

Psychological, Behavioral and Societal Effectiveness of Folk Theatre in Highlighting Educational Development in Jammu: An Evaluative Study

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Abstract

Theatrical productions have been crucial in empowering people to recognise their wants, rights, and responsibilities in society. This paper attempts to examine the effectiveness of folk theatre in highlighting educational development in Jammu. Public awareness and mass education about various societal issues are considered to be key components of educational development in this research. The research focuses on how people view education, knowledge, and information as tools for personal growth and societal development. It also illustrates how important theatre is for educating and raising public awareness. The study is based on experimental research methodology having experimental i.e. uncontrolled and controlled group. In the experimental group, a play was performed and audience feedback was gathered; in the control group, no play was performed, but audience feedback was collected. The play was in the folk theatre form of Jammu i.e. 'Haran'. The paper focuses on the theatre audience and its impact on educational development. To determine the relation between theatre and audience, data was collected and analysed. Students from schools, colleges, and universities were the audience, and they provided feedback on how theatre has contributed in the educational development from time to time. The paper also highlight that theatre is an important medium of communication that spreads educational development and generates awareness among the people of Jammu.

Keywords: Awareness, Communication, Educational Development, Folk Theatre, Theatre

Introduction

In India's vibrant culture, theatre is a traditional method of communication. Folk or traditional theatre is a form of art that includes graphic and plastic arts, dance, theatre, music, and other elements of religion. In addition to providing mass entertainment that has benefited Indian society for centuries as a native means of interpersonal, inter-group, and inter-village communication, folk theatre has its roots in innate culture, is anchored in local identity, and is influenced by societal ethics.

In ancient India, theatre played a major role as a communication tool. Numerous dramatists, including Kalidasa and Bhasa, produced numerous plays. They became well-known among Indian audiences thanks to these plays. In his discussion of his typological study of Indian epigraphic inscriptions, Richard Salomon noted that drama references can be found in literary inscriptions (Chattopadhyay, 2013). This demonstrates that theatre was well-known in historic India.

The theatre is a well-known form of public communication in India. It is a traditional and essential method of mass communication because it reaches a large and diverse population. It first appeared sometime between the second century BC and the first century AD, and it reached its height between the first century AD and the tenth, when India was experiencing a period of relative peace and hundreds of plays were composed (Priyadarshini, 2017). Sanskrit was the first language used for theatre in India, and it dates back to the dawn of societal communication.

Folk theatre has served as a tool for social consciousness, protest, and change (Gupta K. K., 2013). Theatre is more than just entertainment; it is a form of holistic emotional expression that makes audiences more receptive to messages on social problems. Folk communication techniques provide a potential channel for the dissemination of ideas for social and economic advancement.

The Nation and its Diaspora, which is made up of variety, multiculturalism, color, and ethnicity, are represented by Indian theatre. The dichotomy of "longing" and "belonging," which frequently characterises diaspora relations, misrepresents both the position of the nation-as-home and the experience of diaspora (Dharwadker, 1998). This preserves the psychic and historical unity of the populace. Additionally, it contributed to the country's political, economic, cultural, and social growth.

Indian street theatre was created as a form of art to represent the emotions of common people, which gave rise to a brand-new theatrical genre that was then commonly referred to as "theatre by the people and theatre for the people" (Chauhan, 2015). With numerous castes, classes, creeds, and tribes, Indian society has a complicated social structure. The absence of mass media to reach the people who live in rural India has been significantly exacerbated by the high rate of illiteracy. In order to involve these individuals in the nation's development and change, street theatre has been used. India's public theatres have developed into a dynamic means of educating and awaking the nation's populace.

Theatre has been a major part of Jammu and Kashmiri society since the beginning of time. Its roots can be found in Kashmir dating back to the 12th century, when literature such as Kalhana's *Rajtarangini*, the *Purana*, and *Nilmata* was written, showcasing the splendour of the period's play genre (Archana Kumari, 2014). By presenting the traditional theatrical forms in fresh, contemporary methods, theatre aims to grab the attention of children. Its communication approach draws a lot of interest. In Jammu and Kashmir, however, theatre still has a long way to go before it can reclaim its timeless grandeur.

Based on a strong theatrical heritage that was established in the early 19th century, Jammu and Kashmir's expression of regional modern theatre practise is rooted in that time period. Naqaals, Bhands, and Miraasis coexist with time-honored folk theatrical genres like Haran, Bhagtaan, and Jagrana (Gupta L. , 2012). The traditional (folk) arts of Jammu and Kashmir are rich in content and give the locals entertainment and instruction on a daily basis.

Significance of the Study

- 1) Analysis of audience behaviour towards educational development has benefited from the study.
- 2) Understanding how the Dogri folk theatre raises problems for the general public.

Objectives

- 1) To understand how theatre leads to educational development in Jammu.
- 2) To evaluate the effect of theatre on Jammu's student population.

Methodology

The study is based on experimental research methodology having experimental i.e. uncontrolled and controlled group. In the experimental group, a play was performed and audience feedback was gathered; in the control group, no play was performed, but audience feedback was collected.

Data Sampling

There were 60 students in the analytic population, 30 of whom were in the control group and 30 of whom were in the uncontrolled group. These 30 students were further split into three groups, each with 10 high school, 10 college, and 10 university students.

Fischer's exact test was used to establish the p-value of the data and to determine the relationship between the theatre and its students.

Experimental Group

In an experimental group setting, a play was presented, and the 30 students' comments on the treatments used were logged to gauge the effect of the performance on them. The performance was performed in Jammu's "Haran" folk theatre style. The performance was titled "Panjaa Saal Baad" and focused on improving the status of women in society. "Beti Bachao, Beti Padoo" served as the play's inspiration.

The experimental group research results are as follows:

Question 1: Do you think theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development?

		Group			Total	Fisher's Exact Test	p-value	
		School	College	University				
Frequency Uncontrolled	Never	2	1	0	3	7.277	.532	
		20.0%	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%			
	Rarely	2	2	4	8			
		20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	26.7%			
	Sometimes	3	4	1	8			
		30.0%	40.0%	10.0%	26.7%			
	Often	3	3	3	9			
		30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%			
	Always	0	0	2	2			
		0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	6.7%			
	Total		10	10	10	30		
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Ha- Theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development.

Ho- Theatre is not uplifting various issues of educational development.

Out of 30 students 3 students agree that they never think theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development, 8 students agree that they rarely think theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development, 8 students agree that they sometimes think theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development, 9 students agree that they often think theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development and 2 students agree that they always think theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development.

The Fisher's exact test value of this total analysis is 7.277 and p-value is 0.532.

Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, thus Null Hypothesis is accepted i.e. Theatre is not uplifting various issues of educational development.

Question 2: Do you think theatre could become a great medium for educating public in Jammu?

		Group			Total	Fisher's Exact Test	p-value
		School	College	University			
	Rarely	1	0	0	1	7.580	.183

Frequency Uncontrolled	Sometimes	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%		
		3	0	2	5		
	Often	30.0%	0.0%	20.0%	16.7%		
		0	3	1	4		
	Always	0.0%	30.0%	10.0%	13.3%		
		6	7	7	20		
Total	60.0%	70.0%	70.0%	66.7%			
	10	10	10	30			
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%			

Ha- Theatre could become a great medium for educating public in Jammu.

Ho- Theatre could not become a great medium for educating public in Jammu.

Out of 30 students no student agree that they never think theatre could become a great medium for educating public in Jammu, 1 student agree that they rarely think theatre could become a great medium for educating public, 5 students agree that they sometimes think theatre could become a great medium for educating public in Jammu, 4 students agree that they often think theatre could become a great medium for educating public in Jammu and 20 students agree that they always think theatre could become a great medium for educating public in Jammu.

The Fisher's exact test value of this total analysis is 7.580 and p-value is 0.183.

Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, thus Null Hypothesis is accepted i.e. Theatre could not become a great medium for educating public in Jammu.

Question 3: Do you think theatre is changing your perspective regarding educational development?

		Group			Total	Fisher's Exact Test	p-value
		School	College	University			
Frequency Uncontrolled	Rarely	1	2	2	5	3.171	.845
		10.0%	20.0%	20.0%	16.7%		
	Sometimes	2	4	4	10		
		20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	33.3%		
	Often	4	2	3	9		
		40.0%	20.0%	30.0%	30.0%		
Always	3	2	1	6			
	30.0%	20.0%	10.0%	20.0%			
Total	10	10	10	30			
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%			

Ha- Theatre is changing perspective of people regarding educational development.

Ho- Theatre is not changing perspective of people regarding educational development.

Out of 30 students no student agree that they never think theatre is changing their perspective regarding educational development, 5 students agree that they rarely think theatre is changing their perspective regarding educational development, 10 students agree that they sometimes think theatre is changing their perspective regarding educational development, 9 students agree that they often think theatre is changing their perspective regarding educational development and 6 students agree that they always think theatre is changing their perspective regarding educational development.

The Fisher's exact test value of this total analysis is 3.171 and p-value is 0.845.

Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, thus Null Hypothesis is accepted i.e. Theatre is not changing perspective of people regarding educational development.

Controlled Group

No treatment was given to the controlled group; instead, a theatre play was not presented and audience input was gathered. The findings of the controlled group study are as follows:

Question 1: Do you think theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development?

		Group			Total	Fisher's Exact Test	p-value	
		School	College	University				
Frequency Controlled	Never	1	0	0	1	10.060	.185	
		10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%			
	Rarely	2	3	0	5			
		20.0%	30.0%	0.0%	16.7%			
	Sometimes	2	4	6	12			
		20.0%	40.0%	60.0%	40.0%			
	Often	5	2	2	9			
		50.0%	20.0%	20.0%	30.0%			
	Always	0	1	2	3			
		0.0%	10.0%	20.0%	10.0%			
	Total		10	10	10	30		
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Ha- Theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development.

Ho- Theatre is not uplifting various issues of educational development.

Out of 30 students 1 student agree that they never think theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development, 5 students agree that they rarely think theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development, 12 students agree that they sometimes think theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development, 9 students agree that they often think theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development and 3 students agree that they always think theatre is uplifting various issues of educational development.

The Fisher's exact test value of this total analysis is 10.060 and p-value is 0.185.

Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, thus Null Hypothesis is accepted i.e. Theatre is not uplifting various issues of educational development.

Question 2: Do you think theatre could become a great medium for educating public in Jammu?

		Group			Total	Fisher's Exact Test	p-value
		School	College	University			
Frequency Controlled	Rarely	0	1	0	1	6.561	.312
		0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	3.3%		
	Sometimes	4	4	1	9		
		40.0%	40.0%	10.0%	30.0%		
	Often	0	1	2	3		
		0.0%	10.0%	20.0%	10.0%		
Always	6	4	7	17			
	60.0%	40.0%	70.0%	56.7%			
Total		10	10	10	30		
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Ha- Theatre could become a great medium for educating public in Jammu.

Ho- Theatre could not become a great medium for educating public in Jammu.

Out of 30 students no student agree that they never think theatre could become a great medium for educating public in Jammu, 1 student agree that they rarely think theatre could become a great medium for educating public, 9 students agree that they sometimes think theatre could become a great medium for educating public in Jammu, 3 students agree that they often think theatre could become a great medium for educating public in Jammu and 17 students agree that they always think theatre could become a great medium for educating public in Jammu.

The Fisher's exact test value of this total analysis is 6.561 and p-value is 0.312.

Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, thus Null Hypothesis is accepted i.e. Theatre could not become a great medium for educating public in Jammu.

Question 3: Do you think theatre is changing your perspective regarding educational development?

		Group			Total	Fisher's Exact Test	p-value
		School	College	University			
Frequency Controlled	Rarely	2	0	2	4	4.258	.721
		20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	13.3%		
	Sometimes	4	3	2	9		
		40.0%	30.0%	20.0%	30.0%		
	Often	3	4	3	10		
		30.0%	40.0%	30.0%	33.3%		
Always	1	3	3	7			
	10.0%	30.0%	30.0%	23.3%			

Total	10	10	10	30		
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Ha- Theatre is changing perspective of people regarding educational development.

Ho- Theatre is not changing perspective of people regarding educational development.

Out of 30 students no student agree that they never think theatre is changing their perspective regarding educational development, 4 students agree that they rarely think theatre is changing their perspective regarding educational development, 9 students agree that they sometimes think theatre is changing their perspective regarding educational development, 10 students agree that they often think theatre is changing their perspective regarding educational development and 7 students agree that they always think theatre is changing their perspective regarding educational development.

The Fisher's exact test value of this total analysis is 4.258 and p-value is 0.721.

Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, thus Null Hypothesis is accepted i.e. Theatre is not changing perspective of people regarding educational development.

Conclusion

The researcher has concluded that theatre does not plays significant role in educating the masses in Jammu. Theatre is a tool for grassroots development where individuals can connect with current societal issues and attempt to identify their underlying causes. Folk theatre is a traditional form of communication in India and has the ability to spread messages about social, economic, and cultural development, all of which contribute to the country's overall development (Das, 2013).

The play demonstrated during data collection, "Panjaa Saal Baad" has showcased improving the status of women in society in a comparative way i.e. in early and present phase. It also highlights the difficulties women have had in raising their social status in society. The data, which was gathered from school, college, and university students, has shown that theatre does not play an important role in educational development. This might be due to young people using social platforms more frequently. The people of Jammu and Kashmir hardly or partially receive a daily serving of entertainment and instruction from their traditional (folk) forms, which are rich in content.

Media outlets from a variety of governments and non-government organisations are working hard to introduce the next generation to the rich cultural heritage (Shahi Shaika, 2020). The traditional (folk) forms of Jammu & Kashmir are rich in their content and act as a daily dose of entertainment and education for the people in Jammu and Kashmir. Various government and non-government organizations mass media are making many efforts to bring the rich cultural past to the future generation.

Out of 60 students less than half of the sample of the population believes that theatre could be turned into great medium of educational development. Similarly, some of the students partially or does not believe that theatre can lead to educational development in Jammu.

Therefore, the analysis above and the data gathered demonstrate that theatre has no or little impact on the audience, but it is urgently necessary to promote theatrical shows to educate the general public.

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