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## DEVELOPING EDUCATION THROUGH THEATRE: THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

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### ABSTRACT

**T**he paper intends to discuss the role of Government in developing education at school level using theatre as a major pedagogical tool and look into various aspects of teaching and learning process by taking into consideration the experiences of theatre in education companies around the Nation



and also different people/ organizations/personalities involved in this process of bringing in the techniques of theatre into the education, thereby, enhancing the learning capacities of students and overall development of the students. The information collected through the questionnaire and interview, are put into the appropriate

statistical treatment. The percentage technique is used to know the opinion about academic education through theatre, resources available and resources needed for implementation of theatre in their schools.

The paper also offers suggestions and recommendations in order to implement theatre in teaching learning process in all schools and to strengthen the present mode of education through theatre.

**KEYWORDS** :Education, Academic, Theatre, Government, Schools, Techniques, Students, Teaching - learning process.

### INTRODUCTION:

From the ancient to the present day, theatre has undergone tremendous changes and developed variety of techniques in performance and also contributed to the field of therapy, education and socio cultural pedagogy. Numerous organizations and initiatives have used theatre as a development tool: for education or propaganda, as therapy, as a participatory tool, or as an exploratory

tool in development.

At the time when educators across the country are trying new ways to motivate students so they'll stay in school and work hard, plus new ways to prepare a whole new generation for life in a rapidly changing world, theatre can be an important and useful resource. Numerous organizations and initiatives have used theatre as a development tool: for education or propaganda, as therapy, as a participatory tool, or as an exploratory tool in development.

The paper intends to discuss the role of Government in developing education at school level using theatre as a major pedagogical tool and look into various aspects of teaching and learning process by taking into consideration the experiences of theatre in education companies around the Nation and also different people/organizations/personalities involved in this process of bringing in the techniques of theatre into the education, thereby, enhancing the learning capacities of students and overall development of the students.

### GOVERNMENT ACTS:

In 1964-66 the Indian Education commission Report (Kothari commission) emphasized that children in the age are more focused on discovery and invention, and therefore education for creative expression is more important. As a result, in 1966 NCERT took the initiative to survey the education system and monitor the inclusion of arts in the curriculum. Also, examine the whole question of improvement of art education in schools and simultaneously in the university system.

The Government of India has brought out The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act as a landmark for the educational provision in India in 2009 and it is in action from April 2010.

- ✦ It has set the stage for providing free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years.
- ✦ It has made provision in its Norms and Standards for teaching art education to classes 6 to 8, by providing separate teacher for teaching arts.

Art education is given a distinct and a very important place in all documents of India since independence at school level and teacher-education level. Prior The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, in 2005 the NCF (National Curriculum Framework) reiterated the values enshrined in our Constitution including reduction of curricular burden on children, ensuring quality education for all and systemic changes as markers of curricular reforms. It recognizes the primacy of children's experiences, their voices and their active involvement in the process of learning. Curricular transactions seek hands-on experiences and project based approaches. Based on the NCF 2005 a position paper was developed by the National Focus Group on Theatre. These documents paved the way for better judgment of how theatre arts were to be implemented in the field of education.

### Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012)

The Eleventh Five Year Plan prepared by the Ministry of Culture has its mandate to preserve and promote all forms of art and culture. Broadly, the areas of work are ( i ) Performing Arts, (ii) Museums & Visual Art, (iii) Archaeology, Anthropology & Ethnology, (iv) Literature, Libraries & Archives and (v) Education, Research & others.

**ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN THE AREA OF THEATRE EDUCATION:**

Many establishments and institutions which have been consistently working in the field of theatre and education, they are:

- 1.National Bal Bhavan (NBB)
- 2.Navodaya Vidyalayas
- 3.NSD (The National School Of Drama)
- 4.Centre For Cultural Resources And Training (CCRT)
- 5.National Museum
- 6.India International Centre (IIC)
- 7.Indian Council For Cultural Relations (ICCR)
- 8.Sangeet Natak Akademi
- 9.Indian Mime Theatre
- 10.Sanskriti Pratishthan
- 11.India Foundation For The Arts (IFA)
- 12.Sutradhar
- 13.Centre for Community Dialogue and Change (CCDC)
- 14.Vidya Bhawan Society
- 15.The Ishara Puppet Theatre Trust
- 16.NINASAM
- 17.Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS)
- 18.Ritinjali
- 19.Vidya & Child
- 20.Srushti

A research was conducted on 100 respondents of secondary school heads/principals selected from higher primary and secondary schools situated at Bangalore Urban and Rural district, Karnataka. The information collected through the questionnaire and interview, are put into the appropriate statistical treatment. The percentage technique is used to know the opinion about academic education through theatre, resources available and resources needed for implementation of theatre in their schools. The distribution of sample is given in the table.

**Table-1 : Distribution of Sample over different type of locality**

Sl. No.	Locality	No. of Respondents	Total Respondents
1.	Bangalore North Urban	50	100 respondents
2.	Bangalore North Rural	50	

**Table 2: Shows resources available in schools for promoting and implementing theatre education.**

	School Resources	Abundant		Adequate		Inadequate		Very Inadequate		Not Applicable	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Curriculum guides and performance indicators set out by the government	5	5.0	13	13.0	20	20.0	53	53.0	9	9.0
2.	Readily available drama courses/teaching plans/materials	2	2.0	8	8.0	26	26.0	53	53.0	11	11.0
3.	Teacher training provided by the Government	6	6.0	20	20.0	30	30.0	34	34.0	10	10.0
4.	Teachers' support	22	22.0	65	65.0	10	10.0	2	2.0	1	1.0
5.	Colleagues' collaboration	22	22.0	69	69.0	7	7.0	1	1.0	1	1.0
6.	School-based curriculum design	9	9.0	46	46.0	32	32.0	8	8.0	5	5.0
7.	Environment and Facility	15	15.0	62	62.0	16	16.0	4	4.0	3	3.0
8.	Class time and number of available periods.	8	8.0	23	23.0	38	38.0	25	25.0	6	6.0
9.	Students' active participation	32	32.0	57	57.0	9	9.0	2	2.0	0	0.0
10	Parents' support	14	14.0	50	50.0	32	32.0	4	4.0	0	0.0
11	Drama professionals' support	8	8.0	18	18.0	19	19.0	47	47.0	8	8.0
12	Exchange platform among schools	10	10.0	37	37.0	23	23.0	24	24.0	6	6.0
13	Exemplars on teaching and assessment.	5	5.0	20	20.0	24	24.0	44	44.0	7	7.0

Source: Field Work

From the above table prepared with the information received from the school heads, it is observed that, Curriculum guides and performance indicators set out by the government is abundant in only 5% schools, whereas 13% schools have adequate, 20% schools have inadequate, 53% very inadequate and 9% schools say not applicable to this. Readily available drama courses/materials is

abundant in 2% of schools, adequate in 8% of schools, inadequate in 26% of schools, very inadequate in 53% of schools and 11% of schools it is not applicable. Teacher training provided by the Government is abundant in 6% of schools, in 20% of schools is adequate, in 30% of schools inadequate, in 34% of schools its very inadequate and 10% of schools do not comment on this.

Teachers support regarding theatre education activities is abundant in 22% of schools, it is adequate in 65% of schools; inadequate in 10% of schools, in 2% of schools its very inadequate and 1% not applicable. Colleagues' collaboration is abundant in 22% of schools, in 69% of schools its adequate, in 7% of schools its inadequate, 1% of schools it is very inadequate and 1% of schools mark not applicable. The curriculum design based in schools to promote theatre education is abundant in 9% of schools, 46% of schools it is adequate, in 32% of schools it is inadequate, it is very inadequate in 8% of schools and in 5% of schools it is not applicable.

Environment and facility to promote theatre education is abundant in 15% of schools, in 62% of schools it is adequate, in 16% of schools it is inadequate, in 4% of schools very inadequate and in 3% of schools it is not applicable. Class time and number of periods available is abundant in 8% of schools, in 23% of schools it is adequate, in 38% of schools class timings is inadequate and in 25% of schools it is very inadequate to promote theatre education in time available. Students' active participation is abundant in 32% of schools, in 57% of schools it is adequate, in 9% of schools participation is inadequate, and in 2% of schools it is very inadequate. Parents support in regard to theatre education is abundant in 14% of schools, it is adequate in 50% of schools, in 32% of schools support is inadequate and in 4% of schools it is very inadequate.

Support from drama professionals is abundant in 8% of schools, in 18% of schools it is adequate, in 19% of schools support is in adequate and in 47% of schools it is very inadequate with 8% of schools feel it is not applicable. Exchanging platform among schools is abundant in 10% of schools, in 37% of schools it is adequate, in 23% of schools it is inadequate, in 24% of schools it is very inadequate and in 6% of schools it is not applicable. Exemplars and teaching assessment is abundant in 5% of schools, whereas 20% of schools have adequate, in 24% of schools it is inadequate, in 44% of schools it is very inadequate and in 7% of schools it is not applicable.

From the above table the conclusion derived is that most of the schools do not have adequate resources like teacher training, guides, materials, teaching aids, time available, parents support etc., to promote theatre education in their schools, whereas students' participation, teachers support and environment is abundant in many schools.

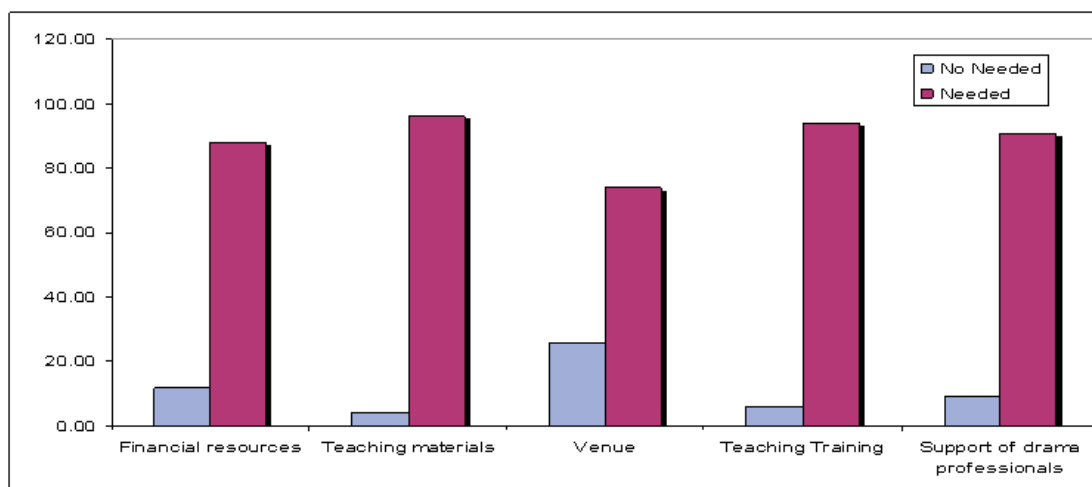
**Table-3: Table shows school heads' requirement for effectively implementing and promoting Theatre Education in their schools.**

Sl. No.	Resources	No Needed		Needed	
		F	%	F	%
1.	Financial resources	12	12.0	88	88.0
2.	Teaching materials	4	4.0	96	96.0
3.	Venue	26	26.0	74	74.0
4.	Teaching Training	6	6.0	94	94.0
5.	Support of drama professionals	9	9.0	91	91.0

Source: Field work



**Fig-1: Graph shows school heads' requirement for effectively implementing and promoting Theatre Education in their schools.**



From the above table and graph prepared with the data collected from the school heads, it is observed in the table that 12% of schools have sufficient financial resources whereas 88% of schools need financial resources to implement and promote theatre education in their schools. 4% of schools do not need teaching materials and 96% of schools need teaching materials for their schools. 74% of schools do not have a venue to conduct theatre educational activities, whereas 26% of schools do not need this. Theatre teaching training is required by 94% of schools and 6% do not require training. 9% of schools do not want support from drama professionals, whereas 91% need support.

The table concludes that all the resources namely: financial, teaching material, venue, teacher training and support from drama professionals is a major requirement of most of the schools, without which the schools find it difficult to implement and promote theatre education based activities in these schools.

At the time when educators across the country are trying new ways to motivate students so they'll stay in school and work hard, plus new ways to prepare a whole new generation for life in a rapidly changing world, theatre can be an important and useful resource.

### IMPLICATIONS:

In Karnataka, 60% of the private kindergartens as well as some private elementary schools have drama lessons, drama teachers and theatre in the activity program related to different subjects such as puppetry, storytelling, music, painting, use of masks and the like. The association for contemporary theatre seeks to function as a central authority for the training of new teachers and offers in-service training on request to kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools.

DSERT, Department of State Education Research and Training, regularly conducts workshops for teachers and provides academic leadership in school education as well as improving the quality of education provided in primary and secondary schools in the State. The Ministry of Education organizes training programs in theatre for pre-service teachers and at the school, college and university level. Several institutions offer courses in creative drama on both undergraduate and graduate levels through various departments.

Karnataka State has introduced several successful experiments in the field of school education: The 'Nali-Kali' program (the activity based learning program), Chaitanya (activity based teaching



methodology), Bahumukhi (the multi grade multi level teaching methodology), Keli-Kali (the direct to classroom radio broadcasts), Shikshanadalli Rangakale (dramatization of teaching technique), Introduction of activity based text books in all classes, Yoga and value education, providing training modules and preparation of Arts education syllabus based on NCF 2005.

Education through theatre is one of the methods strongly recommended by the NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) in its syllabi recently and NGOs have been requested to support its recommendations.

Numerous organizations and initiatives have used theatre as a development tool: for education or propaganda, as therapy, as a participatory tool, or as an exploratory tool in development.

There are a number of organizations in Karnataka like: National Bal Bhavan, National School of Drama, Centre for Community Dialogue and Change, Sutradhar, Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti, Ninasam and so on.., working towards promoting and encouraging theatre activities and education through theatre in schools.

Although a number of projects are working successfully in this area, the work or service has not yet reached many schools. According to this study most of the urban and rural schools under the research study show that more than 70% of schools have inadequacy of curriculum guides, teaching materials, training by the Government, drama professionals support, class time and so on, basic resource like finance and venue is lacking in more than 88% and 74% of North rural and Bangalore urban schools respectively.

Without these resources the schools find it difficult to implement or continue theatre activities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

In order to implement theatre in teaching learning process in all schools, the following would be of great importance.

- Both urban and rural school teachers should be given training in theatre and help them understand the use of theatre as a method to teach the school subjects.
- The Government should take initiative and recognize schools which are in need of resources and provide adequate resource and support.
- Some books and periodicals which deal with using drama as a method in schools should be made available for teachers so as to inform those who have some classical opinions on drama.
- The Association for modern theatre, Universities, particularly faculties of performing arts and education, and the Ministry of Education should organize seminars, workshops or conferences on the advantages and ways of using drama as a method in teaching school subjects.
- The Government should recognize that children need to develop the creative skills where fast-moving technology and global communications call for an ability to produce creative solutions to complex problems in future.
- The Government must provide necessary theatrical equipments to the schools so that teaching – learning process becomes more effective and successful.
- The cultural sense should be imparted to the students for their holistic development.
- Each state government should come up with clear cut cultural policy which helps and makes compulsory for the institutions to implement theatre in the curriculum.
- There should be a research centre which constantly looks into the ongoing dynamics in the field of education and gives scientific recommendations to implement cultural perspectives through theatre.
- Theatre should be made compulsory from the kindergarten level to higher education.

**CONCLUSION:**

It is the nature of human being to separate from people or society who is different. Theatre breaks these barriers of separation and allows to experience the world of another person and at the same time experience oneself in one's own world. In this way theatre bonds together our own humanity.

Education through theatre is a very popular medium in the west. However, this medium if implemented in our country whose culture is very rich when compared to the west will see beneficial results in the field of education.

Students bring to school vast differences in gender, maturity, personality, interest, hopes, ability, dreams, ethnicity, social-class, culture, life experiences and so on. Today's education system seems unable or unwilling to grasp these differences. They treat students by grade level with the core – curriculum and education has become a one sided approach. Therefore, there is a need of a new method or technique which identifies encouragers and caters to the different needs of the students. Throughout the world, theatre practitioners have constantly experimented with elements of theatre to bring about a qualitative change in the field of education. Education is one such factor which adds to the quality of the living and many educationists have strived for it.

Education through theatre truly gives joy to both the students and the teachers. It is one form of entertainment that is boundless and grows eternally. Whether one is working with pre-primary, special or underprivileged children the imagination and creative interest that it can capture has no boundaries. Theatre for children thus needs to both sustained and encouraged by all.

**Annexure: Questioner used for research:****Name of the School:****1. Resources available for promoting and implementing theatre education (please appropriate)**

School resources	Abundant	Adequate	Inadequate	Very Inadequate	Not applicable
A. Curriculum guides and performance indicators set out by the government					
B. Readily-available drama courses/ teaching plans / materials					
C. Teacher training provided by the government					
D. Teachers' support					
E. Colleagues' collaboration					
F. School-based curriculum design					
G. Environment and facility					
H. Class time and number of available periods					
I. Students' active participation					
J. Parents' support					
K. Drama professionals' support					
L. Exchange platform among schools					
M. Exemplars on teaching and assessment					
N. Others:					

2. To effectively promote and implement theatre education, our school would expect the following resources and support:

- A. Financial resources: \_\_\_\_\_  
B. Teaching materials: \_\_\_\_\_  
C. Venue: \_\_\_\_\_  
D. Teacher training: \_\_\_\_\_  
E. Support of drama professionals: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature & Name:

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