social Communication Tool-

In a practical sense, street play is a type of group drama performed outdoors, mainly on the street, on a college or university campus, at a railway station, in a market, or in slums, where a group of artists can directly interact with a broad section of the audience in order to not only entertain but also to trigger activism. Traditional ways of communication are people's indigenous modes of expression. They're like a tree's roots, without which the tree would fall. Traditional media, in contrast to current mass media, are more intimate, recognisable, and trustworthy, with the majority of literate people understanding their formats, genres, and content. Through open communication, an intentional distortion of the forms might quickly alienate the public. People's hearts and minds are close to the folk media, therefore their attraction is personal and intimate. The different groupings and distinct forms provided for certain homogeneous

groups and for specialised objectives can be leveraged to serve people from various regions on their own territory, as it has been done previously. The traditional media's nature makes it an extremely effective medium for mass communication. Traditional media are the most appropriate for bringing about changes in attitudes and promoting new habits in a traditional society, just as a nail is used to drive out a nail. The fundamental aesthetical aspects of street plays include the incorporation of local languages into songs, dance, and folk arts, the use of minimal props or clothing, and the lack of a theatrical set-up. The shape is maintained as free of hyperbole and as clean as possible, while the tone is set to electric using an experimental approach. In street theatre, the audience comes to the theatre rather than the other way around. Unlike traditional modes of communication, which either use a medium between the communicator and the receiver or do away with the scope for feedback, street plays are primarily community-based, short in length, and allow for post-performance conversation with the audience, unlike traditional modes of communication, which either use a medium between the communicator and the receiver or do away with the scope for feedback.

### **A Conceptual Framework for Theater**

A new form of social education and development for the marginalised and the persecuted took shape and received global attention, mainly based on the theatrical form, to critically question the conventional academic system and reverse the top-down approach to education into a participatory process. A new kind of social education and development for the marginalised and persecuted has emerged, primarily based on theatrical forms, to critically question the standard academic system and transform the top-down approach to education into a participatory process. The term "theatre-in-education" (TIE) refers to the use of theatre for purposes other than entertainment. The goal is to change audience members' knowledge, attitudes, or behaviour (or all three) in some way. Theatre has taken a novel approach to bridging the gap between classroom learning and dramatic skills, a collaboration that has benefited both educators and performers. The participants primarily express themselves through nonverbal means, moulding their own and other participants' bodies into static physical representations that can express an abstract or concrete topic or mood.

#### **Study Phases:**

The study was divided into three phases based on the objectives:

#### **1) Views of audience regarding performance and Street Theatre for Communication:**

An open-ended questionnaire was used to collect the opinions of 50 people. The vast majority of them were women from similar backgrounds to the performers. A random sample was taken. The following are the most important findings:

- The play's problem is one of necessity. Because of its existence, the drama is based on real-life experiences. The events presented in the play are based on true events.
- The play was superb in terms of acting, but it was good in terms of content, music, formation, coordination, props, humour, and the capacity to attract interest.
- Because of its realism, street theatre is a useful medium for presenting major issues. An ordinary man's real-life concerns are addressed through street theatre.

- There are no restrictions on what problems can be addressed by street theatre, involving political, health, environmental, and social issues.
- Because people in rural areas are less aware of societal issues, street theatre can be performed there.
- It can also be done in colleges because young people are the primary target audience for communicating messages because they are the nation's future heroes.
- The youth might be the target audience because they are the most productive and the future of tomorrow.

#### **Views of participants on Street Theatre as a tool for Communication:**

- People's associations with street theatre have influenced cognitive skills such as decision making, self awareness, and critical thinking, according to significant stories collected from team members.
- Significant Stories also showcased team members' social abilities, such as team leadership, appreciation, and moving the scene ahead with others.
- The impact of Street Theatre on the development of team members' personalities has been mentioned in the stories.
- These improvements have been recorded through the team members' major stories, and changes such as increased confidence, negotiation abilities, and empathy toward others have occurred in the team members.
- Transparency and debate are used to develop societal norms and discuss problems of concern relating to the stories. The stories provide insights into the transformation process and can help the programme comprehend and communicate people's perspectives.

#### 2) Professionals' perspectives on the street as a tool for theatre Communication

- The use of local language and personalities with whom the audience may identify improves the audience's attention span.
- The audience is drawn in by messages conveyed through songs and rhymes. Its popularity is enhanced by songs based on popular catchy tunes.
- Street theatre strives to sensitise the masses to social issues and communicate with them.
- Street plays can establish a conducive environment for the development of social norms.

#### **Conclusion – The Potential to Bring Change**

Although the street theatre movement has always been Left-leaning, the goal of their art is to bring about social change in the lives of the oppressed – the common people. Street theatre is being recognized as a powerful tool for social change & communication. It is an excellent tool of edutainment because it contains effective components such as topic relevancy, script content, audience active participation, conversation strength, and physical movement, all of which help to make the play understandable by educating and entertaining audiences. To achieve this, it is critical to integrate the processes of "progressive community development" with "popular education." Street plays, as a genre of popular theatre, strive to establish a participatory process that is in touch with the target audience's "cultural forms." However, in order to maximise its potential and produce a positive impact on society, the theatrical process should be combined with long-term development planning. For this, the street theatre should get to know its audience, identify topics of concern, weave communal expression and entertainment together, invite audience participation, and make a call to action. It is critical to establish dialogue following the performance in order to determine

whether the messages were received by the audience, and post-performance talks have an impact through individualism. After the performance, interactivity allows for feedback, which has a significant impact on the performance and content. As a result, street theatre delivers good and effective information about various areas as well as exposure to societal issues through a strong communication method.

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