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THEATRE ARTS AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN EDUCATION

Annotation

The article “Theatre Arts and its Importance in Education” depicts the problem of Theatre Arts, one of the popular form of performing arts. This art form is rarely used from the preliminary stage of education to the senior secondary stage of education in our country. This article highlights the importance, challenge and seeks to improve the growth benefits of the younger generation. The children of the new generation are unaware of the culture, tradition, moral ethics etc. Theatre Arts helps them to present and apply these practically and creatively. In this article the researcher tries to study the benefits and impact of theatre arts in education, bearing in mind its long-term goals for the children. Theatre has been a means of entertainment and also a resource of cultural and social lifestyles of various regions, religions and societies. It is not only a means of entertainment but a very powerful tool to spread social messages across the length and breadth of the country. Indian Government has used it successfully for programmes. Such programmes go a long way in spreading awareness about polio eradication, save soil, afforestation, girl child education, various vaccinations, AIDS, COVID, Save Water, prevention of child marriage, dowry deaths etc.

Key words: theatre arts, performing arts, culture, rituals, folk, dramatic arts, natyashastra.

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ТЕАТР ӨНЕРІ ЖӘНЕ ОНЫҢ БІЛІМ БЕРУДЕГІ МАҢЫЗЫ

Аннотация

“Театр өнері және оның білім берудегі маңызы” мақаласында орындаушылық өнердің танымал түрлерінің бірі-театр өнері мәселесі қарастырылады. Орта білімнің бастауыш деңгейінен бастап жоғарғы сатысына дейін өнердің бұл түрі өте сирек қолданылады. Бұл мақала тақырыптың өзектілігін, маңыздылығын айқындайды, сондай-ақ жас ұрпақтың өмірін жақсартуға бағытталған. Жаңа буын балалары мәдениет, дәстүр, моральдық этика және т.б. туралы білмейді. Бұл мақалада зерттеуші балаларға арналған ұзақ мерзімді мақсаттарды анықтай келе, театр өнерінің балалардың білім алуына тигізетін әсері мен пайдасын зерттейді. Театр қашан да ойын-сауық орталығы, сонымен қатар әртүрлі аймақтардың, діндер мен қоғамдардың мәдени және әлеуметтік өмір салтының қайнар көзі болып есептеледі. Бұл тек ойын-сауық орталығы ғана емес, сонымен қатар бүкіл ел бойынша барлық әлеуметтік хабарларды таратудың өте күшті құралы болып танылады. Үндістан үкіметі оны өз бағдарламаларында сәтті қолдана білді. Мұндай бағдарламалар полиомиелитті жою, топырақты сақтау, орман өсіру, қыздардың білімі, әртүрлі вакцинация, ЖИТС, COVID, суды үнемдеу, балалардың некесін

болдырмау, дәстүрге сай қыз жасауының болмауы және т. б. туралы ақпараттарды таратуда маңызды орын алады.

Түйінді сөздер: театр өнері, орындаушылық өнер, мәдениет, салт-дәстүрлер, фольклор, драмалық өнер, натьяшастра.

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ТЕАТРАЛЬНОЕ ИСКУССТВО И ЕГО ЗНАЧЕНИЕ В ОБРАЗОВАНИИ

Аннотация

В статье “Театральное искусство и его значение в образовании” рассматривается проблема театрального искусства, одна из популярных форм исполнительского искусства. От начальной до старшей ступени среднего образования этот вид искусства используется очень редко. Эта статья акцентирует внимание на важности темы, ее проблематичности и нацелена на улучшение жизни молодого поколения. Дети нового поколения не знают о культуре, традициях, моральной этике и т.д. Театральное искусство помогает им представлять и применять эти знания практически и творчески. Автор статьи освещает собственную попытку изучения пользы влияния театрального искусства на образование детей, с учетом долгосрочных целей. Театр всегда был средством развлечения, а также источником культурного и социального образа жизни различных регионов, религий и обществ. Но это не только средство развлечения, но и очень мощный инструмент для распространения социальных сообщений по всей стране. Индийское правительство успешно использовало его в своих программах. Такие программы имеют большое значение для распространения информации об искоренении полиомиелита, сохранении почвы, облесении, образовании девочек, различных прививках, СПИДе, COVID, экономии воды, предотвращении детских браков, смертей от приданого и т.д.

Ключевые слова: театральное искусство, исполнительское искусство, культура, ритуалы, фольклор, драматическое искусство, натьяшастра.

Definition of Theatre Arts. Theatre Arts is a collaborative form of several performing arts which is used by theatre performers. Actors are the most important part of any performance. An actor's work is the most important resource of any performance, enact the experience of real or an imaginary event to a live audience, generally, on the stage.

Impact on one's Personality. For this presentation an actor has to go through a different kind of research work that is to develop and live that role. This makes an actor rich with ideas, expression voice and personality. Day by day, actors are experiencing many characters and due to this their thinking level becomes very creative and unique. When we meet an actor after long duration of theatrical experience then we definitely enjoy their personality, way of speaking, knowledge of the subject and its best presentation in life. It

means that a Theatre art is definitely helpful not only in development of personality but also to develop creative thinking with valuable ideas.

Theatre Arts at the grass-root level. Most of the time it has been seen that after schooling selected students have option to opt theatre as higher studies but the question is why not in school? Why is theatre considered as an extra-curricular activity? As we know it has vast benefits and possibilities to an individual then why is it extra-curricular or why not a professional subject in schools? What challenges do private and government schools/institutions face in theatre arts education?

Folk Theatre. Folk Theatre integrates elements such as music, dance, pantomime etc., having its roots in native culture and is embedded in local identity and social values. Folk theatre is a powerful medium for social change.

Natya Shastra. Natya Shastra is a Sanskrit treatise on the performing arts, which is attributed to sage Bharat Muni. It deals with all aspects of classical Sanskrit theatre.

Opinion of the author. As a stage actor and theatre arts educator and researcher it is felt that theatre education is an important part of education and believes that School going students from grade first onwards strongly need this Professional subject to be learnt. This will develop the students' understanding of values, moral, ethics, culture, history, creativity, personality etc. in a practical way. Researcher has selected one of the most important and valuable topic to research which will highlight intricacies of different aspects of theatre education in the development of personality, right from the Preliminary stages of student. Theatre arts attract and inspires kids to, not only perform, but also learn their academic studies in a creative way. So, the objective of this research is to study the need and value of theatre arts in education in School at an early stage.

No matter whatever the aspect of Theatre Arts – on-stage performance or helping out behind the scenes, they enjoy every aspect of it. The creative side of the brain is activated while engaging in dramatic activities.

A constructive feedback is always required for the progress in any field. Criticizing is an art which can be both -constructive and regressive. Students of Theatre Arts fine tune these aspects of learning and expression with a stroke of finesse. They even acquire a sportsmanship spirit by accepting their 'rights' and 'wrongs'.

The detailing of the varied forms of human expression are interestingly learnt by the students through Theatre Arts.

Discovering their 'voice' while engaging in dramatic Arts, some of the students finds themselves a totally different person.

Learners find their 'voice' while studying performing arts.

Theatre Arts in its own way, tends to develop the potentialities in learners in such a way that it enhances their performances in different disciplines of student life.

Theatre Arts is all about collaboration and communication. These features of one's personality can be subtly enhanced without being too obvious.

Some students find themselves 'lost' in the crowd or excessive activities in outer space. Through Theatre Arts such students are able to delve into their vast 'inner self' - a place where a child is able to shut out their surrounds and immerse themselves in a creative environment. They are initiated into a self-discovery mode.

Theatre Arts fosters creativity in students. The mind is conditioned into 'problem-solving' capacities. The students are intrigued about their already existing perceptions about their world and about themselves.

Performing Arts give a vent to the students for emotions, thoughts and dreams that might be bottled-up for various reasons.

Methods of research. For this research, data was collected by conducting personal interviews, interaction with students, discussion with experts, questionnaire and observational methods with trained students and untrained students through workshop:

I) Personal Interviews. One on one interaction was done through personal interviews, as data was collected from individuals regarding theatre arts and education. Most of the interviewees found that theatre arts were very exciting. Others found it so much fun. There were some who liked the part where all of the attention of the audience is on the performer or actor who is performing on the stage.

Some interviewees remarked that before learning Theatre Arts they were very shy. After they had had a hands-on-experience in performing arts, their shyness disappeared. They spontaneously mentioned that they found themselves more confident. They were able to face people better. Their body language improved. They observed that even their speech and voice had clarity. There was better modulation in the speech, so it became more effective. Earlier they felt conscious while dealing with outsiders. But, after a considerable exposure to Theatre Arts, they were able to do away with their inhibitions. Some even went to the extent of saying that they were not 'scared' to interact with a new person, too. They found themselves better equipped to face an interview in future. There were some interviewees who said that after learning about Performing Arts, they were able to explore their expressions and their entire body language, in general. They said working in teams became more fun and that they were looking forward to wards group activities. Some went to the extent that they stressed that they learnt more about the outside world through Theatre Arts than through the books. It was even observed that they had become more frank than before. They had even become more assertive and more persuasive than before.

II) Interactions with students. Researcher discussed with a group of children. The group consisted of a maximum of 18 to 20 students of varying age groups, studying in different schools of Andhra Pradesh (a Southern state

in India). In this group very few students had had an exposure of Theatre Arts. Most of the students in this group were novice (or new) to Theatre Arts. In fact, they could not believe that Theatre Arts existed as a subject that is studied and pursued by many students across the world. Initially, they thought that this art is a good means of entertainment. After being a part of Theatre Arts for a limited period of time they themselves accepted that they were able to mingle with their classmates very easily. Even after meeting a new student they were able to break the ice initially. This meant that they no longer shied away from strangers or unfamiliar faces. This art has boosted their personality. There was greater clarity in their thought process. They were able to think, perform or speak faster in front of an audience. They were able to do away with stage fright, too. They understood that Theatre Arts imparts knowledge about their culture, rituals and traditions. They were sensitized towards the other forms of Arts in their regions. Theatre Arts had definitely boosted their personalities within a short span. They were eager to learn more about our folk tales, folklore, traditions etc. They did not get nervous when they faced an odd situation. Instead they were ready to solve the problem with the help of their team mates. They had a better understanding of space around them and how to use that space effectively using their actions, talent and thoughts. Not just that, they understood their own potential. It was nothing short of a self-discovery. The importance of 'practice' was very well brought out by the 'phenomenon' of Theatre Arts. Enactment of animals even further sensitizes towards other living beings on the planet, making them realise the importance of bearing an attitude of empathy towards them. There were many who got interested in the book/story after being a part of the dramatization of the book / novel / story in question.

III) Discussion with experts. A number of experts and teachers from the field of Performing Arts were selected for the purpose of discussion. In these cases the first question asked was as follows:

'How is Theatre Arts education beneficial to school students?'

To which the responses were as follows:

Students of school who have participated in Theatre arts education class activities usually face less difficulty in speaking publicly. They have more command in their communication skills. They will be more able to express their opinions, thoughts, emotions and ideas. They will be able to handle the stressful episodes in school judiciously. They will be able to empathize with their fellow students, too. Theatre Arts gives them the much-needed reprieve from their monotonous school routine. This art form is definitely a much better option than mobiles, T.V., on-line options that pose a hazard to their thinking process as well as their health, both physical and mental. We constantly crib about the little-known dying arts of our country. Theatre Arts, through the students, can give such traditional art forms a new lease of life. Students pursuing Theatre Arts develop more tolerance and empathy towards others view-points, languages, behaviour, traditions etc. Through this

medium it is possible to bring the world closer and spread the message of universal brotherhood. Students get a better feel of good presentation skills, since they do get involved in the various aspects of stage performance. They evolve aesthetically, too.

The second topic, in the form of question that arose for the purpose of discussion was:

'Bearing in mind the school education in its current form, what are the challenges that need to be addressed in order to incorporate Theatre Arts in the school curriculum?'

The discussion that ensued on the given topic highlighted the following points:

Introducing. Theatre Arts in school warrants presenting stage performances as an attraction to students more as a good substitute for other recreations. This means we are competing against T.V. shows, movies, video games, social media etc. Therefore, it is imperative that all the ingredients of a good performance have to be added to make the recipe relishing. These elements could be excellent light effects, proper costumes, grand sets, long hours of rehearsals etc. There may be some issues regarding the expenses to be incurred by a school on the production of a stage performance, for example, the setting, props, costumes etc. These are the very elements that attract children to Theatre Arts. Another challenge schools might face is a proper auditorium facility. Yet another point of concern is that there are certain parents who have specific expectations from their wards. They might be anxious about them being academically-oriented. The parents, in such cases, need to be educated in this regard. The vast syllabi in academics might put off students from accepting an additional subject, even if it is something as interesting as Theatre Arts. This field/subject will be taken seriously by teachers and students alike if it carries marks and a proper examination / evaluation system. Equally imperative is the need to find trained Theatre Arts teachers in every school possible. Such teachers need to be paid well to maintain consistency in teaching Theatre Arts as a subject.

IV) Questionnaire and Observational methods (Between theatre arts students and fresher's through workshops).

A) The Questionnaire:

Q) What are the benefits of Theatre Arts?

A) Theatre Arts help us hone our performing skills. We learn how make different expressions, at the right moment, really fast. This makes our performance very impressive. Even our body language improves a great deal.

Q) What do you like most about Theatre Arts?

A) What I like most about Theatre Arts is the acting part. I love acting on stage.

I like the way this form of Arts builds character. The goal of character building is always to create a character that hooks the audience, is satisfying to play, and uses your imagination.

It has helped me build my confidence that's essential to speaking clearly, lucidly and thoughtfully.

It has taught me teamwork, time management and how to work co-operatively with different types of people.

The back stage work really interests me, for example, designing the sets, writing script, organising costumes, making props, light arrangements, direction etc.

I love singing and dancing, and Theatre Arts includes both these aspects.

I developed my leadership skills very well.

Mimetic illusions attract me a lot. I am a great fan of realistic stories and events. This genre of Theatre Arts brings out the best in me. It is the soul of Performing Arts.

Q) If you were not introduced /exposed to Theatre Arts, then what kind of person would you have been?

A) I can't imagine myself without Theatre Arts. My language skills have improved so well.

I would not have performed in my school Assembly so well, if I had not attended the Theatre Arts workshop. It helped me overcome my shyness.

I was not at all appreciative of other students during Sports Day, Annual Day etc. I would never applaud at a dance or song performance. I was not at all motivated. But now I understand and appreciate arts and sports well. Thanks to Theatre Arts.

Without Theatrical training, I would have become an introvert.

During rehearsals of a play, the most important part is when the script is read out and the script slowly unfurls. Without this session I would have really missed the speaking skills of our co-actors.

If there were no Theatre Arts in my school life I would have missed such an important subject / event.

I would be less creative, less imaginative and fewer alerts (focussed) without theatrical training.

Without Theatre Art, school would have become so boring. I would have possessed only bookish knowledge. I would not have known about the different cultures of the world and about the different writers and good stories.

There are various school projects assigned to us from time to time. Earlier I just focussed on completing them somehow. They were just another task for me. But after my exposure to Theatre Arts, I try to do my projects practically in a creative way.

Q) What will you suggest to those children who have not experienced the subject of Theatre Arts?

A) I would suggest everyone to have some kind of learning in this field in order to bring out the best in oneself.

Please experience the different training sessions in the workshop and apply them in your day-to-day life.

Even if you can't participate in a play/ drama/skit, you must at least watch some good plays to enhance your creative side.

I don't know why our school is not teaching us Theatre Arts. It gets very boring studying the same old subjects. I will suggest my Principal to introduce this art form in our school.

B) Observational Methods. In the initial stages of introduction of Theatrical Arts in the school, the students showed negligible progress and interest. They wouldn't engage in an eye contact. They lacked self-confidence. They demonstrated poor body-language. The projection of their voices was negligent. They would hardly bring out any expressions on their faces, speech or actions. Learning the dialogues was boring for them. Their orientation on the stage was improper. Their speech was incoherent. They were reluctant to mix around with the other students.

By the last day of my theatrical session/experience in the school, the students showed drastic change in their personalities. They were quite fluent in the language they spoke. They were more persuasive in their approach. They looked more confident. Their projection of the voices was more pronounced. They became more articulate. They seemed to have gained life-long benefits out of this form of art. They were rattling off dialogues with a lot of ease. They had befriended new students (strangers). They worked perfectly as a team.

Literature review. When the researcher steps into the shoes of an educator and a learner he observes a tremendous evolution in the field of education. The education mode has transformed totally from 'Classroom learning'. Now, the more scientific approach towards teaching and learning is the 'Experiential' form. This form is being increasingly adopted and accepted.

Incorporating rational changes in the field of education has always been a daunting task in the history of human civilization. It is surprising that educators and facilitators, themselves are averse to this experimental stage of education. Maybe they are doubtful of its effectiveness.

However, this is an era where a lot of research is underway to make learning as student-centric and as effective as possible, thereby, totally eliminating rote- learning. The aim of teaching and learning is to cater to the needs of each child in school. In all this, Theatre Arts stands a much greater chance of reaching out to each and every child in varying capacities. Every workshop and performance becomes a sure-shot means / medium of learning in a subtle and fun way without imposing the learning outcome on any student. But, using Theatre Arts as an essential part of education is still in its experimental stages (or phases). This option is still being explored. However, its potential is immense.

Bearing in mind the futuristic needs of learners and the three main features of learning, that is, knowledge and expertise, mode of instructions, assessment techniques, adequate opportunities must be made available to the

learners. There should be a wider scope for them to explore, career-wise or otherwise.

Searching for the literature review on the topic 'Theatre arts and its importance in Education' is quite challenging but for theatre, drama, design a number of philosophers have suggested their designs/methods. Prominent among these are Dinanath Sahani (Natyshastra aur Rangmanch), Konstantin Stanislavski (An actor prepares, Building a character, Creating a role), Peter Brook (The empty space), Bertolt Brecht (Epic Theatre, Theory of Alienation effect), Vsevolod Meyerhold (Introduced Theory of Biomechanics, Meyerhold on Theatre by Edward Barun), Jerzy Grotowski (Towards a poor Theatre) etc. But, the researcher fails to find out any relevant literature on Theatre Arts and its importance in Education which can be mentioned point wise here specifically. That being the case, the researcher has decided to take his own methods as the base in order to conclude this article. It is hoped that other researchers will continue their research from where it has been left by the researcher, and also fill up the gaps in this article, if any. The debate on the given topic for this article is still in its infancy stages.

Results of the study. Researcher feels that this research work will be very helpful to all the education institutions and individuals to understand the values, impact of this subject in the form of theatre arts in education as a Professional subject to develop morals, Personality, Creative, thinking, Speaking, Reading, listening skills etc. to the students.

Researcher has divided research of this article in three stages/Chapters:-

1. The Growth at Primary level (Grade 1 to 5)

These are the formative years in the growth of a child. Theatre Arts had a direct bearing on their mental growth. Their grasping power increased. They became more receptive. They found school very interesting as they got along with their peers much better than the others. They became more vocal in their expression. A moving around and making different body movement nourishes their minds with more oxygen, making them sharper. Venting out their emotions made them happier and more content with school life, in general. Theatre Arts was more like an extended fun/play time for them. Therefore, children with a theatrical Arts exposure were more expressive and active.

* Benefits at Primary level (Grade 1 to 5)

Theatre Arts had indeed brought fun into learning life skills. They even started performing better academically as their comprehension and communication skills got a fillip through the various activities. These students were even able to recall a story very well.

2. The Growth at Secondary level (Grade 6 to 8)

Students who have had an experience of Theatre Arts were creative. Students who lacked Theatre Arts exposure were struggling in public speaking and expressing themselves.

* Benefits at Secondary level (Grade 6 to 8)

Theatre activities improve reading comprehension, and both verbal and non-verbal skills. These are even beneficial for children with learning disabilities. This is the age group where children get overtly conscious in the midst of the opposite sex. But, constructive interaction during theatre activities / rehearsals provided them with ample opportunities to mingle as a team, behave appropriately and contribute constructively irrespective of their gender.

3. Growth at Senior Secondary and Higher Secondary level (Grade 9 to 12)

In this age group, students show over-anxiousness towards Board Examinations. They whole-heartedly participated and learnt the different aspects of stage-acting, with a lot of fervour. Even these students found themselves relaxed and entertained.

* Benefits at Senior Secondary and Higher Secondary level (Grade 9 to 12)

The results of students have clearly demonstrated a correlation between drama involvement and academic achievement. Such students show a better understanding of the work performed and of the language and expression in general. Students involved in dramatics had built a high esteem. They had more empathy and tolerance towards others.

Conclusion. Researcher feels that this research will be very helpful to all the educational institutions and individuals to understand the value, impact of this subject in the form of Theatre Arts in education as a professional subject to develop morals, personality, creative thinking, speaking, reading, listening skills etc. to the students.

To enhance academic performances and to develop a disciplined mind, performing arts help students to achieve their ultimate goal soon. Theatre arts in education improve communication skills (Pronunciations, Modulation, Emphasis, Intonation etc. in speech) of a student. Through practising dialogue delivery Theatre arts helps performers to learn and express the right tone in their voice and speech. Techniques of theatre arts can be used to teach a number of academic subjects in a creative way. For example - The impact of this subject will be excellent if a teacher will teach a topic like Solar System in a theatrical way in the classroom. Some theatrical performances come up with very strong social messages that have a long-lasting impact on the spectator. Such performances create a social awareness in a positive way to the society. Teacher and Student should learn to adapt new methodologies in teaching and learning process. Theatre arts in education will not only help students but also teachers to become a conceptual artist who moulds knowledge, sentiments, creative ideas, imaginative view, sensation and experiences into an active educational process. In the absence of this subject in education it is felt that there may be several challenges like lack of concentration, ideas, creativity, focus, interest, confidence after having proper knowledge of subject, public speaking skills, fear etc. may be found in the

student. Having an exposure of Theatre arts subject children will experience full command to control their emotions and live stress free life not only on stage but also in life as well.

Finally, after the study specially practically on this topic - Theatre arts and its importance in education, researcher can say that the benefits of Theatre arts are manifolds and the students studying in schools, colleges and educational institutions should not be deprived of such beneficial learning methodology.

FIGURES







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