

The contribution of NSD in Theatre in Education Company (T.I.E.C)

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ABSTRACT

The National School of Drama is one of the foremost theatre training institutions in the world and the only one of its kind in India. It was set up by the Sangeet Natak Akademi as one of its constituent units in 1959. In 1975, it became an independent entity and was registered as an autonomous organization under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860, fully financed by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Training in the School is highly intensive and is based on a thorough, comprehensive, carefully planned syllabus which covers every aspect of theatre and in which theory is related to practice. As a part of their training, students are required to produce plays which are then performed before the public. TIE Company consists of a group of actor-teachers working with and performing for children. The major focus of TIE Company is to perform creative, curriculum based and participatory plays in schools specially designed and prepared for children of different age groups. The major thrust of the plays is to create an atmosphere to encourage children, to raise questions, make decisions and choices with an awareness of themselves within larger society.

Keywords- *Repertory, Theatre in Education, Extension Program, Festivals, Alumni, Tenders etc.*

INTRODUCTION-

National School of Drama (NSD) is a theatre training institute situated at New Delhi, India. It is an autonomous organization under Ministry of Culture, Government of India. It was set up in 1959 by the Sangeet Natak Akademi and became an independent school in 1975.¹ In 2005, it was granted deemed university status, but in 2011 it was revoked.² Paresh Rawal is the current Chairperson & Chittaranjan Tripathy.³ currently serves as Director of National School of Drama (NSD). History

The origins of the school can be traced back to a seminar in 1954, where the idea of a Central institution for theatre was mooted, subsequently, a draft scheme was prepared in 1955, and the Sangeet Natak Akademi, which had Jawaharlal Nehru as its president, started drawing plans for the institution. Meanwhile, elsewhere in Delhi, Bharatiya Natya Sangh (BNS) with assistance from UNESCO, independently established the 'Asian Theatre Institute' (ATI) on 20 January 1958, and in July 1958, ATI was taken over by the Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA), India's National Academy of Music, dance and drama of Government of India.⁴

In the following year, the government merged it with the newly founded school, and thus NSD was established in April 1959 under the auspices of Sangeet Natak Akademi. Initially, the school was situated at Nizamuddin West and was called 'National School of Drama and Asian Theatre Institute, whose first batch passed out in 1961. During his tenure as the director of the institution, Ebrahim Alkazi (1962–1977), not just overhauled the syllabus, but also had the students dig and build platforms for a theatre in the backyard of a rented Kailash Colony house, where NSD had moved.[6] Later when it moved to its present location, he also designed two theatres for NSD, including a 200-seat studio theatre, and the open-air Meghdoot theatre, under a banyan tree.⁵

In 1975 it became an autonomous organization, under the erstwhile Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture, Department of Culture, with the name 'National School of Drama' and relocated in May 1975, to its present premises at

¹ Training – National School of Drama The Columbia encyclopedia of modern drama, by Gabrielle H. Cody, Evert Sprinchorn. Columbia University Press, 2007. ISBN 0-231-14422-9. Page 766

² "PMO wants deemed varsity tag for NSD, institute disagrees". 8 August 2016.

³ "Odia Actor Chittaranjan Tripathy New NSD Director". 7 October 2023.

⁴ National School of Drama ..over the past 50 years The Tribune 15 March 2009.

⁵ NSD Genesis Archived 18 July 2011 at the Wayback Machine NSD website

Bahawalpur House, the residence of Bahawalpur a former princely state. However, the place is generally known by adjacent (now demolished) Mandi House, the former residence of Raja of erstwhile Mandi princely state. In 1999, the school organized its first National Theatre Festival, 'Bharat Rang Mahotsav', generally held during the second week of January each year.⁶

In 2008, the institution celebrated its golden jubilee at its annual theatre festival, Bharat Rang Mahotsav, with a gathering of its alumni from all over the country,⁷ the festival's satellite edition in Mumbai showcased plays of NSD graduates, including Ratan Thiyam's Prologue, Bansi Kaul (Aranyadhipati Tantiya), Neelam Mansingh Chowdhury (The Suit), Sanjay Upadhyay (Harsingar), Baharul Islam (Akash), Mohan Maharishi (Dear Babu) and M K Raina (Stay Yet Awhile).⁸ Waman Kendre was appointed as Director the school in 2013. He will serve a five-year term.⁹ He has done post-graduate with research in folk theatre of Kerala from NSD. He belongs to the nomadic Vanjara tribal community of Marathwada and was one of the leading lights of the Dalit theatre movement in Maharashtra in the late 1970s. As of 10 September 2020 Paresh Rawal, has been appointed as the Chairman of the National School of Drama.¹⁰ On 6th October 2023, Chittaranjan Tripathy became the new Director of NSD. He is a prominent theater and film actor, director, screen writer and music composer both in Hindi and Odia film industry.

Deemed University Status-

On 16 March 2005, the Government of India granted the NSD the status of deemed university.¹¹ However, in 2010 the NSD Society asked for the deemed university status to be revoked since "[it] could undermine the professional training, autonomy, and flexibility required in the creative fields such as theatre." Thus, in October 2011, the status was revoked on request of NSD.¹²

Theatre In Education Company (Sanskar Rang Toli) of National School of Drama was established on October 16, 1989, and is one of the important educational resource centers in the country. TIE Company consists of a group of actor-teachers working with and performing for children. The major focus of TIE Company is to perform creative, curriculum based and participatory plays in schools specially designed and prepared for children of different age groups. The major thrust of the plays is to create an atmosphere to encourage children, to raise questions, make decisions and choices with an awareness of themselves within larger society. TIE Company has done more than 800 performances of 26 plays in Delhi and other parts of the country. More than 5.5 lakh children, apart from college students, teachers, parents and theatre lovers, have witnessed these plays. In the following paper researcher focused on the department of Repertory, Extension Program, Festivals, Alumni, Tenders etc. The analytical study of such points is as under-

Repertory-

The Repertory Company is the regular performing wing of the School. It was set up in 1964 with only four actors, namely Shri Ramamurthy, Ms. Meena Williams, Ms Sudha Shivpuri and Shri Om Shivpuri. with the dual purpose of establishing professional theatre on the one hand and continuing with regular experimental work on the other hand. In 1976, the Repertory Company became a full-fledged unit inducting eight new artistes on its regular staff. Late Sh. Manohar Singh, a stalwart of theatre and cinema was the first Chief of the Repertory Company.

The company presented works of various playwrights and directors who have been associated with it from time to time. The objective of the Repertory Company was to provide a platform to the graduates of the school in their academic interest and to perform plays professionally. However, with the passage of time, it became one of NSD's major institutions working on contemporary and modern plays and introducing experimental works on a regular basis. Apart from doing productions, it also organises its own Festival in the summers, where past and new productions are introduced and staged.

⁶ "Theatre is revelation (Interview)". The Hindu. 24 February 2008. Archived from the original on 2 March 2008.

⁷ National School of Drama The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre: Asia/Pacific, by Don Rubin. Published by Taylor & Francis, 2001. ISBN 0-415-26087-6. Page 168.

⁸ "The Graduates". The Indian Express. 28 December 2007. Archived from the original on 4 October 2012. Retrieved 2 April 2010.

⁹ "Government Appoints Prof. Waman Kendre as Director of National School of Drama" (Press release). Press Information Bureau, Government of India. 1 August 2013. Retrieved 1 August 2013.

¹⁰ "Marathi theatre veteran to head NSD". The Telegraph. 26 July 2013. Archived from the original on 27 July 2013. Retrieved 1 August 2013.

Besides staging plays in Delhi on a regular basis, the Repertory Company also undertakes performance tours to different parts of the country and abroad. The Company is currently headed by Sh. Rajesh Singh and comprises a group of 20 regular artistes. These artistes are assisted by a number of casual artistes who are mostly passed out Graduates of the School and a team of administrative and technical staff. Over the years, the Repertory Company has produced a variety of plays ranging from stylized musicals to realistic contemporary Indian drama to translations and adaptations of foreign plays. Many artistes of the Repertory Company have emerged as celebrities in theatre, cinema and television. The Company has toured extensively all over India and has made several successful trips to Germany, Poland, Britain, Nepal, Mauritius, China and Bangladesh.

The National School of Drama Repertory Company is housed at 1, Bahawalpur House, Bhagwandas Road, New Delhi-110001. The Company organizes its own festivals every summer. During this festival old and new productions are selected and staged. It also performs extensively on tours in India and abroad.

About Extension Program-

NSD Extension Department is the education and outreach wing of the institute. Established in 1978, it has conducted thousands of workshops for adults and children in urban, rural, and remote parts of the country including a few in Nepal, Sikkim, Ladakh and Bhutan as well. The workshop curriculum is based on the NSD training model, and seeks to facilitate creative interactions between traditional and contemporary theatre artists on a regular basis. Along with an introduction to theatre, these workshops also seek to develop personality and expand the emotional horizons of the participants.

NSD faculty and alumni, and other theatre experts are invited to conduct these workshops with a focus on spreading awareness about all aspects of the theatre arts. The workshops focus on a wide range of subjects related to theatre, covering subjects such as acting, movement, light, make-up, design, direction, scenography, creative writing, theatre history, and literature among others. With over 50 programs every year, the NSD Extension Program is able to reach hundreds of theatre enthusiasts and arts professionals engaged in diverse disciplines across the country, and introduce the knowledge, aesthetics, and joy of theatre to their lives. Currently, the Extension Program is headed by Shri Amitesh Grover, Assistant Professor, NSD.

Festivals-

Regular festivals of the School **Bharat Rang Mahotsav** -The Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM) was started by the NSD in order to contribute to the growth and development of theatre across the country. From being a national festival that presented the work of some of the most creative theatre workers in India, it has grown into an international event, hosting theatre companies from around the world. The Bharat Rang Mahotsav is today acknowledged as the largest theatre festival of Asia dedicated solely to theatre. In addition to the national and international productions/ performances that are staged during the Festival, the fare also includes exhibitions, conferring of awards/tributes, interactive sessions with directors and performers for the general public and professionals, Photographic exhibitions featuring landmark productions, Open forums and meetings and a shorter festival in another city to which some of the productions travel. The last Bharat Rang Mahotsav, organized from 6-22 January 2010, hosted 76 performances drawn from across 13 countries. Special features of this BRM XII were Natya Manthan – a two day round table, with participation by theatre scholars and practitioners from across India and abroad; and Natya Naad – special evenings of theatre music and song featuring the music of stalwarts and groups who have been integral to the theatre tradition of India.

Bal Sangam- Every alternate year the TIE Company organizes a national festival, Bal Sangam, which is essentially a cultural mela with an education objective. The festival is an ensemble of various performing traditional art forms that are presented by children belonging to traditional performing families, guru-paramparas and Institutions. The main objective of Bal Sangam is to encourage children to continue traditional performances so as to preserve our cultural heritage in this rapidly changing world. Till now the TIE Company has invited more than 40 groups well-known for their folk presentations by child artistes. While presenting a spectacular and unique confluence of performances by children of various folk & performing traditions, the Festival also includes art and craft workshops of activities like Origami, Pottery, Puppet-making, Aadiwasi Shilp, Recycling, etc. The last Bal Sangam was organized from 12th – 18th of October 2008.

Jashnebachpan- JashneBachpan showcases the works of different theatre groups working with and for children, representing various regions and languages from across the country. Eminent and emerging theatre directors and established theatre groups doing plays with and for children participate in the Festival with full-fledged productions. So far there have been 9 Jashnebachpans, with the most recent one being held from 1st to 14th November, 2009.

Sunday Club Festival- Following the success and popularity of the ‘Summer Theatre Workshops for Children’ NSD’s Sanskaar Rang Toli decided to start a Saturday Club that was basically an extension of the summer workshops. In this Club extensive work was done with children of varying age groups with the aim of creating original plays through a process of improvisation. Children in the Club jointly decided upon a theme and then proceeded to work on it on a creative manner. During 2002-03 the Saturday Club was shifted to Sundays and is now known as the ‘Sunday Club’. Training to participants is given in two parts – Part I comprises of script-writing, improvisation, etc. and aims at helping children develop a play. After completing their training in Sunday Club-I the children move to Sunday Club-II where theatre is introduced to them as a subject. Training received in the Club results in plays that are staged before parents as well as the wider public. The most recent Sunday Club Festival was organized in January 2010.

Poorvottar Natya Samaroh-Each year the NSD, as a part of its Extension Programme, organizes a series of theatre workshops in the North Eastern states. The workshops proceed on the basis of a 3-step programme – the first is to arouse interest amongst all participants about the intricacies of the theatre experience – performance and transference; the second is to impart training in the area and the third is to help and guide them to prepare productions on the basis of the received training. Once the productions are ready, participants are given an opportunity to stage shows in different areas of the region so as to gain self-confidence and a variety of experience and audience interaction. And finally, in the form of the Poorvottar Natya Samaroh, the School provides them with a platform to showcase these productions. Organized by the National School of Drama in collaboration with Directorate of Cultural Affairs, Government of Assam, the first Poorvottar Natya Samaroh showcased a total of 28 plays, and sought to give representation to the creative talent that lies in the region. Since then senior theatre personalities like Kanhailal, Ratan Thiyam, Dulal Roy and Ram Gopal Bajaj have participated in the Festival, allowing for a synthesis of experience and fresh talent. While most performances are in North-Eastern languages like Assamese, Manipuri, Mizo, Rabha, Garo and Nepali, there are also other plays in Bengali, Kannada, Marathi, Urdu and Hindi that are added to give the festival a variety in terms of production styles and texts drawn from a variety of sources. By underlining the unity in the diversity of human life and existence the Festival aims at achieving a space of meaningful interaction and engagement for all.

Delhi International Arts Festival & OCTAVE-

For the last two years the National School of Drama has been associated with two other cultural festivals. These are the Delhi International Arts Festival – a cultural extravaganza of dance, music, theatre, bands, films, exhibitions and so on; and OCTAVE, a cultural festival organized by the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs), in which it was one of the nodal agencies involved.

The first of these, the Delhi International Arts Festival was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture & Tourism GOI, and was co-partnered by several institutions and organizations that made up the core of the cultural spirit of the country at large and of the city in particular. These included the Sangeet Natak Akademi, Sahitya Akademi, IGNCA, ITDC, Madhyotari, Directorate of Film Festivals, NEZCC Dimapur, TRIFED, FSI, ICCR, Lalit Kala Akademi and the National School of Drama. In case of the latter, OCTAVE, a Committee constituted by the School was responsible for selecting the plays participating in the festival and thereby contributing to the dramatic and theatrical component in both years

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the above points, being as a research scholar of Ph.D. concluded that from 1955 the best institution of theatrical drama playing an important role for the overall growth and development of Indian theatre. Today’s such institution of North-India running best courses for improving the role, characters and destination of the theatre lovers