

**POLITICS OF GENDER IN PERFORMANCE :
A STUDY OF GROUP THEATRE PRODUCTIONS
DURING LEFT FRONT RULE IN WEST BENGAL**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL
FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

SUBMITTED BY

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DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This thesis titled **POLITICS OF GENDER IN PERFORMANCE : A STUDY OF GROUP THEATRE PRODUCTIONS DURING LEFT FRONT RULE IN WEST BENGAL** submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.



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Certified that the Ph.D Thesis titled **POLITICS OF GENDER IN PERFORMANCE : A STUDY OF GROUP THEATRE PRODUCTIONS DURING LEFT FRONT RULE IN WEST BENGAL**, submitted by AMITAVA KANJILAL, [Ph.D./Pol.Ss. (171)/961/ R-2008 (4)] dated 28/4/2008 and re-registered as Ph.D./Pol.Ss. (550)/436/ R-2013 dated 12/03/2013] is the result of his own investigation carried on under my supervision in the Department of Political Science, North Bengal University. The dissertation is the result of his research and thus original outcome of his sincere research. It may also be noted that the thesis has not been submitted in part or in full to any other institution for award of any other degree.

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The cultural history of West Bengal reveals the note that for more than three decades the themes of the mainstream theatrical activities in the state has been predominantly pro-leftist in approach. A strong Leftist cultural tradition, like I.P.T.A movement, had set forth the backdrop of the genesis and augmentation of Group Theatre activities, which was further nurtured and patronised by the Left Front Government. Therefore, this mutually reciprocal relationship between the two major aspects of the present study has contributed to a unique politico-cultural symbiosis in West Bengal.

The transition of Bengali Theatre from People's Theatre (I.P.T.A) to Neo Theaterism (led by some departed stalwarts of the I.P.T.A movement like Sombhu Mitra) to the contemporary Group Theater had been an influential shift in paradigm in the cultural history of Bengal after the partition. Amateur theatre in the form of Group Theatre in West Bengal became the mainstream of Bengali theatre almost at the same span of time that the Left Front regime was installed and consolidated in the state. To a greater extent majority of the Group Theaters plotted their dramatic productions as to give passive support to the 'friendly government' in the power. Some of these groups even strongly propagated the gospel of Leftist political views through electoral campaigns. As courtesy to such a stance by the Group Theaters they received great endowment from the Left Front Government. Almost each of the towns theaters were established under the state sponsorship, the government also set up Paschim Banga Natya Academy to encourage the theatrical activities throughout the province, frequent Theatre Festivals, Workshops, Exhibitions were organized under the government patronage and government grants were pouring in for theatre. However, critics point out the silent process of bringing the Bengali theatre into the fold of an establishment. And the Bengali theatre had shown no will to expose on stage the oppressive face of the 'state power' maintaining the orthodox Marxist class-view. Gradually the dramatic productions of the Group Theatres of Bengal turned its face towards exploring the fragmented "personal crisis" of the individuals. And this trend has opened up a new vista for the Feminism in respect of the Bengali theatre. From the city of Kolkata to the mofussils, the life and the crisis of

the woman became the concern of Bengali theatre. Char Adhyay (1951), Voma (1976), Putul Khela (1977), Nathbati Anathbat (1983), Maa (1985), Vama (1990), Rudali (1992), Jejon Achhe Majhkhane (1995), Beti Ayee (1996), Jara Brishtite Vijejhilo (1997), Sanu Roy Choudhury (1998), Himmat Mai (1998), Mukti(1999), Suprova (2000), Natir Katha (2003) -- woman as the victim of semi-feudal exploitation; woman subjected to the attack of global consumerism; women of the epics improvised in the reality of the date; woman towards iconisation -- since 1978 till date 'the woman' is being developed from all possible creative perspectives in the contemporary arena of mainstream Bengali Theatre.

The proposed study has taken an empirical investigation in the interior of the contemporary Bengali Theatre and has collected the possible anecdotes of the theatrical productions of the leading Group Theatres spanning across the districts of West Bengal, i.e period of the performance, directorial improvisation, thematic discourse of the script (if the production is a manuscript-play), interconnectivity of the play with the contemporary social background, suggestions and messages conveyed through the production and the major critiques on the play as available. Based on the gathered primary data, the study has tried to locate all possible traits of the Leftist political regime in the conceptualization of the 'gender issues' in the modern Bengali theatrical constructs. The study has also tried to reach at a conclusion that may facilitate future researches in enriching the pool of interdisciplinary studies in other aspects of cultural life in other parts of our country.

The study has been historical, analytical in perspective and comparative in nature to be ascertained by both qualitative and quantitative methodology. All the relevant reports, government and other institutional sources, interviews, documents, books and articles was consulted to develop the study. Besides, several open ended interviews were undertaken to ascertain the qualitative inputs into the theme of gender, performance and politics. For the purpose personalities in the domain of art and performance, critics and academic experts in the field were interviewed.

The chronicles of theatre reveal a prosperous tradition of dramatic performances concentrating on socio-political agenda and currents that has deep or considerable impact in public life to seek attention, consciousness and reaction of the people. The Satires performed by the comic poets at the amphitheatres played influential role in the articulation, aggregation and exposition of public opinion in Hellenic democracies. Although the performance of Drama had ritualistic significance in the then Athenian society, the dramatists enhanced the scope of such performances towards examination of political issues and their relevance in the running of Polis or city-state centric rule. The splendours of such open-minded criticism of politically controversial and critical themes are drafted in the works of Sophocles, Euripides, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Agathon and many others.

In the age of Renaissance, Shakespeare's plays were challenging the Christian traditional morality and ethos. "In his critique of *King Lear*, Swinburne valorizes Hellenic aestheticism over Christian morality, and argues that this play proves Shakespeare's sympathy with radical political causes. Indeed, Swinburne's rhetoric in *King Lear* inverts traditional reading of the play by promoting agnosticism over Christianity, aestheticism over morality. Critiques also observe the portrayal of struggle between various social groups in the Roman republics was central to Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, which is amid the minority of Shakespeare tragedies proscribed in a democracy in modern times. The drama was temporarily censored in France during late 1930s on the allegation that it exhibits certain fascist aspects, and Slavoj Zizek, recorded its embargo in Post-War Germany on the ground of its content of severe militarism.

In subsequent centuries, political theatre has evolved in depth and range. Eventually political theatre has associated itself with cabaret performances and indigenous folk theatre. Under the semblance, political theatre has cultivated itself as an agency of authentic alternative interaction inside the civil societies that are being ruled by oppressive governments and worked to proliferate the critical judgmental thought.

Political theatre, therefore, is a conscious attempt to endorse specific political stand or ideals, the most organized and comprehensive endeavour in this regard may be traced, in the recent history, in the left wing culturalism called Agitprop in erstwhile Soviet Russia, which gradually appeared as a methodology of phenomenal development of Marxist aesthetics amongst the global Lefts. Agitprop theatre as a highly politicized left-wing approach originated in 1920s to feature cardboard characters of flawless righteousness and absolute evil and its uncouth deride. Later the term became operational in any context whereby highly agitational contents were being performed in the arena of theatre.

Marxist aesthetics in theatre found further highly elaborate and sophisticated impetus in Bertolt Brecht's methodology of Epic Theatre. Brechtian approach to theatre methodology was far more rational than Agitprop. He introduced the mechanism of Alienation (*Verfremdungseffekt*) in theatre where an actor or group of actors suddenly use to start active communication with the audience, putting a halt in the story-telling, to wake them up from their involvement in the entertainment of the storyline and follow the inner ideological message of the dramatic content. This method emphasizes the socio-political content of drama, rather than its emotional manipulation of the audience or on the production's formal beauty. Brechtian approach became highly acclaimed in the Indian sub-continent and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Augusto Boal built on the Brechtian construct of *Lehrstücke* into an internationally admired technique of *Theatre of the Oppressed*, with its pervasive varieties of 'forum theatre' and 'invisible theatre'. Boal intended to break the four walls of a theatre hall, which he considered, elitist, and built theatre with portable, flexible and inexpensive components and items. In the perspective of those less-represented in a society, his style is effective as arms against tormenters. For Boal, there are three attributes of the aesthetic plot. First, is Plasticity, means that one may be somebody or something without actually being that entity. Objects can obtain diverse meaning like a piece of long cloth can substitute a river. He avows that just the duration and location of the object matters, rest all its features are counted as temporal and location can be

changed. Second, is the Dichotomy of the Space, i.e. the performing arena may conceive several layers of aesthetic spaces. This scheme insinuates that there are spaces within a space. The stage is in front of the audience is a space as a whole, yet the actors may create a market, a royal court, a roadway in between, a forest at a time within that whole space by means of suggestions and communications in theatrical language. Third, is Tele-microscopic. This idea denotes that it is difficult to put out of sight while some one is on the performing space. Each part and property of the space is visible and it may assemble the distant things in close-up views. Boals contribution ignited the emergence of Third Theatre movement across the world and the minimalistic approach, based on less properties, less stagecraft, less costume, less arrangements and more of choreography, more of bodily suggestions, more active participation without achieving much acting skill, became predominant methodology of political theatres. Theatre, then, moved out of its regular spaces and halls to be performed on streets, open spaces at the factory gates, market premises and places of public attention.

Political theatre in India has a profound legacy since 15th century when Bhakti Movement sprang out as a protest to typical domination of Brahmanism in the traditional Hindu society. Bhakti poets and saints spread and sustain the spirit of assimilative and inclusive religious culture as against the mainstream Varna system prevalent in India throughout the length and breadth. The Kirtana and the Krishna Katha acts introduced by Sri Chaitanya in Nadia district of Bengal can be marked as a pioneering effort in this regard. Researchers have shown that at Vijayanagar in 1504, the ruler Veer Narasimhadeva Raya, sentenced some Kuchipudi dancers to death after their performance enacting the gruesome sufferings used by the oppressor king to extract taxes from the poor peasants.

The more prominent and impactful phase of political theatre in India began in the late 19th Century when dedicated patriots took theatre as an instrument against the suppressive restrictions imposed by colonial rulers on the publication and performance of anti-government dramas. Dinabandhu Mitra published *Neel Darpan*

in 1860 depicting the agony of the Bengali indigo cultivators being ruthlessly persecuted by the British planters. The play provoked strong public sentiment in Bengal against British rule and opened the way for a host of nationalist literary and dramatic works along similar lines elsewhere in the country. *Neel Darpan* was staged in Dhaka in 1861 and in the same year Reverend James Long translated the play into English for which he was imprisoned for a month under the charge of sedition. Great National Theatre, chaired by noted Bengali dramatist Girish Chandra Ghosh, produced *Neel Darpan* at Kolkata in 1872. In subsequent years plays like *Jamidar Darpan*(1873) based on peasant rebellion against the land-owning babus by Mir Masarraf Hossain, *Cha-Kar-Darpan*(1873) dealing with the poor working conditions at the British tea-estates in North Bengal and *Jel Darpan* (1875) depicting the terrible life of prisoners in the jail houses of Bengal by Dakshinaranjan Chattopadhyay, *Gajadananda O Jubaraj*(1876) by Amritalal Basu, a satirical account of a barrister named Jagadananda who had entertained the visiting Prince of Wales in his house and allowed the womenfolk of his family to meet him breaking the traditional practice of veil, *Surendra Binodini* (1876) by Upendranath Das on the similar spirit. Both the plays were promptly closed down by the government after the second night.

In the milieu of political theatre in India, the influence Socialist and Communist ideologies became prominent since late 30s. The accomplishment of Socialism in Soviet Russia thrilled the Indian playwrights and dramatists to design theatre to incite the spirit of both anti-colonial struggle as nearer objective and class struggle as the distant yet final goal. Thus, appeared in 1942, the most significant organization, Indian Peoples Theatre Association (IPTA). IPTA initiated its move as a modest associate of the Left-wing Anti-Fascist Writers and Artists Fraternity based in Calcutta. All legendary stalwarts in the arena of creative writing, painting and performance folk together to tour the country performing to aid the victims of the ruinous famine in Bengal in 1943 under the banner of IPTA. The famine took lives of more than two million people, moreover the rampant corruption, black marketing worsen the situation to catastrophe.

Gradually, theatre became an useful tool of propaganda for various programmes and manifestations by Left Trade Unions, Student Organizations, Peasants Associations in collaboration with the cultural wing of the party. With the installation of Left Front government in West Bengal and its adoption of Land Reforms policy and Panchayat System for rural development, theatre became a major agency of preaching the gospel of success of public policies of the government. Government, in return, extended resources to the theatre activists to fund Lokoranjan Shakha or the field publicity wing of the government under the Information and Cultural Ministry. Lokoranjan Shaka produced several dramatic productions like *Gulshan* (1975), *Amar Mati* (1982), *Hiseb Nebar Pala*(1983), *Dena Paona* (1984), *Rahumukta* (1985), *Rather Rashi* (1986) some of which were noted works of Rabindranath Tagore.

IPTA worked as the first largest platform for the women to participate in theatre since 1943. Dina Pathak, Shanta Gandhi, Gul Bardhan, Sova Sen, Geeta Sen, Reba Roychoudhury, Rekha Jain, Tripti Mitra, Preeti Banerjee, Chitra Sen were the stalwarts who travelled and performed extensively throughout the country with the Central Squad of the IPTA. Although, in fact, IPTA considered women's issues was only a part of a cluster of a range of social, economic, political and aesthetic problems.

All though the discourses on Feminist Theater has been largely Eurocentric and has ignored the possibilities of a Third World version of Feminist Theatre, there has been a consistent process of gendering the theatre in India and band of women playwrights, directors, actresses, critics and commentators extended vigorous efforts to surface women's issues through theatre since late 80s. Dramatic scripts have been developed based on the literary works of Maitreyi Devi, Ashapura Devi, Leela Majumdar, Mahasweta Devi, Bani Basu, Nabanita Dev Sen, Suchitra Bhattacharya, Tilottama Majumder in Bengali; Balamani Amma, K. Saraswati, Lalithambika Antharjanam, Asitha, Indu Menon in Malayalam; Malati Bedekar, Kamal Desai,

Gauri Deshpande, Girijabai Kelkar in Marathi; Varsha Adalia, Esha Dadawala, Dhiruben Patel in Gujrati; Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi, Indira Raisom Goswami in Assamese; Ismat Chughtai, Saliha Abid Hussain, Zahida Zaidi in Urdu; C.S. Lakshmi, Raghavan Chudamani, Manjula Padmanavan in Tamil; Neelam Mansingh Chowdhury, Ajita Kaur, Nirupama Dutt in Punjabi; Mridula Garg, Anju Makhija, Chitra Mudgal in Hindi and many more.

While the Indian women authors persisted in writing on complex concerns such as sensuality, suppression, isolation, exodus, identity crisis, free sex etc. they were being criticized to be inferior to their male counterparts for their projection in canvas that was still narrow and they for the most part limited themselves to the portrayal of the household space and their encounters with it. Notwithstanding the inadequacies they have explicitly inflated the awareness about the woman's position, role and responsibility in the society. The exposure of women as an individual through a women writer's creative depiction remain always practical, accurate and as such authentic. Representation by women of their issues by male playwrights is inclined to be a insignificantly unpersuasive as they fail to comprehend the female psyche and viewpoint, at the outset. Female author's writing strive to oppose the male supremacy, despotism, partition, alienation and marginalization and in doing so argues from an altogether distinctive angle and attitude. Women performers were habituated to perform, in the earlier phases of political theatre in India, awfully contentedly with the scripts developed by gents playwrights. They had been vocal to what has been written by male dramatists and expressed their own choices as was intended by male directors. The status of women on stage was nothing more than a creative imagination of male artists.

In the context of modern Indian theatre, the women's theatre is largely concerned nowadays with social change and feminist ideology. There is a fundamental difference between Western feminist theatre with that of India's in agenda setting. While the feminist cultural politics and theatre in West, according to Susan Basnett, is based on demands like Equal Pay, Equal Education and Opportunities; Financial

and Legal Independence; End to Discrimination Against Lesbians; Women's Right to Define Her Own Sexuality; and Freedom Against Violence.

Emergence of Group Theatre in West Bengal was fostered both by the spirit of Indian Peoples' Theatre Movement and its decay. The IPTA wave was at its hue till 1947 by way of agenda setting, organizational strength, splendid aestheticism, and above all connectivity to the commons. No sooner the Communist Party was declared forbidden in independent India and the party went 'underground' split appeared in the IPTA and many dispersed from the organisation on various personal, ideological and political grounds and the theatre scene began to change radically. The wave of IPTA began to wane. Entertainment theatre faced a severe impede due to the contest of the more popular variety of cinema. Amateur theatre continued by concentrating in big cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Bangalore.

Although the Group Theatre movement is not a uniform or homogeneous sum and includes within it activists from range of shades and hues, some of these groups supported the Left, more precisely the CPI(M) in particular and the Left Front in general in the face of assail from right wing political forces. Many of these groups or individual activists have frequently partook in the election campaigns with their street plays, poems and lectures, dance and songs in espousal of the contenders and parties of the Left Front. More significantly these groups persisted to perform Avant Garde experiments and supplemented to a vibrant theatre going tradition in West Bengal - a tradition which has in general windswept the contests of globalization. Group Theatre shared its experimental passion with theatre of the 1960s and 70s in almost all language of India.

Sooner the Left Front government came to power, the millage the Lefts took from the committed cultural workers' relentless campaign and propagation was to be recognised and acknowledged. The Left Front government made no mistake to extend its patronage and support to nurture the revolutionary cultural activism to virtually turn it to pro-establishment advocacy. This gradually led to instiutalization

of what was predominantly a movement and activism. But the task was not that easy. The variety of cultural activities from a range of Folk Cultures to Group Theatre was a complex arena to deal. There were sustained difference of opinion, ego-centric contradictions, charges of nepotism and much more melodrama. But in ultimate, the highly regimented and cadre based organisation of the Lefts took an effective control to stabilise the situation and bring it to their favour as the government on the other hand was extending institutional support in the form of establishing co-ordination organisations, funding, awards and honours to the activists, study and research facilities etc.

The present study conducted throughout 19 districts of the state where 932 Group Theatres are regularly performing to produce theatrical productions has somehow been facilitated by the Left Front Government during decades under scrutiny. Some has received the production grant from Paschim Banga Nattya Academy, majority of these Groups has been invited to produce dramatic shows at theatre festivals in various districts at terms on rotation and were paid lump sum production cost and travelling expenses, some received special grants to host theatre workshops where all resource persons were paid handsome remuneration by the Department of Information and Culture, mentors of many of these Groups remain associated with Nattya Academy as members representing their respective districts or region, many of them were awarded with prestigious awards named after the doyens of modern Bengali theatre. Following are the distribution of benefits by Left Front Government availed by the Group Theatres.

By means of this the mainstream Group Theatres were tamed to act pro-establishment and as a machinery to champion the cause of public policies adopted by the Left Front Government from time to time like Land Reforms, Panchayat system etc, and many of these Groups even went to produce electoral street plays in favour of the Left Front during electoral campaign.

As the Group Theatre were participating in the in the electoral campaign process of the state being a influential mechanism of propaganda, the unease of the ruling government heightened further, by mid 50s. A group of Leftist theatre performers both from Group Theatres over and above disintegrated sections of IPTA's Bengal faction underwent producing and performing street plays filled with political messages on behalf of the Communist Party of India as effective apparatus of election campaigns. The majority of these street shows were developed to visualize and predict a definite adherent ideology, the central theme being the "class-conflict" yet bespoke according to the requirement of the local conditions and concerns.

During period under study, i.e. the rule of Left Front Government in the state since 1977 up to 2007, three decades at the most, there has been considerable growth of participation of women in the mainstream Group Theatre, although not as an universal phenomenon all over the state, yet this has broaden the scope and framed a perceived factor behind the number of theatre productions on women's issues to be increased. The study was initiated to understand whether the genuine spirit of feminist theatre has developed in the mean time in the state within the rich tradition of protest theatre or in visualizing the women's issue through theatre the Group Theatres maintained its left political bias to a large extent, and in either cases how far the participation of women in numbers at the decision making body of Group Theatres is a fundamental factor.

Whilst passion for acting and longing for self- manifestation were commonly the prime intention for several of these female artistes to join organisations of Group Theatre which was characteristically presided over by patriarchal standards, for few others of them, theatre became a dais for acquiring a required livelihood, although time and again irregular. Behind the increased participation of female performers in Group Theatre during early 1980s and 1990s, ideological commitment played major role. Although they lacked proper training and experience, it was the ideological zeal that played havoc as a dynamic in the participation of women in Group Theatres in notable numbers. However, it is only during the early couple of years of

twenty first century that only some woman practitioners have appeared impressively enough at the vanguard position of the Group Theatre movement.

With the advent of a perennial globalization and its tentacles in the Group Theatre culture in West Bengal, a potential makeover has been evident in the making of theatres on women' issues. Several women director, dramatist came to surface featuring the required USP while reflecting women's issues through their works. They were no Catholics to conform their outlook with the patriarchal attitude and set up of Group Theatres, rather they challenged it stoutly. It would, therefore, appear as no flabbergast that even in the sphere of performing arts, the field that holds a testimony of generating alluring sale and money-spinning profit precincts, would be undoubtedly and effectively globalised. Thus, the reach variety of Group Theatre productions came into the notice of multi-national corporations. Abandoned sponsorship and financial supports were extended to popular Groups who hold large scale sale of their productions across the nation and abroad. Amongst the stimulating ambience of the mid to late-1990s, socially relevant theatres based on women's issues embark on to open the way forward. Several tabooed and proscribed issues discovered manifestation and articulation through theatre. By the mid-1990's, women's question loomed large in Bengal's theatre scene in a diversified language and presentation. In the form of the experimental theatre, the agenda of the women's movement shaped the content of plays by prominent Group Theatres in West Bengal.

Group Theatre's effort towards building dramatic production around women's issues has, therefore, remained an area of ambiguity in West Bengal. While there was a genuine underlying demand within the Group Theatre movement to replace the patriarchal ethos and modes of operation inside organizations and drawing conclusions to theatrical production as both this aspects of Group Theatre movement was found to be highly influenced by the Leftist political bias during the early phase of Left Front rule in the state, surprisingly enough, when the influence of globalised market economy, in the latter half of the Left Front rule, quite swiftly washed out the

Leftist political prejudice in the Group Theatre culture, and more women with great spirit came to join the camps of theatre, formed their own associations to build theatre of their own, they simply rejected any conformity to feminism to such an extent that they denounced any identity in the limits of 'women director'.

Ever since 1991, Jana Sanskriti has moved itself extreme from conformist and typical Group Theatre activity to widen the exercise of *Theatre of the Oppressed* to distant and secluded rural areas of the Sunderban region in southern most West Bengal. The *Theatre of the Oppressed* has the finest attributes to be a feminist project as it proves that the 'gender' is an artificial construct and can be consciously denied once radical stimulations are added to instigate the spirit of opposing the gendered roles sooner it becomes oppressive to an individual. Theatre of the Oppressed has contributed in both the ways in aesthetics and activism, as a methodology of building theatre and pedagogy of feminist activism as and where required.

“Experiencing” and “Living through” are the parameters that the performers of Janasanskriti Centre of Theatre of the Oppressed use when they try to define the problem the women face at the grass root level. Through the performance the integration of the theme and the viewers are built through easily flowing dialogues and physical acting. Moreover they use the methodology of interventions by means of bringing the narrator in between the progress of the theme. This imparts a handy training to the audience about how to intervene and why to intervene. Through such interventions the theatre works to develop the individuality and community feeling among the women, and *the theatre of the oppressed* introduces them to a collective space. They, then become a group, and detect diverse ways of discussion and sharing within the group, and most essentially they find the opening to exercise what they obtain as ‘real life’ solutions.

Thus, from the Colonial Theatre to a Nationalist Theatre, from there to the Peoples' Theatre (IPTA), from IPTA to Group Theatre and from Group Theatre to the Theatre of The Oppressed, the dialectical development of Indian theatre continues to sustain.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction.

1.1. BACKGROUND AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

A debate has been raging over the last couple of decades about the sensitivity of the cultural activism towards the struggles and movements of and for the woman in our country. A number of scholars have expressed interest in analyzing the phenomena from a socio-political perspectives. As a matter of fact, feminism had a late arrival in this country, and moreover, had a very limited scope in the sphere of performing arts. It is a moot point, however, if ever, there was a chance to academically built any framework of Indian version of feminism. In the realm of performing arts, a serious question on the same note remain pertinent, whether the making of the female character on stage from the age-old literary works of Kalidasa to a more technologically advanced proscenium production playwrights of the date, dare to delimit the chalk-circles drawn by the patriarchy or not. The debate on 'gender and media relationship' may be, thus, revised encompassing such fundamental questions besides focusing upon the approaches of the frontrunners of the woman's movements in our country in relation to such debate.

1.2. OF FEMINIST CRITICAL THEORY AND THEATRE

Centrally, Performance Studies set-out to understand the study of Drama as the study of theatre in its historical, theoretical and practical contexts. Each of these three areas has undergone conceptual and methodological shifts in the move towards a 'new' theorized field of Performance Studies under the broad discipline of Social Science. The importance of Feminist approach in recent thinking about theatre history, theory and practice is considerable. The current study sets out to

demonstrate its importance through a survey of the feminist projects in contemporary Bengali theatre, in one hand and the course of interaction between such significant projects and a dominant political ideological campaign through theatre as a tradition of cultural practices in West Bengal, on the other.

Writing on the growth of Performance Studies in the American context, feminist theatre academic Sue-Ellen Case comments, "as the study of theatre within theatre departments developed, it was dominated by the history of theatre, rather than its criticism" [Sue-Ellen Case (ed.); **Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre**; The Johns Hopkins University Press; London; 1990]. This was a consequence of the way in which performance studies sought to re-locate the study of plays within their historic-theatrical context. Theatre, studied as dramatic literature in English departments, has been divorced from the context of its production. Performance studies, however, began to examine the history of playing spaces, performance conditions, audience compositions, and the various artistic, social and political functions assigned to theatre at different times. In this context, play-texts, themselves, once 'read' as opposed to dramatic texts, were seen to contain important information about aspects of their contemporary staging.

By 1985, the year of the first British Academic Women's Theatre Conference held at Warwick University, a 'feminist thinking' of theatre history was shown to be well underway. Different periods of theatre history from the Renaissance to the Nineteenth Century were re-examined by feminist approaches. The methodologies used to frame the historical material were a mixture of 'old' and 'new'. On the traditional side these included the 'images of women in male-authored drama approach' derived from feminist literary studies; and the empirical research of under/non-documented work by women in theatre. The conference also showed a feminist intervention in more recent theoretical positions used to re-frame theatre-history: a feminist appropriation of 'semiotics' (Semiotics offered an understanding of the theatrical text as a sign-system, and, moreover, provided a 'language' for the study of plays in performance :: *Introduction to Feminism and Theatre* by **Aston Elaine**)

critiqued the images of women in Nineteenth Century theatre; feminist-cultural-materialist analysis alienated the representation of women (by men) on the Renaissance stage.

When Manchester University hosted a second major feminist theatre history conference in 1989, focusing specially on the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century British stages, it demonstrated that there was now an established and growing body of feminist historic-revisionist activity in the field of Performance Studies. The 'new direction' in theatre history was exposing the history of male domination on the stage and recovering women's performance which, like so much of women's culture, had been 'hidden' and silenced by a body of conservative, male criticism.

In addition to semiotics, there were several other spheres of critical theory in the 1980s which provided important frameworks and methodologies for the study of plays and performance. The field of theatre connected with disciplines such as Politics, Anthropology, Sociology and Psychoanalysis. It was re-examined within the contexts of post-structuralism, post-modernism and deconstruction; was cross-examined by the new-historians, Marxist scholars, cultural materialist, and by the theory and practice of feminism(s).

As performance studies was a late developer and the impact of feminism came much later than in other studies, feminist critical theory in theatre began by 'borrowing' from feminist projects in related discipline. Feminist theatre scholarship was subsequently able to draw on this work to develop a conceptual and methodological framework for critiquing how women are 'imaged' in dramatic productions. Unlike its literary 'sister', however, the feminist study of theatre had not only to 'resist' or re-read the written text, but also needed to find ways of 'reading' the performance context. Theatre studies looked to film and media studies where feminist scholarship focused on the construction of women as sign: an approach in which feminism,

psychoanalysis, and semiotics was and is being used to understand how women are represented in cinematic texts as other cultural contexts.

Feminist theorization of stage practice has been critical of those realist traditions of performance which work in tandem with dominant and oppressive representations of gender, and 'glorify the phallus' centre stage. Feminism looked to a theatrical practice rooted in a desire for political change.

Now, why Bengali Theatre? It goes without saying that Bengal had been among the Indian provinces that advanced the most in education and culture during the colonial rule. Thus Bengal was the first to be illuminated by the lights of Indian Renaissance. The lives and the living of the woman in Bengal had been under severe oppression under the medieval patriarchy and the Brahminism. It was then the vanguards of the Bengal Renaissance, armed with the light of new knowledge, called out for the movement for Religious and Social reforms. The newspapers and the theatre of that era played a progressive role, though with major limitations, to spread the message of such philanthropic movement to the common people. The dramatic productions like *Sadhabar Ekadoshi* (1866), *Vidhaba Vivah* (1872), and *Sati Ki Kalankini?* (1875) exposed the plight of the incarcerated woman. Playwrights like Dinabandhu Mitra, Madhusudan Dutta, Rabindranath Tagore, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Shishir Bhaduri, gave voice to the hitherto unheard experiences of the woman.

However, it is rather unfortunate to note that the woman had no right to act in those plays that denoted their stories in the Bengali theatre during the 19th Century. The few who actually got the break to appear on the stage were either prostitutes or dirt poor. Even the leading lights of Bengal Renaissance had been carrying a prejudiced thought to oppose women's liberty to perform on stages. It was at the dawn of the independence that the Leftist ideology in the form of people's theatre movement of I.P.T.A brought the educated women the opportunity to perform in theatres in the dramatic productions like *Nabanna* by Bijon Bhattacharya (1944), *Jwala* by Writtik

Ghatak (1951), *Dukhir Iman* by Tulsi Lahiri (1955), *Laboratory* by Benoy Ghosh (1956), *Louha Kapat* by Manmatha Roy (1958) etc. Bengali Theatres, by that time, had been more into the documentation of the local and national crisis than depicting the predicament of the women as individual. It seemed that the Bengali Theatres of that period led by the Marxist understanding of the events had taken it for granted that the root of all social inequality including the oppression of women was the basic exploitative nature of the economic system. As soon as Socialism is achieved, women problems like all other social disparities shall disappear.

The transition of Bengali Theatre from People's Theatre (I.P.T.A) to Neo Theaterism (led by some departed stalwarts of the I.P.T.A movement like Sombhu Mitra) to the contemporary Group Theater had been an influential shift in paradigm in the cultural history of Bengal after the partition. Amateur theatre in the form of Group Theatre in West Bengal became the mainstream of Bengali theatre almost at the same span of time that the Left Front regime was installed and consolidated in the state. To a greater extent majority of the Group Theatres plotted their dramatic productions as to give passive support to the 'friendly government' in the power. Some of these groups even strongly propagated the gospel of Leftist political views through electoral campaigns. As courtesy to such a stance by the Group Theatres they received great endowment from the Left Front Government. Almost each of the towns theatres were established under the state sponsorship, the government also set up Paschim Banga Natya Academy to encourage the theatrical activities throughout the province, frequent Theatre Festivals, Workshops, Exhibitions were organized under the government patronage and government grants were pouring in for theatre. However, critics point out the silent process of bringing the Bengali theatre into the fold of an establishment. And the Bengali theatre had shown no will to expose on stage the oppressive face of the 'state power' maintaining the orthodox Marxist class-view. Gradually the dramatic productions of the Group Theatres of Bengal turned its face towards exploring the fragmented "personal crisis" of the individuals. And this trend has opened up a new vista for the Feminism in respect of the Bengali theatre. From the city of Kolkata to the mofussils, the life and the crisis of

the woman became the concern of Bengali theatre. Char Adhyay (1951), Voma (1976), Putul Khela (1977), Nathbati Anathbat (1983), Maa (1985), Vama (1990), Rudali (1992), Jejon Achhe Majhkhane (1995), Beti Ayee (1996), Jara Brishtite Vijejhilo (1997), Sanu Roy Choudhury (1998), Himmat Mai (1998), Mukti(1999), Suprova (2000), Natir Katha (2003) -- woman as the victim of semi-feudal exploitation; woman subjected to the attack of global consumerism; women of the epics improvised in the reality of the date; woman towards iconisation -- since 1978 till date 'the woman' is being developed from all possible creative perspectives in the contemporary arena of mainstream Bengali Theatre.

The question is - can these creative efforts operate beyond the influence of the 'establishment'? Any serious study to understand the reflections, if not the biasness, of 'established Left' in the contemporary Bengali theatre that speaks about women may contribute to the socio-cultural history of the region.

The proposed study has taken an empirical investigation in the interior of the contemporary Bengali Theatre and has collected the possible anecdotes of the theatrical productions of the leading Group Theatres spanning across the districts of West Bengal, i.e period of the performance, directorial improvisation, thematic discourse of the script (if the production is a manuscript-play), interconnectivity of the play with the contemporary social background, suggestions and messages conveyed through the production and the major critiques on the play as available. Based on the gathered primary data, the study has tried to locate all possible traits of the Leftist political regime in the conceptualization of the 'gender issues' in the modern Bengali theatrical constructs. The study has also tried to reach at a conclusion that may facilitate future researches in enriching the pool of interdisciplinary studies in other aspects of cultural life in other parts of our country.

1.3 AREA OF ENQUIRY IN THE STUDY

It is noteworthy that the critical juncture of the triangular relationship between Gender, Media and Regime has fascinated scanty intellectual endeavour. Lack of significant focus on this space is basically due to the ignorance amongst the political researchers in considering theatre as a vibrant media of political socialization. There has been considerable amount of critical studies on the Indian mainstream cinemas, yet there were lack of concern to study modern Indian mainstream theatres as politically insightful perspective.

The cultural history of West Bengal reveals the note that for more than three decades the themes of the mainstream theatrical activities in the state has been predominantly pro-leftist in approach. A strong Leftist cultural tradition, like I.P.T.A movement, had set forth the backdrop of the genesis and augmentation of Group Theatre activities, which was further nurtured and patronised by the Left Front Government. Therefore, this mutually reciprocal relationship between the two major aspects of the present study has contributed to a unique politico-cultural symbiosis in West Bengal.

At the time that women and media debate began reviving, especially in the context of dramatic productions shown in various prosceniums of the country, the theatre media in West Bengal was witnessing some dramatic developments. With the installation of the Left-Front Government in the state, slow but steady efforts were made to institutionalize the ideologies of the Left-Front in education and mass-media like theatre. Number of theatre halls were developed, theatre groups were given Government assistance, an academy for the theatre groups of the state was established under the supervision of the Information and Cultural Department of the Left-Front Government to 'aid and assist' the theatrical efforts of the theatre groups of the state. As a linear consequence to all these, serious tuning-changing operation was gradually taking place in various stages. And a pro-Left bias was in vogue in the 'language' and 'message' of the mainstream theatrical productions of the Group

Theatres of West Bengal. While it was expected that in the midst of the contemporary wave of women's issues at the national and international level, the theatre media, as a symbiotic agent of the Left Front regime in West Bengal, shall respond by making their productions more gender-inclusive and gender-sensitive and harp on the relevance of the State's commitments towards women, the Group Theatres of West Bengal went on theorising women's issues as an integral part of the broader consequence of Capitalist exploitation. No doubt, such a reductionist approach was not welcomed by many of the contemporary feminist critiques of Bengali theatre, and the surfaced regimentation of the mainstream Group Theatres for the political career of the Left-Front Government in the state was being influenced by new challenges and pressures.

Meanwhile, the more interesting outcome of the developments over the last decade and a half has been the response of the native theatre-media to "Globalisation". Under the pressure of globalization and the competition from satellite television a majority of renowned Group Theatres of West Bengal moved swiftly from an 'ideological shows' to one dedicated and driven by advertisers and sponsors. This shift has been attributed to two factors. Given the fall of financial support from the government, the need to earn funds from advertisements and prevent the loss of viewership to competing channels has made such a shift inevitable and logical. Such is the bogey of commercial viability that hardly any crucial question was raised on women's issues. This in turn influences the representation of family structures in the dramatic productions of the Group Theatres. It is largely nuclear, with a sizeable proportion of men and women. The extended family is in fact few and far between. The overwhelming representation of certain segments of society in terms of age, class, lifestyle and preoccupations is a planned outcome of a market-strategy. Given this focus on the rich, assertive and enterprising entrepreneur, the business milieu provides much of the context in which some of the contemporary preoccupations with liberalization and opening up of the economy and its impact on civil society gets reflected and addressed. It is therefore not surprising that what is being projected is the highly assertive urban Bengali, a leader of sorts who is highly

individualistic and accountable to no one. Women figure as wives, lovers, professional colleagues, friends and even as enemies. Within this broader context the struggles continue to be stereotyped. Men have professional setbacks and personal disappointment in love to reckon with; women, on the other hand, have to face far more complex pressures ranging from disintegration of personal relationships, estrangement of children, to withstanding threats of sexual assault and molestation, blackmail etc. Again, such productions fail to uphold any serious question about State's commitment towards women. In short, what we found ourselves watching on the stage was an uneasy mix of a so-called social reality that the audience found credible and true either for upper class families living in big cities and a construct of the women that is highly problematic.

In such a scenario some pertinent survey of the dramatic productions of the Group Theatre requires greater attention to meet specific enquiries like, how these theatre troops look at the problems of women, what remains as their basis of selection of scripts for productions, whether any post-production review is made on the basis of the comments of women in the audience, what has been the influence of the leftist ideology and the market factors to locate any concern on the women etc.

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Having perceived the problem area of the study, the present research has intended to achieve certain objectives, as stated below -

- To analyze and reinterpret the theories selected in the study, to check their applicability in accordance to the regime-media-gender ecology in the state of West Bengal.
- To focus on the traits of ideological temperaments of Bengali theatre as a traditional media of socialization in the portrayal of 'Gendered' points during the rule of Left Front Government in West Bengal.

- To understand the attributes of the Gender-Media-Regime relationship as reflected in contemporary Bengali theatre in the age of Liberal Market Economy.
- To point at the emerging scope of an alternative theatre, free from the influence of market or ideology, to enlighten authentic and exclusive questions on Women's agenda.

1.5. REVIEW OF THE AVAILABLE LITERATURES

A fleeting go through the literatures available on the issue of politics of performance divulge that these literatures can broadly be categorized into four sets of distinctly different categories, as --

Firstly, literatures on the *understanding of the correlation of 'Politics' and the 'Performing Art'*; Cultural theory has taken a 'performative turn', shifting its focus from the textual nature of the world to how the social world is narrated, its subjects are subjected and its relations are ritually enacted. The rise of performativity in cultural theory has profound implications for the way we think about ethics and politics. Indeed, as it concerns all aspects of 'difference', it reshapes the ways we think about the continuities and interruptions of social life itself. Culture and Performance explores the development and direction of the notion of performativity. It interrogates the idea of subjectivity, the possibility of ethics and, beyond this, it explores new ways of thinking political imaginations and possibilities. It traces the implications of the concept, and assesses the critique that is emerging from a renewed interest in creativity. The literatures under this category come from both Marxist and Non-Marxist tradition in plenty of numbers. Notable of them are like

- Bell, Vikki; **Culture and Performance : The Challenge of Ethics, Politics and Feminist Theory**; Seagull Books; New Delhi; 2005.
- Benjamin, Walter; **Understanding Brecht**; New Left Books; London; 1977.

- Bentley, Eric; **Theory on the Modern Stage : An Introduction to Modern Theatre and Drama**; Penguin; Harmondsworth; 1992.
- Bharucha, Rustom; **Theatre and the World: Performance and the Politics of Culture**; Routledge, London, 1998.
- Bradby, David; **Performance and Politics in Popular Drama: Aspects of Popular Entertainment in Theatre, Film and Television, 1800-1976**; Cambridge University Press; London; 2005.
- Chelmsford, Hanna; **Vladimir Mayakovsky : Plays, Articles, Essays**; Raduga Publishers; Moscow; 1987.
- **Collected Works of Maxim Gorky; Volume X**; Progress Publishers; Moscow; 1982.
- Craig, David (ed.); **Marxists on Literature : An Anthology**; Penguin; Harmondsworth; 1975.
- David, Brady, James, Louis and Sharratt, Bernarad (ed.); **Performance and Politics in Popular Drama**; Cambridge University Press; London; 2002.
- Finburgh, Clare, Lavery, Carl, and Shevtsova, Maria (ed.); **Performance and Politics**; Palgrave Macmillan; London; 2006.
- Forgacs, David and Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey; **Antonio Gramsci : Selection from Cultural Writings**; Lawrence and Wishart; London; 1985.
- Hollows, Joanne and Moseley, Rachel; **Feminism in Popular Culture** Oxford University Press; London; 2006.
- **Lenin on Tolstoy from Lenin's Collected Works; Volume IV**, Progress Publishers; Moscow; 1982.
- **Mao Zedong : Talks at the Yen'an Forum**; Foreign Languages Press; Beijing; 1967.
- Piscator, Erwin; **The Political Theatre**; Eyre Methuen; London; 1980
- **Selected Works of Lu Xun; Volume III**; Foreign Languages Press; Beijing; 1985.

In the Second category, there are ample amount of publications *on the correspondence of performance and politics at the global level*. As a matter of fact, such exclusive

interdisciplinary studies are in vogue in other continents as a concern for political sociology. The literature under this category presents some ongoing struggles and tensions in feminist work as researchers and theorists carve niches, expand knowledge, and strive for legitimacy in the academy and, of course, a remarkable synthesis of past and present feminist communication work as well as its look toward the future. The examples throughout are vivid and compelling and the primary focus on the performance lens offers much to identity, cultural, and political communication and feminist studies. It is an excellent resource or springboard for future scholarship as well as a riveting and coherent analysis of scholarship that can challenge advanced students in feminist and communication studies courses. The publications under this category also present an able and insightful guide to the diverse and changing ways that feminist scholars in communication, linguistics, and cultural studies have theorized and researched gender communication as dominance, identity and difference, and performance. The innovative formats of these texts links theory to research methodologies illustrated by case studies of face-to-face and theatre-mediated communication. Bringing together some of the most important and groundbreaking theorists and performers of the late twentieth century, this category of reader juxtaposes writings on gender in performances in post-apartheid South Africa and post-Communist Russia, post-industrial USA with well known, and frequently cited publications by prominent feminist theorists such as Jill Dolan, Judith Butler, Teresa de Lauretis, and Laura Mulvey. Essential reading for feminists, theatre enthusiasts and theatre and art practitioners, these books constitute the most up-to-date resource for the exploration of gender and performance, worldwide. Citation of some of such works may be like

- Arrizon, Alicia; **Latina Performance: Traversing the Stage (Unnatural Acts: Theorizing the Performative)**; Beacon Press; London; 2000.
- Bradby, David, James, Louis and Sharratt, Bernard (ed.); **Performance and Politics in Popular Drama :Aspects of Popular Entertainment in Theatre, 1800-1976**; Cambridge University Press; 1998.
- Edmondson, Laura; **Performance and Politics in Tanzania: The Nation on Stage**; Indiana University Press; USA; July 2007.

- Fusco, Coco; **Corpus Delecti : Performance Art of the Americas**; Routledge Publications; Berlin; 1999.
- Larson, Catherine and Vargas, Margarita (ed); **Latin American Women Dramatists: Theater, Texts, and Theories**; Indiana University Press; USA; 1999.
- Munoz, Jose Esteban and Munoz, Rose Esteban ; **Disidentifications : Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics**; University of Minnesota Press; Minnesota; 1999.
- Richardson, Angelique and Willis, Chris; **The New Woman in Fiction and Fact**; Palgrave; Basingstoke; 1998.
- Schechner, Richard and Appel, Willa (ed); **By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual** by Cambridge University Press; London; 1990.
- Schechner, Richard; **Between Theater and Anthropology**; University of Pennsylvania Press; Pennsylvania; 1985.
- Taylor, Diana and Villegas, Juan (ed.); **Negotiating Performance: Gender, Sexuality, and Theatricality in Latin America**; Duke University Press; 1994.
- Troyano, Alina; **I, Carmelita Tropicana: Performing between Cultures**; Beacon Press; London; 2000.
- Turner, Victor; **From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play**; PAJ; New York; 1982.

The Third cluster of literatures are grouped as those scholastic writings that focuses *on the context of a native Indian Theatre that has passed through many critical junctures of being the projection of political sociology of India on stage*. After Independence, in 1947, in their efforts to create an 'Indian' theatre that was different from the Westernized, colonial theatre, Indian theatre practitioners began returning to their 'roots' in classical dance, religious ritual, martial arts, popular entertainment and aesthetic theory. The Theatre of Roots - as this movement was known - was the first conscious effort at creating a body of work for urban audiences combining modern European theatre with traditional Indian performance while maintaining its distinction from

both. By addressing the politics of aesthetics and by challenging the visual practices, performer/spectator relationships, dramaturgical structures and aesthetic goals of colonial performance, the movement offered a strategy for reassessing colonial ideology and culture and for articulating and defining a newly emerging 'India'. The third category of literatures presents in-depth analysis of this movement: its innovations, theories, goals, accomplishments, problems and legacies.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century many forms of theatre have been called 'popular', but in the twentieth century the term 'popular drama' has taken on definite political overtones, often indicating a repudiation of 'commercial theatre'. But does that mean that political theatre is or tries to be more attractive to more people than commercial theatre? Does it conversely mean that commercial theatre has no political effects? These are some pertinent questions that have been raised in various literatures assembled under this category. Contributions came from people with very different types of experience: from an ex-animal trainer to a lecturer in film studies; from playwrights, directors and actors to professional critics and academics. Each author focused on a particular problem of defining drama in performance, drawing together the conditions of performance, the types of audience and the political effects of the plays or films in question. The result was a series of fruitful connections and juxtapositions which shows the remarkable continuity of the problems raised in attempts to create a popular political drama in the Indian environment. Some influential writings in this are inclusive of followings.

- B. Mee, Erin; **Theatre of Roots : Redirecting the Modern Indian Stage**; Berg Publishers, New York, 1999.
- Barlingay, S.S.; **A Modern Introduction to Indian Aesthetic Theory**; Eastern Book Corporation; New Delhi, 2007.
- Dalmia, Vasudha; **Poetics, Plays and Performances : The Politics of Modern Indian Theatre**; Oxford University Press; USA; 2005.
- Deshpande, G. P.; **Political Plays**; Seagull Books; London; 1998.

- Dhananjayan, V.P.; **Beyond Performing Art and Culture : Politico-Socio Aspects**; B.R. Rhythms; New Delhi; 2007.
- Dhananjayan, V.P.; **Beyond Performing Art and Culture : Politico-Socio Aspects**; B.R. Rhythms, New Delhi, 2007.
- Lal, Ananda and Dasgupta, Chidananda (ed.); **Rasa : The Indian Performing Arts in the Last Twenty-five Years (Vol. II Theatre and Cinema)**; Rawat Publication ; New Delhi; 1995.
- Mukherjee, Tutun (ed.); **Staging Resistance Plays by Women in Translation**; Oxford University Press; New Delhi; 2005.
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The fourth category of literatures explores *how Bengali theatre and the upsurges of various political movements inform and appropriate each other during the post-independence era*. As Bengal was the centre of the interaction, negotiation and conflict between the native and the British, its theatre experienced different spatial, and consequently, thematic and technical dislocations and relocations. The theories and practices of theatre underwent a change due to the emergence of a conscious nation-space. The books in this category studies the various aspects of the contemporary Bengali stage, with all its major and minor nuances, fame and notoriety, allegiances and importance. These books cover the wide range of themes, innovations, and

personalities that dominated the Bengali stage during this markedly important phase of the political and cultural history of Bengal. These books will be a good reading for those interested in cultural studies, colonialism and post-colonialism, sociology and history. Books that can be treated under this category are like the followings.

- Bandyopadhyay, Amiya; **Dekha Hoi Nai**; Proma; Kolkata; 2006.
- Bandyopadhyay, Robin; **A-Bidya Parar Avinetri**; Fotik Jal Prokashoni; Kolkata; 2006.
- Bandyopadhyay, Suresh Chandra; **Tirish Bachharer Lokayat Jiban**; Mitra and Ghosh Publication; Kolkata; 2007.
- Banerjee, Utpal; **Bengali Theatre 200 Years**; Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Govt. of India; 1999.
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- Bannerjee, Himani; **The Mirror of Class: Essays on Bengali Theatre**; Papyrus; Kolkata; 1999.
- Bhattacharya, Rimli (ed); **Black Town White Town - Nineteenth Century Calcutta**; Seagull Books; India; 1998.
- Chatterjee, Minoti; **Theatre Beyond the Threshold : Colonialism, Nationalism and the Bengali Stage 1905-1947**; Indialog; New Delhi; 2004.
- G.E. Ross, Fiona; **The Printed Bengali Character On Stage**; Curzon Press; London; 1996.
- Mukhopadhyay, Kuntal; **Theatre and politics: A study of group theatre movement of Bengal, 1948-1987**; Bibhasa; 1999.
- Raha, Kironmoy; **Bengali Theatre (India, the land and the people)**; National Book Trust; Delhi; 2001.
- Roy Chowdhury, Reba; **Jiboner Taane - Shikorer Taane**; Papyrus; 2005.

- Sen, Shova; **Nabanno Theke Laaldurgo**; National Book Agency; Kolkata; 1989.
- Silva, Neluka; **Politics and theatre: A comparative study of the construction of nation and gender in the contemporary Sinhalese and Bengali theatres**; Regional Centre for Strategic Studies; New Delhi; 1999.
- Somerset, Fiona and Watson, Nicholas (ed.); **The Vulgar Tongue: Medieval and Postmedieval Vernacularity in Bengali Theatre**; Pennsylvania State University Press; November 2003.

Review of literatures in the concerned field suggests that there is a lack of any coherent thought in the study of interactions of performance and politics in our country, at large. However, inconsistent and ineloquent attempts have been made to focus on the political perspectives of modern Indian theatre in general and Bengali theatre in particular. The notable point, here, is the vogue of Performance Studies from various social scientific approaches that has generated genuine academic curiosity in countries abroad. Surely, some serious requisite of mooted such research should have been felt by our native scholars in a multi-cultural nation like India, much earlier. But, they are yet to pursue such learned activity. Thus, there is a visible gap in the availability of a sound perception in this area. The present study has been an attempt to fill the void. Subsequently, it also tried to bridge the knowledge gap, and thereby contributes to the conceptualisation of gender normativism.

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study had been undertaken to have an understanding of the '*dynamics and transformations*' of the role of theatre in articulating the gender issues in general, and of the effervescent Group Theater movements in West Bengal in particular. The post-independence political debate in India has centred on two major issues, equity and growth. The gender concern in the recent times has been one of the major attributes of this greater debate. It is beyond doubt that the role of media, more

intensely the popular 'activist' media like theatre, in sensitizing the gender issues and transforming the gender apprehension to 'common sense', has remained a crucial dynamic in the entire discourse. The present study has focused on the nature of manipulation of political regime and market economy on the 'activist media' trying to incriminate gender as a contemporary social virtue.

Therefore, the theme of the inquiry constituted a matter of present-day significance. Unless the experience is theoretically empathized, one can hardly decipher the contemporary Indian political process that is characterized by multiple neo-social movements; nor can one act positively and rationally about it. The inferences of the present study has tried to provide valuable information about the energy and dynamic facets of the gender and media correspondence that will help policy-planners, implementers, teachers, researchers, the activists and the society at large. Herein lies the significance of the present study.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How far the existing theories in the understanding of Culture and Politics rapport are applicable to explain the projections of the gender perspective through Group Theatre productions staged during the Left Front regime in West Bengal?
- Has there been any genuine effort by way of Group Theatre productions exclusively to promote women's issues in West Bengal?
- In what way the typical Group Theatre productions in West Bengal on /encompassing women's issues have epistemologically inherited the Leftist ideological aphorism?
- Dose the ideological influence of the Leftists has been implanted to a considerable extent from the arena of Group Theatres' effort to expose women's

questions as the attributes of Globalisation and Liberal Market Economy has marched into the scenario as crucial inputs?

- How far is there any scope to envision the women's issues on stage without allegiance to the hegemony of regime or contemporary currents of market?

1.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has been historical, analytical in perspective and comparative in nature to be ascertained by both qualitative and quantitative methodology. All the relevant reports, government and other institutional sources, interviews, documents, books and articles was consulted to develop the study. Besides, several open ended interviews were undertaken to ascertain the qualitative inputs into the theme of gender, performance and politics. For the purpose personalities in the domain of art and performance, critics and academic experts in the field were interviewed.

In spite of the bigger field area of interest incorporated in the room of the thesis - it can never expect to be inclusive of all attributes and components or cannot even assert to be complete and all-embracing. Whilst keeping on a broad sketch of the chronicles of Group Theatre productions on women's issues, the study concentrated intensely on organisational dynamics of these productions. Certainly there are organisational aspects that augment the question of aesthetics. Eventually the whole historical outlook comes down to the examination of an assortment of aesthetic forms, their origin, evolution, significance and finally the inconsistencies involved.

It is this fundamental investigation of artistry that construct the theoretical skeleton of the thesis and its observable problem area, which as indicated by Bacon and Dewey are the initial phase of any research methodology and reasonably establishes the grounds to engage in the line of research. The actual problem area, is in the fact that for any performing art which has least little scope to congeal or even reproduced in exactly same aspects - aesthetics is in all probability the only feasible

agency to document theoretical schemes, observations and breakthroughs without upsetting its monist underpinnings.

The survey of available literatures indicated, analyzed and considered a wide-ranging overlook in this speciality. Instead, a very unsophisticated approach resplendent with either acclamation, longing or individual favouritisms is evident. The predicament shoots essentially from the fact the existing study on Group Theatre productions lack a cohesive "historic approach" so important for aesthetics. The present thesis in its each chapter has its own connection and own drawbacks regarding models of aesthetics but ultimately they all refer to what Dewey calls a "Justification" of the solution for the "user" (theatre activists in this case).

Collection of data denotes to information acquired at diverse stages and different levels. Sample, here, does not refer to all theatre productions which have ever been staged, Group Theatres who has produced the plays, and the female members in those Groups. Bad maintenance and lack of preservation, mobility of actors across the groups and split in the group to form a new one have impeded availability of a complete, primary data. Moreover, some were so transitory or so bland that it add little or nothing to the principle problem. From this thought, the most important and influential theatre productions related to women's issues from each year has been selected.

The second part of the sample - management is the classification of the data according to attributing factors discussed. Other sources of relevant data collected include review of books, contemporary documents, clippings from contemporary papers and magazines. Here the book assessment included not only those portraying the account of the Bengali theatre, but also the international theatre magazines to locate the imperatives of feminist theatre movement across the globe. Pamphlets, brochures, government documents and advertisements were also consulted as important data. Interviews with stalwarts of the movement like Habib Tanbir (now departed), Nadira Babbar, Usha Ganguli, Soumitra Chattopadhyay, Debshankar

Haldar, Chandan Sen (Sr.), Shantilal Mukherjee, Chandan Sen (Jr), Rudraprasad Sengupta, Samik Bandopadhyay, have been recorded and used.

A participant survey has been conducted, specifically for the dissertation, through a questionnaire (enclosed), which test the performer's opinion on theatre and the inner dynamics behind the production of such theatres which they claim to have women's issues in focus and how far they have kept up with the movement's activities. The survey sample is based on judgement criteria, that is people who have been attending participating in performances of Group Theatres from 1977 to 2007.

Data collected and analyzed, clearly reflect the relationships and the reason for the formulation of the answers to the research questions. Once the data is classified and categorized and its relationship with the answer to the research question is described and discussed, these answers has been summarized and stated as research findings, till the conclusion is proved beyond doubt.

Hence, from an scholastic approach, the methodology has been a combination of Bacon's empiricism with Dewey's pragmatic conceptualizations. The steps broadly cover -

1. The identification of a problem area and the framing of the related questions, which when answered would offer an rational justification of the problem
2. Assemblage and anthology of the details pertinent to the research question which have been formed.
3. Formulation of answers to the research question those are coherent with the evidences previously simplified and which lends itself to deductive analysis in which new inferences may be envisaged.
4. Verification - the scrutiny of new inferences which are consistent with the answers of the research questions.

1.9. ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

Over the last three decades the 'Women and Media' debate in our country has been influenced by the larger agendas and compulsions set by policy-makers, media-planners and other influential interest groups. Having emerged from an active interaction with powerful and leading spokespersons of the women movement, many Theatre Troops and Group Theatres of the country responded by launching a 'deluge of women-oriented dramas'. However, this effort failed to sustain itself. A section of women's groups themselves became disillusioned. They felt that in an effort to give women a positive imaging, many of the patriarchal values and institutions were left unquestioned and unchallenged. In fact, the kind of issues that were projected and the solutions offered at best reflected the lives and aspirations of middle-class, urban, educated women. So unrepresentative was it that it bordered on a different kind of bias and discrimination. Broadly speaking, in the backdrop of such a context, the present dissertation is designed to contain seven chapters. The first chapter entitled 'Introduction' contains the statement of the problem of study and its significance, review of literature, and the objectives of study spelt out by the research questions.

The Second Chapter is a theoretical understanding of Performance as an act of cultural representation. This chapter is to comprehend the aesthetic and anthropological dimensions of Performance with special references to the major theories of Performance and Performativity by means of which a systematic discussion on the symbiotic relationship between theatre as performance and gender as politics has been extended. Before entering into co-relation between gender and Performance, especially Theatre, attempts have been made to explain the legacy of political theatre in India in the chapter and to resort to an explanation how a rich tradition of political theatre like ours could conceive feminist question at its core.

There can be hardly any denial of the fact that the ideological regimentation of the milieu of creativity has remained one of the needful motives of all the establishments

seeking longer occupancy of power. West Bengal under the Left Front rule had been no exception to that. It has been argued that a steady approach on the part of the ruling government to appropriate the voices of the 'theatre' in tune with its manifesto in turn of providing better infrastructure to produce more 'socially sensitive theatres'. The Third Chapter of the study has focused on the nature of government assistance to the development of the performing art like theatre and their political dividends. This chapter has also examined whether the contemporary Bengali theatre has taken a role of Leftist propagandist. But prior to that the chapter has drawn a broad sketch of the vibrant Group Theatre culture in West Bengal.

Commitment to taking forward women's issues and concerns through theatre is evident in the numerous plays produced and staged all over West Bengal by the Group Theatres cutting across the districts of the state. These Group Theatres has been consistently focusing on three major concerns of gender, culture and social activism. Nevertheless the emphasis of these organizations on gendered theatre/theatre from a feminist/gendered perspective and there hopes to act as a catalyst in the process of women's awareness and empowerment are subject to extensive critical assessment. The 4th chapter contains the primary information gathered through questionnaire, interviews, newspaper reviews, scripts and manuscripts, production brochure etc. This chapter is also an attempt to analyze the database of the entire study and the crucial notes of enquiry gathered therefore. As the 'empowered' Leftists of West Bengal consider that all sorts of social bigotry against women are inevitably rooted in the greater realm of class-exploitation, and that only with the demise of Capitalism and the onset of Socialism gender inequalities, like all other historically established inequalities, shall disappear forever, similar suggestions in the finale of the theatrical climaxes has been anticipated by majority of the mainstream Group Theatres of the region. The thrust area of this chapter shall be to look upon the routs and roots of corroboration of such normativism in the contemporary Bengali theatre.

The impact of globalization on culture and the impact of culture on globalization merit discussion. David Rothkop writes “You are either someone who is threatened by this change (impacts of Globalisation) or someone who will profit from it, but it is almost impossible to conceive of a significant group that will remain untouched by it.” Group Theatres in West Bengal has been subjected in either ways. While some earned greater enterprises sponsored by Multi-national Corporations, many are yet to. No doubt, the funding they get from these companies to organize theatre festivals are much larger than the government bursary. With this crucial point of consideration, contemporary Bengali theatre has become ‘consumer-oriented affair’ rather than any ideological ‘agitation’. Sensitization of the gender issues through theater has undergone fundamental changes, both in the ‘content’ and in the ‘form’. The fifth chapter appraises such changes from all possible angles. This chapter also attempts to study the scopes of any approach adopted by the present-day Group Theatres of West Bengal to perceive the gender issues which is capable of maintaining equidistance from the influences of the market economy and the ideological domination. To understand that, creative journey of some leading women director and playwrights has been discussed.

The following chapter is a study of an alternative theatre activism in West Bengal in the line of Theatre of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal, that has really created the silver lining of hope towards a genuine activism of theatre towards women's issues at the grass root level. Various experimental and influential attempts on the part of Janasanskriti, a group theatre at a remote corner of the state has been highlighted thereof.

The concluding chapter of the study is an attempt to indicate, and to theorize thereof, the changing patterns of media-gender-regime relationship under the influence of market economy with special reference to contemporary mainstream Group Theatre productions in West Bengal on women's issues.

Thus, the study presupposes the following tentative chapters as a part of a comprehensive dissertation.

- Chapter 1.* **Introduction**
- Chapter 2.* **Theoretical Framework on Relations of Politics and Performance with Special Reference to Gender and Media Debate in India.**
- Chapter 3.* **Institutionalization of the Leftist Political Ideas through the Vibrant Group Theatre Culture in West Bengal.**
- Chapter 4.* **Women's Issues Staged : A Critical Survey of the Contemporary Dramatic Productions of the Group Theatres of West Bengal Envisioning the Women Issues.**
- Chapter 5.* **Imperatives of New Liberal Economy as a Crucial Input in the Construction of Women's Issues through Theatre.**
- Chapter 6.* **Her Stories - Otherwise Told : Scope of Alternative Viewpoints on Women's Issues in the Contemporary Bengali Theatre.**
- Chapter 7.* **Concluding Observation.**

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CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Framework on Relations of Politics and Performance with Special Reference to Gender and Media Debate in India.

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Almost three decades of my close association with contemporary Bengali Theatre in various capacities as actor, background artist, director, manager, organizer and more, has set forth several academic issues, other than the methodologies of performance in theatre, before me to focus upon or make a journey of enquiry. The basic of all these issues is to understand what is more important to the theatre itself, to react or to create reactions? However, in both the cases, theatre is considered to be an out and out culturally integrated part of socio-political processes in the broader aspect. Thus, the proposition, in the simplest expression, outnumbers the acceptability of a view like "art is for arts' sake".

The symbiotic relation between the all round performing art called 'theatre' and the contemporary social, political, economic or cultural context is reflected in the attempts to improvise even the Classics of dramatic literature in a way that suggest to be meta-narratives or grand design to explain existing realities besides attempts to develop i.e. scripting, designing and building the theatrical productions amalgamating facts and their interpretations, expressions and blank verses common to the phenomenon of communication in the present period of time. But in both case of such attempts, the primary or crucial concern remains the relevance of the 'form' and the 'content' of the theatre in the background of existing social, political, economic or cultural scenario. Thus, theatre of an age is a product of the most comprehensive and continuous human effort to establish relevance of artistic expression in the realm of reality.

The journey of a dramatic literature from 'page' to 'stage' is completed through a critical phase called 'performance'. A performance can be, at a time, a narration, an interpretation, a suggestion, an expression, a communication and more. Performances explain, explore, add or divert 'meaning' of/from the body text. Of course, sometimes arises the issue whether 'performance' overtakes or overrides the 'literature' and its intentions or not. There can be hardly any denial of the fact that both the dramatist and the drama director owe a persona that is out and out very creative. Their views on artistry may welcomingly vary. These variations are broadly concerned over 'performativity' of a dramatic literary text or the means of performance of the same in a limited space and time. The difference of opinion is, then, at the 'Form' level, but at the 'Content' level, they share common concerns. The performance or the live presentation of the content is, therefore, an area of currents and cross-currents of interpretations of the content that probably exhibits the best connection between the art and the reality.

Theatre remain to be the most influential art of performance that may combine wide verities of dance, music, oratory, verse, acting, painting as well the scientific knowledge mixed with aesthetics in lighting, sound projection, stage set up building, make up, costume designing and many more in its scope. No stuntman, no computer graphics, no dummy or proxy actors, however. Theatre is a live show presented by a group of people connected and appropriated together by the content of the drama. A group, so organized and ordered, that their activities on the platform called 'stage' is directed towards exposing specific elucidation of the content of the drama. Theatrical performances are ever latest, as in every show of the same theatre, the series of human activities compiled in a presentation, is publicized afresh and nothing of it is mechanically automated. Thus, performance, in theatre is a conscious process of interaction between aesthetics and social, political, cultural, economic objectives. An interaction so elaborate and comprehensive that can generate a 'message' to its audience by means of elucidating the content of the drama.

2.2. WHAT IS PERFORMANCE ?

Performance, as a field of enquiry has cross-contours over social studies, political studies, anthropology, culture studies, behavioural studies, gender studies, psychology, psychoanalysis etc. that has generated overlapping and ambiguity at the semantic expression itself. The intangible term, Performance, however, somehow denotes aesthetics of human body and energy to exhibit creative thoughts and ideas.

To Marvin Carlson, the traditional concept of Performance defines the term as a display of skills, a form of art as craft. In this case, an audience is needed, and the performance becomes a public presentation of skills. [Carlson, Marvin; **Theatrical Performance : Illustration, Translation, Fulfillment or Supplement ?**; *Theatre Journal*; March 1985; pp. 5-11]. For Richard Schechner, Performance is a 'restored behaviour' where the performer(s) consciously pretend to be someone or something else. Thus, a Performance separates a person performing from his/her normal reality and the 'restored behaviour' becomes prominent in theatre, rituals, masquerade etc. 'Restored behaviour', then, becomes that crucial mechanism of Performance, which works to distance the 'self' from the 'role' performed. And the mechanism is so influential that even if we act on the stage alike our usual actions of regular life, it is considered to be a Performance. [Schechner, Richard; *Performance Theory*; Routledge; New York; 1988] Perhaps the frameworks of Performance, then, become so prominent that the viewers are conditioned to consider what they see on the stage is a Performance and not a real life incident. Carlson is of the opinion, that "The recognition that our lives are structured according to repeated and socially sanctioned modes of behaviour raises the possibility that all human activity could potentially be considered as performance, or at least all activity carried out with a consciousness of itself" [Carlson, Marvin; *Performance. A Critical Introduction*; **Second Edition**; Routledge, New York & London 2004].

To Judith Butler, Gender is also a Performance as it encompasses all such sanctioned mode of conscious behaviours which are repeated to act upon a constructed reality. She, however, analyzed that, in times, our social role reveals subtle and unconscious Performance of Gender (as if, being in trance) we appropriate through adaptation of a normative mechanism by means of socialization. Sometimes even, mere our appearance may play a 'Gendered Performance'. If we think, act, behave, suggest or appear differently in respect to the gender standards of performance, it is generally considered as perverted. Therefore, our 'Gendered Performances' are stigmatised; so stigmatised that an individual from the transgender community boasts upon overacting or melodramatic performance of a particular 'Gendered Performance'. Everyone of us is, then, determined, role-modelled and habituated in the 'Gendered Performance', but only become aware of the same when there arises any situation beyond the array of these commonly adopted gender specific roles in the 'Gendered Performances'. [Butler, Judith; *Bodies that Matter*; Routledge; New York/London; 1993]

To Jasminka Markovska, "Even when the audience is one's self, a performance takes place in order to be consciously judged, valued, perceived. This understanding of performance as a conscious action differentiates it from the performative. The performative is a function of a process, in everyday life or as a part of a performance, or an unconscious repetition of learned behaviour and learned psychological reactions. We can also talk about a performative function of social "institutions" that try to create fitting, normative members. Whenever the usually normative aspect of a performative function surprises us, whenever it is unusual, we tend to value this as a negative category and label it as theatrical, marking it as something unnatural, outside the self. This is one of the main differences between a performance (social, behavioural) and the performative: the performance is done consciously, the performative is not 'really' conscious, although it can become conscious through a developed self-reflexivity. Both are learned, but 'restored behaviour' is typical for the performance. The sets of learned performative that fit into the standards of a certain society, or culture, are considered to constitute a

natural, normal self." [Markovska, Jasminka; *Performativity and Theatricality: on the Concepts and their Use*; lecture at conference Kritikk, dømmekraft og intervensjon; 8-9 May 2008; Programme of Aesthetics; Oslo University. <http://www.uio.no/studier/program/estetisk/tyrifjord8/innlegg/markovska.pdf>]

Anthropologists like Van Gennep and Victor Turner, Performance is a 'liminal' activity. Liminality, as coined by Gennep and Turner, is a state of ambiguity or disorientation that appears in the half way of any rituals being performed, where the participants are yet to be converted to post-ritual identity or status, neither the participant belongs to an identity of status he/she used to hold prior to the initiation of the ritual. Liminality leads to defencelessness and exposure of the participant to new knowledge and experience relevant to evolved state of existence. The participant, then, is bound to be guided by certain normative standards and liminality becomes operative towards re-integration of the participant to the changed state of existing identity or status. However, in cases, the outcome of the liminal experience can be a total displacement of norms, a separation from the milieu one has to re-integrate into; in such a case any norm that has lost legitimacy is replaced by a new norm and gradually the new norm becomes legitimate. [McKenzie, Jon; *Perform or Else : From Discipline to Performance*; Routledge; London; 2001] In fact, Schechner's idea of 'restored behaviour' was much influenced by the concept of liminality, where the relation between the self and the performed role, or more accurately to say, the distance between the self and the role performed is in liminality or liminoid situations.

Erica Fischer-Lichte preferred the term 'Theatricality' over Performance and argues that the term should significantly describe the aesthetics of theatre. Aesthetics that are determined by and as well composed of exclusive semiotic systems of theatre. To her, theatre, at larger scope, interprets the signs generated by a specific culture and at turns uses those signs as theatrical signs. When an Indian Classical dancer expresses the aesthetic content of the art through 'Mudra's, the dance becomes the theatrical act of using signs as Mudras and simultaneously their interpretations.

Hence, all Performances are Theatrical. The proximity of real object and their projection as signs in Theatricality is called 'Suggestions', by means of which infinite things or themes can be portrayed within the limits of a stage where the theatrical production is being presented. [Fischer-Lichte, Erika; *The Semiotics of Theatre*; Indiana University Press; Bloomington and Indianapolis; 2010]

Philip Auslander has approached Performance as the performative functions of Language. The theory is critical to standard meaning of the text and considers performance as a process of deconstruction that differentiates the exposure of the text from any standard interpretation. He attempts to deconstruct acting and performing through Derrida's concept of "*Différance*" as "meaning generated by productive non-presence". [Auslander, Philip; *From Acting to Performance: Essays in Modernism and Postmodernism*; Routledge; London; 1997]. Such an approach, however, has been criticised to have failed to understand the actual happenings on stage and to be narrowly limited in scope as there are huge number of non-dramatic, non-theatrical, not-scripted, non-ceremonial, and regular life performances that are distant from the authority of the text. The performative in a dramatic performance cannot be minimised as 'recitation of the Text', very often the Performance becomes a conscious contradiction to the power-structure of the text itself and a set of performative meanings appear to support the Performance from outside the text. W.B. Worthen remarks that as an art of citational performance, theatre does not only cite texts, but it restates them "within its own regimes" that refers to "social and behavioural practices that operate outside theatre and that constitute contemporary social life.... Although dramatic performance uses texts, it is hardly authorised by them." [Worthen, W.B; *Drama, Performativity, and Performance; Performance. Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*, Volume II; Ed. Philip Auslander; Routledge; London and NY; 2003].

The Routledge Companion of Theatre and Performance has elaborated five broad common and appropriate genera of Performance and performativity. These are -

A. An act of, a live event before an audience, which has been designed, improvised and rehearsed for many a times before showcasing. Theatre production, Puppetry, Mime, Dance, Music, Street Show, Live Presentation characterised by the quality of liveliness and communication with the audience, comes to this category.

B. All types of Social Behaviour, may be natural or inborn or may be learned or adopted, remains to performative functions.

C. Success and Achievement, is also an approach of Performance in the capitalist paradigm of social values, as 'not performing well' rests to failure. Sports Performance, Sexual Performance, Performance of machines are the examples of such category.

D. Body Art and Live Physical Acts that are Post-Modern forms of performing art that thrusts upon deconstructing firm and established ideas and identities in aesthetics, culture and social constructs. Sometimes, to pursue political claims, these approaches to Performance may boast upon the existing structure of meaning of ideas and identities too.

E. The term Performance is also used to denote 'Performance as deconstructive performance' as Allain and Harvie write, Performance works "to challenge naturalistic characterization and narration in order to question the apparent truth 'shown' by representational forms". [Allain, Paul and Harvie, Jen; *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance* ; Ed. by Paul Allain and Jen Harvie; Routledge; New York; 2006]. Post-Modern Performance uses "deconstructive and meta-theatrical performance strategies that foreground process over product, interrogate theatrical illusionism and resist offering stable, conclusive meanings"[*ibid.*; 2006]

My concern in the studies of Performance and theatre associates predominantly to take note how Performance as an organised social event or our social choices to

publicity is influenced by the socio-political structure of Power. There can be hardly any denial of the fact that our social choices and behaviours determines our sense of aesthetics and our tastes. Thus studying Performance in lieu to power structure not only emphasises the external relationship of socio-political environment and artistry, but also has significant implications in understanding the complex internal connections of various psycho-cultural traits within Performance. In our world and time 'Culture' itself is a contested term. However, with the force-driven connection of culture, force of globalized commerce, urbanization and avid search of resources, including the resources of aesthetic inspiration, the possibilities of conflict and challenges relating to understanding and acceptance of other's culture, identity and attitude has intensified. Therefore, the public space of Performance has also become an arena of such conflict and challenges to explore and learn.

2.3. ON THE INTERACTION OF POLITICS AS CONTENT AND PERFORMANCE AS FORM

Here, I would cite my own fond memory of intimate interaction with Utpal Dutta, one of the stalwart of Bengali Theatre, in the post-soviet period, to have confessed that "As an activist in Theatre, I presume, I am an agitator, I am a propagandist." Such a conviction is, of course, rooted in the perception that although in the academic domain we often consider culture to be embodying rituals and traditions of a society, including its language, art, edicts, and religion and remains unbiased to these, in actuality, culture is no way neutral. Much of what is portrayed as common culture is choosy broadcast of class-dictated values. Antonio Gramsci explicitly exposed, while speaking of class hegemony, that the state is only the "outer ditch behind which there [stands] a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks," a complex arrangement of cultural values and institutions by and large not considered as political. [Gramsci, Antonio; *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*; International Publishers; New York; 1971]. What we generally claim to be "our culture" is essentially reflective of contemporary hegemonic compositions within the social array, convincingly sympathetic to certain class-interests over others.

Performance is, also, not an abstract force that floats in virtual world; it is mediated through social structure, social relations, social principles and so forth. If Performance is treated as nothing more than simple build up of practices and solutions, then Performance is being considered at its face value.

In academic arena, exponents of postmodernism recommend their own form of cultural relativism. They decline the notion that human awareness can surpass culture. According to them, all kinds of wisdom are featured by social paradigms. To estimate any culture from a stage of permanent and highest truths, they opine, is a perilous scheme that frequently includes the seeds of further severe forms of domination. But then, even if there are no supreme truths, this does not signify all awareness is completely culture-bound. People from extensively diverse societies and from different epoch in history can still identify varieties of class, ethnic, and gender domination in numerous cultures across ages and places. Though it is a fact that culture pervades all our perceptions, it is not the sum of human experience.

As the industrial economy has grown in influence and power, much of the Culture and its Performances has been confiscated and commodified. The use value of Culture and Performance is gradually being overtaken by their exchange value. As of today, we produce less of our culture and acquire more of it, until it reduces to a 'fusion' of confused features. A widely larger portion of our culture is now appositely labeled as "mass culture," "popular culture," and sometimes "media culture," possessed and managed generally by big business conglomerates with primary interest to accrue assets and prepare the world secure for their proprietors. The reach of culture and its performance is then limited only to the exchange value rather than use value, social control rather than social creativity. Public preferences become much more accustomed to cultural junks, fast foods, big hypes, cheap pranks, flashy gossips, violent reactions, instantaneously exciting, and frantically shallow submissions. Albeit purportedly apolitical in its objectives, this popular culture or mass culture or media culture (which has already developed as the entertainment industry) is very much political in its influences, proliferating visions

and values that are time and again completely sexist, racist, consumerist, authoritarian, militaristic, and imperialist.

As a matter of fact, a vibrant working-class culture subsisted, during the period between 19th century to the mid-20th century, in the form of union get together, music and dances, verses and literatures, theater and performances, night schools, summer camps, co-operatives and mutual assistance societies, majority of which were arranged by anarchists, socialists, and communists, and their various front groups. But these ceased to exist under the hazardous twin explosion of commodification of culture through Tele-media imperialism and McCarthyism. This course of action, whereby a profit-ambitious mass culture or popular culture or media culture anticipates people's culture, is expanding vigorously all over the world, Utpal Dutta, as committed critic of cultural imperialism, had spoken in obvious idioms to remind that the task of any conscious cultural activist would be to agitate and propagate against the hegemony of Capital in the realm of culture.

Althusser has argued "A painter, a writer or a musician proposes new ways of perceiving, of seeing, of hearing, of feeling, etc. ... We can put forward the hypothesis that a great work of art is one which, at the same time that it acts in ideology, separates itself from it by constituting a functioning critique of the ideology which it elaborates, by making an allusion to manners of perceiving, or feeling, or hearing, etc., which, freeing themselves from the latent myths of the existing ideology, transcend it. . . . Art acts in every manner upon the immediate relation with the world, producing a new relation with the world rather than producing knowledge as science does. Therefore, it has a distinct function; although formally, the scheme of the rupture with ideology and the relative independence of the work which results is the same in the case of the ideology-science relation as in the ideology-art relation..." [Althusser, Louis; *Polemica sobre Marxism y Humanismo*, Siglo XXI. 1968, p. 194.]

Tussles against the predominant culture can seek to transform and forbear it, and in occasion can make an effort to conquer its supremacy. However, subordinate

cultures may not all the time involve into exposed discord with the predominant culture. Subordinate cultures can prevail for a considerable period with the predominant culture, negotiating scopes and spaces that may appear within the predominant culture, or by managing inner-avenues into the predominant culture. But, even then, the tussle between the two cultures persists in a covert fashion, often ensuing in the impression that the predominant culture has effectively and enduringly captivated the subordinate cultures into a uniform, harmonized, standardized, consistent, identical mass culture or popular culture or media culture. Subordinate classes, who observe that their culture is infiltrated and subjugated by the culture of the hegemonic class, can, however, obtain means of articulating and accomplishing, in their exclusive cultures, awareness of their place in social gamut and sufferings as a subordinate class.

Althusser's explanation of cultural production as an undertaking contained by ideology that is capable of untying itself from that ideology by means of a critical appraisal of specific allegories innate to that ideology, further asserts that exceeding such immediate relations between the two is viable by way of cultural manifestations. Fresh relations can be constructed in culture. Whether such fresh relations would be revolutionary or not can only be decided by understanding their relation to, and effect on the broader aspect of ideological class struggle. Any music, or a painting, or, for that matter, a theatre, or work of art can be designated as revolutionary if it act to decompose the hegemony of the ruling class.

The chronicles of theatre reveal a prosperous tradition of dramatic performances concentrating on socio-political agenda and currents that has deep or considerable impact in public life to seek attention, consciousness and reaction of the people. The Satires performed by the comic poets at the amphitheatres played influential role in the articulation, aggregation and exposition of public opinion in Hellenic democracies. Although the performance of Drama had ritualistic significance in the then Athenian society, the dramatists enhanced the scope of such performances towards examination of political issues and their relevance in the running of Polis or city-state centric rule. The splendours of such open-minded criticism of politically

controversial and critical themes are drafted in the works of Sophocles, Euripides, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Agathon and many others.

In the age of Renaissance, Shakespeare's plays were challenging the Christian traditional morality and ethos. "In his critique of *King Lear*, Swinburne valorizes Hellenic aestheticism over Christian morality, and argues that this play proves Shakespeare's sympathy with radical political causes. Indeed, Swinburne's rhetoric in *King Lear* inverts traditional reading of the play by promoting agnosticism over Christianity, aestheticism over morality. Swinburne appropriates Shakespeare, to further radical agenda which prompted liberal politics, agnostic religion and Hellenic aestheticism." [Sawyer, Robert; *Victorian Appropriations of Shakespeare : George Eliot, A.C Swinburne, Robert Browning and Charles Dickens*; Associated University Press; London; 2010; p. 50]. Critiques also observe the portrayal of struggle between various social groups in the Roman republics was central to Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, which is amid the minority of Shakespeare tragedies proscribed in a democracy in modern times. The drama was temporarily censored in France during late 1930s on the allegation that it exhibits certain fascist aspects, and Slavoj Zizek, recorded its embargo in Post-War Germany on the ground of its content of severe militarism.[Zizek, Slavoj; *Living in the End Times*; Verso; Slovenia; 2011; p. 432]

In subsequent centuries, political theatre has evolved in depth and range. Eventually political theatre has associated itself with cabaret performances and indigenous folk theatre. Under the semblance, political theatre has cultivated itself as an agency of authentic alternative interaction inside the civil societies that are being ruled by oppressive governments and worked to proliferate the critical judgmental thought.

Political theatre, therefore, is a conscious attempt to endorse specific political stand or ideals, the most organized and comprehensive endeavour in this regard may be traced, in the recent history, in the left wing culturalism called Agitprop in erstwhile Soviet Russia, which gradually appeared as a methodology of phenomenal development of Marxist aesthetics amongst the global Lefts. Agitprop theatre as a highly politicized left-wing approach originated in 1920s to feature cardboard

characters of flawless righteousness and absolute evil and its uncouth deride. Later the term became operational in any context whereby highly agitational contents were being performed in the arena of theatre.

Marxist aesthetics in theatre found further highly elaborate and sophisticated impetus in Bertolt Brecht's methodology of Epic Theatre. Brechtian approach to theatre methodology was far more rational than Agitprop. He introduced the mechanism of Alienation (*Verfremdungseffekt*) in theatre where an actor or group of actors suddenly use to start active communication with the audience, putting a halt in the story-telling, to wake them up from their involvement in the entertainment of the storyline and follow the inner ideological message of the dramatic content. This method emphasizes the socio-political content of drama, rather than its emotional manipulation of the audience or on the production's formal beauty. Brechtian approach became highly acclaimed in the Indian sub-continent and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Augusto Boal built on the Brechtian construct of *Lehrstücke* into an internationally admired technique of *Theatre of the Oppressed*, with its pervasive varieties of 'forum theatre' and 'invisible theatre'. Boal intended to break the four walls of a theatre hall, which he considered, elitist, and built theatre with portable, flexible and inexpensive components and items. In the perspective of those less-represented in a society, his style is effective as arms against tormenters. For Boal, there are three attributes of the aesthetic plot. First, is Plasticity, means that one may be somebody or something without actually being that entity. Objects can obtain diverse meaning like a piece of long cloth can substitute a river. He avows that just the duration and location of the object matters, rest all its features are counted as temporal and location can be changed. Second, is the Dichotomy of the Space, i.e. the performing arena may conceive several layers of aesthetic spaces. This scheme insinuates that there are spaces within a space. The stage is in front of the audience is a space as a whole, yet the actors may create a market, a royal court, a roadway in between, a forest at a time within that whole space by means of suggestions and communications in theatrical language. Third, is Tele-microscopic. This idea denotes that it is difficult to

put out of sight while some one is on the performing space. Each part and property of the space is visible and it may assemble the distant things in close-up views. Such as, the peak of the Mount Everest can be made visible on stage by means of performance and a man to climb it if the content demands a situation like this. Boals contribution ignited the emergence of Third Theatre movement across the world and the minimalistic approach, based on less properties, less stagecraft, less costume, less arrangements and more of choreography, more of bodily suggestions, more active participation without achieving much acting skill, became predominant methodology of political theatres. Theatre, then, moved out of its regular spaces and halls to be performed on streets, open spaces at the factory gates, market premises and places of public attention.

Peter Weiss was the founder of Documentary approach towards political theatre during 1960s following Erwin Piscator, an ardent enthusiast of Brechtian Epic Theatre. Weiss extensively used still photographs and cinematic projections as well as complex scaffold stages to visualize historical plots based on which the drama has been produced. The theme would, then, become more convincing to the audience and the intellectual penetration becomes far more deep to understand the scenario the content of the drama has indicated. Later, in Birmingham of United Kingdom, regular productions of Documentary Theatre was institutionalized by Banner Theatre Company. Docu-Theatre (popular shortened name of Documentary approach to political theatre) as a method of political theatre was welcomed in industrially developed European countries due to its authentic basis of statement making and rational tactics of drawing inferences to contemporary contexts.

In 1947, Julian Beck and Judith Malina introduced the Living Theatre, where actors used to dissolve the 'fourth wall' between them and the audience sitting in dark before them. They use to walk down to the empty seats in the hall and seat next to a viewer to discuss what could be possibly happen after they have suddenly put a dramatic situation at a halt on the stage and use to mould the performance in the desired direction compiling the advocacies of the audience. Thus, the theatre becomes a 'living' business in every show producing variety of conclusions. Since its

inception, The Living Theatre was committed in transforming the establishment of power within society from a aggressively competitive, exclusively hierarchical formation to a more accommodating and collective appearance. Living Theatre make an effort to do so by working against aesthetic complacency in the audience through straight manifestation, therefore, adopting the Brechtian way of communication through dramaturgy. Living Theatre contradict the mercantile orientation of Broadway productions and have led to the off-Broadway theater movement in New York City, producing poetic dramas. Living Theatre, during its heydays in 1960s, speaking against the Vietnam War, used to drive the audience to undergo a critical standpoint on the events being dramatized or shown in the projection and developing an approach called Theatre of Cruelty following the practices of French Surrealist Antonin Artaud, is considered the pioneering left-wing political theatre movement in United States of America.

Comparatively less radical trends of political theatre emerged in the West adopting a Realist approach to probe political behaviour of social man and Arthur Miller was the man behind it. Miller effectively amalgamated varied dramatic approaches and movements in the conviction that a dramatic piece should represent a sensitive equilibrium between the individual choice and social responsibility, between the curious persona and the polity, between the distinct and commune constituents of life. He also figure on the Realist tradition of Henrik Ibsen in his investigation of the individual's discord with society as well sponged Symbolist and expressionist performances from Bertolt Brecht.

A more recent form of political theatre appeared after feminist authors Elfriede Jelinek and Caryl Churchill. Jelinek, who own the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2004 has specific political take, in particular her feminist standpoint and her attachment with Communist Party, are vital part of the grounds for the controversy intended for Jelinek and her work. Jelinek identified three major and interconnected "targets" in her writing: Firstly, the capitalist consumerist social edifice and its sustained and chronic venture towards commodification of all human beings and their relationships; Secondly, the affects of residues of Austria's (her native land) fascist

past in civic and personal life; and Thirdly, organized exploitation and subjugation of women in a capitalist-patriarchal society. Caryl Churchill's works of dramatizing the mistreatments of power and exploration of sexual politics through feminist themes and her adoption of non-naturalistic procedures in theatre building has set further the routes of future prospect of Feminist Theatre. Her early works grew under the influential Bertolt Brecht's modernist dramatic and theatrical techniques of Epic Theatre to delve into problems of gender and sexuality.

There surfaced several other version of political theatre in the last century in the branding of Black Theatre, based on anti-apartheid issues and racist politics; Green Theatre, focusing the environmental concerns and politics of global waste management and bio-preservation; Pink Theatre, voicing the human rights of Lesbian-Gays-Bisexual-Transgender community in the line of the new social movements being popular worldwide. What they share in common in the inner spirit is their anti-establishment stance within the contemporary social-political systems.

2.4. LEGACY OF POLITICAL THEATRE IN INDIA

Political theatre in India has a profound legacy since 15th century when Bhakti Movement sprang out as a protest to typical domination of Brahmanism in the traditional Hindu society. Bhakti poets and saints spread and sustain the spirit of assimilative and inclusive religious culture as against the mainstream Varna system prevalent in India throughout the length and breadth. The Kirtana and the Krishna Katha acts introduced by Sri Chaitanya in Nadia district of Bengal can be marked as a pioneering effort in this regard. Researchers have shown that at Vijayanagar in 1504, the ruler Veer Narasimhadeva Raya, sentenced some Kuchipudi dancers to death after their performance enacting the gruesome sufferings used by the oppressor king to extract taxes from the poor peasants. [Rao, Banda Kanakalingeshwara; *The Kuchipudi Dance Drama*; Marg; March 1966 issue; Hyderabad; p. 33].

The more prominent and impactful phase of political theatre in India began in the late 19th Century when dedicated patriots took theatre as an instrument against the suppressive restrictions imposed by colonial rulers on the publication and performance of anti-government dramas. Dinabandhu Mitra published *Neel Darpan* in 1860 depicting the agony of the Bengali indigo cultivators being ruthlessly persecuted by the British planters. The play provoked strong public sentiment in Bengal against British rule and overlay the way for a host of nationalist literary and dramatic works along similar lines elsewhere in the country. *Neel Darpan* was staged in Dhaka in 1861 and in the same year Reverend James Long translated the play into English for which he was imprisoned for a month under the charge of sedition. Great National Theatre, chaired by noted Bengali dramatist Girish Chandra Ghosh, produced *Neel Darpan* at Kolkata in 1872. In subsequent years plays like *Jamidar Darpan*(1873) based on peasant rebellion against the land-owning babus by Mir Masarraf Hossain, *Cha-Kar-Darpan*(1873) dealing with the poor working conditions at the British tea-estates in North Bengal and *Jel Darpan* (1975) depicting the terrible life of prisoners in the jail houses of Bengal by Dakshinaranjan Chattopadhyay, *Gajadananda O Jubaraj*(1976) by Amritalal Basu, a satirical account of a barrister named Jagadananda who had entertained the visiting Prince of Wales in his house and allowed the womenfolk of his family to meet him breaking the traditional practice of veil, *Surendra Binodini* (1876) by Upendranath Das on the similar spirit. Both the plays were promptly closed down by the government after the second night. "The Great National Theatre, in protest, launched a new production overnight, a skit--The Police of Pig and Sheep--ridiculing Mr. Hogg and Mr. Lamb, two high ranking British Police Officials. That same night Basu and seven others were arrested from the premises of the theatre, not for the satirical piece but the apolitical featured production of the night on account of obscenity. The charge was challenged in the court and the theatre won the case, but not before the Dramatic Performances Control Act had been passed". [Chatterjee, Sudipto; *Performing (Domi-)nation : Aspects of Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Bengali Theatre*; <https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/su/southasia/TESTold/Sudipto.html>]

Foundation of Indian National Congress in 1885 gave stimuli to many playwrights who opted to propagate the spirit of nationalism in veil allegories, for which they resorted to Hindu mythological narratives that pronounced the win over evil spirits. Prabhakar Khadilkar produced *Keechakbadha* (1906) in Marathi in based on an episode of Mahabharata where the mighty Bhima killed Keechaka, who wanted to quench his lecherous desires by forcing Draupadi, the wife of the Pandavas, to immoral conjugation with him. Along with many other Marathi musical opera from noted playwrights of the day like Govind Ballal Deval, Ram Ganesh Gadkari, Annasaheb Kirloskar, *Keechakbadha* was banned by the colonial masters. After the partition of Bengal in 1905, Girish Chandra Ghosh produced *Siraj-ud-Daullah*, *Mir Kasim* and *Chhatrapati Shivaji*, three most powerful allegories based on the historical accounts of heroes who stood against the oppression from the rulers. All of these were banned again under Dramatic Performance Act.

In the milieu of political theatre in India, the influence Socialist and Communist ideologies became prominent since late 30s. The accomplishment of Socialism in Soviet Russia thrilled the Indian playwrights and dramatists to design theatre to incite the spirit of both anti-colonial struggle as nearer objective and class struggle as the distant yet final goal. Thus, appeared in 1942, the most significant organization, Indian Peoples Theatre Association (IPTA). IPTA initiated its move as a modest associate of the Left-wing Anti-Fascist Writers and Artists Fraternity based in Calcutta. All legendary stalwarts in the arena of creative writing, painting and performance folk together to tour the country performing to aid the victims of the ruinous famine in Bengal in 1943 under the banner of IPTA. The famine took lives of more than two million people, moreover the rampant corruption, black marketing worsen the situation to catastrophe. Bijan Bhattacharya composed *Nabanna* in 1944, which became the first major offering of IPTA's dramatic productions. "It was not clear and probably never will be whether the IPTA, as it was called, was born of a positive directive of the Communist Party of India, or whether it came about through the anti-fascism of the war years with some remote identity with the

international artistic movement of progressive forces..." [Benegal, Shyam; *Theatre's Commitment*; Enact; No. 39; March, 1970; p. 39].

Enthusiasm and deep impact of IPTA's role towards promoting progressive and pro-people political views loomed large at pan-India level. In Orissa, Kalicharan Pattanayak composed and produced *Bhata* in 1943 and *Raktamati* in 1945 dealing with the problems of untouchability and hunger among the poor peasants of Orissa. In Kerala, K. Damodaran wrote and directed *Pattabakki* in 1944 to expose the exploitative nature of Indian traditional landlordism. One of the IPTA's effective means to pursue political propaganda in acceptable forms to the commons was to develop upon the time-honored folk form of arts. As in Andhra Pradesh, the volunteers of IPTA adopted Burrakatha, age-old popular form of story-telling with drummers and singers to produce *Veethi Natakam* and *Yakshagana*. In Maharashtra also, Tamasha form of folk act was appropriated by IPTA activists to spread the doctrine of class struggle. Sahir Annabhao Sathe produced *Aklechi Goshte* in 1944, to popularize the communist wags in Maharashtra.

"Despite of its ingenious experimentations and national character, the IPTA suffered a major setback when ideologies were polarized within the association after independence in 1947. Many disenchanted artists left the organization in protest as they felt their works were being misused by the Communist Party." [Sengupta, Sachin; *People's Theatre in India*; Unity, Volume - 2; Dec. 1952-Jan. 1953; p. 8] However, Communist Party of India continued to worth of the viability of IPTA and the potentials of its theatres in various regional strongholds as mediums of propaganda. In 1952, the Kerala People's Art Club of Trivandrum staged *Ningalenne Communistakki* and was performed for 600 times to have created a mass impact towards installing the first ever Communist government in the country in 1957. Congress Party in Kerala immediately stroke back with Keshaba Dev's *Jnanippo Communistavum* designed to expose the misrules of the communist government in 1958. In subsequent years dramatic productions like *Manthriyakkolle*, *Bhagawan Macaroni*, *Kotu Krishi* were launched to retrieve voters by the either parties.

An unequivocal advocate of the use of radical content in theatre, Utpal Dutta, founded Peoples Little Theatre in 1947 at Calcutta. During early 50s, PLT produced street dramas and skits voicing the demand of the Communist Party to release the political prisoners. P.L.T, in following years, produced dramas like *Kallol*, another milestone creation in the legacy of political theatre of India by Utpal Dutta reflecting a leftist review of India's history of struggle for freedom in the light of Naval Uprising in 1946. Dutta and his associates were arrested and put to jail, news agencies refused to publish the advertisement of the show under pressure from the government, yet *Kallol* became a big hit amongst the commons chanting the popular slogan "Kallol Cholchhe, Cholbe". In 1960, *Angar* was composed and produced to expose the inhumane exploitation of coal mine laborers who were despised to death in the risk under the ground. During the course of Naxalbari Movement, an attempt of armed peasant rebellion in northern districts of West Bengal, Utpal Dutta gave the clarion call "on one hand we have the road that leads to Naxalbari, and on the other there is a road to 'Beshya-Bari' (the brothel)... We must chose our way... revolutionary theatre must preach revolution; it must not only expose the system, but also call for the violent smashing of the state machine" [Gunawardhana, A.]; *Theatre as a Weapon : An Interview with Utpal Dutta*; The Drama Review, No. 15, (Spring, 1970); p. 225] In 1967, his *Teer* and *Din Badaler Pala* and Anal Gupta's *Rakter Rong* romanticized the peasant-guerrillas who were assaulted by the police and military in Naxalbari.

Conceivably instigated by the endeavors of Utpal Dutta, students of Miranda House College, New Delhi produced *India'69* in 1970, a high end criticism of almost all political institutions of India and the bi-furcated Communist Party. They also criticized the scheme of nationalization of Banks by the government in a drama named *Mary Had A Little Lamb*.

Gradually, theatre became an useful tool of propaganda for various programmes and manifestations by Left Trade Unions, Student Organizations, Peasants

Associations in collaboration with the cultural wing of the party. With the installation of Left Front government in West Bengal and its adoption of Land Reforms policy and Panchayat System for rural development, theatre became a major agency of preaching the gospel of success of public policies of the government. Government, in return, extended resources to the theatre activists to fund Lokoranjan Shakha or the field publicity wing of the government under the Information and Cultural Ministry. Lokoranjan Shaka produced several dramatic productions like *Gulshan* (1975), *Amar Mati* (1982), *Hiseb Nebar Pala*(1983), *Dena Paona* (1984), *Rahumukta* (1985), *Rather Rashi* (1986) some of which were noted works of Rabindranath Tagore.

Besides the Lefts, C.N. Annadurai in Madras swayed public opinion through his dramatic production *Chandrodayam* in 1943 and pursued his party, Dravida Kalagham, to consider theatre as an official political programme [Shivathamby, Kartigeshu; *Politicians as Players*; The Drama Review, Number 15; Spring 1970; p. 220]. Leaders like T.V. Narayanaswami, M. Karunanithi, E. Nedunchalian, K.A. Mathialokan joined him to produce political plays during that period that stipulated sovereign independence for the four linguistic divisions of South India, establishment of a casteless society abandoning the Brahminical traditions, advocacy for re-marriage of the widows and inter-caste marriage etc. In 1949 Dravida Kalagham was experienced a split to form Dravida Munnetra Kalagham (D.M.K) and the newly formed party continued to boast up on theatre as an important media of political communication till late 50s unless the talkies became popular and D.M.K quickly moved to take advantage of the impact of cinema in Tamil minds, to convey political messages through cinema.

In contrast to Communist Party of India, the DMK or the Congress Party has been rather sluggish to pick up theatre as a media of political propaganda. And that is why, most of the trends in political theatre in India links to Left political camp. Mention of Safdar Hashmi and his Jana Natya Mancha is a must here, for Safdar being the most discussed case of political assassination of a Leftist cultural activist,

killed during his performance of a street theatre *Halla Bol* on 1st January, 1989. Hashmi was a communist playwright, director, actor, lyricist to have composed several street plays like *Aurat* (1975), *Machine* (1978), *Aphar Bhaichare Ka* (1979), *Gaon Se Sahar Tak* (1980), *Hatyare* (1982) and many more. His martyrdom is observed as National Street Theatre Day in the country by the cultural activists after his wife Malayashree Hashmi led Jana Natya Mancha to Jhandapur Village of Sahibabad in the Ghaziabad District of Uttar Pradesh where Safdar was brutally killed political hooligans to perform the unfinished show of *Halla Bol* on 2nd January, 1989.

The chronology of Indian political theatre is a persistent one and may be considered as a subject matter of further research from many aspects. Critics sometime note the feeble literary merit and less aesthetic value of political theatres, yet they hardly can underestimate the objective and motivation behind such artistry.

2.5. INTERACTION OF GENDER AND THEATRE

Since 1980s, the Feminist studies have also examined and revealed how women have been successful in making space for themselves in larger dimensions or voicing themselves to utmost clarity. Recent Feminist researches has tried to illustrate that the women has made their presence felt by means of their active roles, and has proved to host a coherent culture and their powers are real. The presence of women in contemporary regime of theatre has been studied within the framework of such latest Feminist studies.

As a matter of fact, of all the performing and non-performing arts, theatre traditionally remained the one where women had least opportunity to participate due to patriarchal hurdles. But the scenario has momentarily changed to have widen the scope for women to built their identity on the stage and utilize the space of theatre to develop an image larger than life. Theatre, in turn, in its theme and characters, management and promises, has worked on gender equation, sensitively.

Feminist Theatre, as discourse and scholarship has set forth and took shape since 1960s. As Feminist Theatre has become an exciting and important cultural form, Helen Keyssar illustrates the diversity and depth of the field and that pose key questions about the relations of drama to gender and states "although plays about women have existed since the origin of drama, the plays by women have been written and performed in the Western world at least since Sappho" and by the 60s "Feminist Theatre emerged as a distinct theatrical genre" [Keyssar, Helen; *Feminist Theatre and Theory*; Palgrave; 1995; p. 132]. Taisha Abraham has gone to mark two corresponding reasons behind such distinction of Feminist Theatre, "first, the resurgence of women's movement in America; and, second, the Avant-Garde Movement in European theatre that radicalized American Drama in the sixties and helped create a "revisionary" framework in which women dramatists could experiment" [Abraham, Taisha; *Feminist Theory and Modern Drama*; Pencraft International; New Delhi; 1998]. In the subsequent decades, the 'women' strongly observed in Western theatre, come to challenge the age old male construct of the setting.

All though the discourses on Feminist Theater has been largely Eurocentric and has ignored the possibilities of a Third World version of Feminist Theatre, there has been a consistent process of gendering the theatre in India and band of women playwrights, directors, actresses, critics and commentators extended vigorous efforts to surface women's issues through theatre since late 80s. Dramatic scripts have been developed based on the literary works of Maitreyi Devi, Ashapura Devi, Leela Majumdar, Mahasweta Devi, Bani Basu, Nabanita Dev Sen, Suchitra Bhattacharya, Tilottama Majumder in Bengali; Balamani Amma, K. Saraswati, Lalithambika Antharjanam, Asitha, Indu Menon in Malayalam; Malati Bedekar, Kamal Desai, Gauri Deshpande, Girijabai Kelkar in Marathi; Varsha Adalia, Esha Dadawala, Dhiruben Patel in Gujrati; Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi, Indira Raisom Goswami in Assamese; Ismat Chughtai, Saliha Abid Hussain, Zahida Zaidi in Urdu; C.S. Lakshmi, Raghavan Chudamani, Manjula Padmanavan in Tamil; Neelam Mansingh

Chowdhury, Ajita Kaur, Nirupama Dutt in Punjabi; Mridula Garg, Anju Makhija, Chitra Mudgal in Hindi and many more.

While the Indian women authors persisted in writing on complex concerns such as sensuality, suppression, isolation, exodus, identity crisis, free sex etc. they were being criticized to be inferior to their male counterparts for their projection in canvas that was still narrow and they for the most part limited themselves to the portrayal of the household space and their encounters with it. Notwithstanding the inadequacies they have explicitly inflated the awareness about the woman's position, role and responsibility in the society. The exposure of women as an individual through a women writer's creative depiction remain always practical, accurate and as such authentic. Representation by women of their issues by male playwrights is inclined to be a insignificantly unpersuasive as they fail to comprehend the female psyche and viewpoint, at the outset. Female author's writing strive to oppose the male supremacy, despotism, partition, alienation and marginalization and in doing so argues from an altogether distinctive angle and attitude. Women performers were habituated to perform, in the earlier phases of political theatre in India, awfully contentedly with the scripts developed by gents playwrights. They had been vocal to what has been written by male dramatists and expressed their own choices as was intended by male directors. The status of women on stage was nothing more than a creative imagination of male artists. We can take note of a particular situation of Utpal Dutta's "*Tiner Talowar*" to understand the situation best. Moyna, the women vegetable vender was trained to become the worthy actress by the director of Bengal Opera, a 19th century theatre company, Benimadhab Chattopadhyay alias Kaptan (Captain) Babu. The proprietor of the theatre company, wealthy Babu, Birkrishna Dan wishes to occupy her as his kept by fixing a deal with Beni in exchange of the propriety. Moyna, out of gust says -

ময়না :: পারবোনা, থিয়েটার ছাড়া বাঁচতে পারবো না! এরাই পিতামাতা ভাইবোন সব, এদের পথে বসিয়ে চলে যেতে পারবোনা। আবার গরীব হয়েও যেতে পারবোনা। [...] সোপান বেয়ে ধীরে ধীরে উঠেছি এখানে, গায়ে উঠেছে গয়না, পায়ের কাছে হাতজোড় করে ধনা দিয়ে পড়ে আছে কলকৈতার বড়লোকের দল - আবার ধাপে ধাপে নেমে গিয়ে গেরস্তের ঘরে বী-গিরি আমি করতে পারবো না! [...] আমি কলকৈতাকে পেয়েছি হাতের মুঠোয়। আমি ওই বাবুদের পেয়েছি পায়ের

তলায়। আর অভিনয় করে কখনো হয়েছি রাজকুমারী, কখনো নবীনা তপস্বিনী, কখনো রুদ্ররোষ সম্রাজ্ঞী
রিজিয়া। সেসব আমি ছাড়বোনা !

[I can't live but theatre. This is family to me. I can't leave them in misery. To become beggar again, as I was, is next to impossible for me. I have climbed to this stage. I have earned both money and fame. that was certainly not to become a married slave to a household. I have won the hearts of Kolkata, the rich Babus are at my feet, being an actress I have played the role of Princes to monk and even as a despot like Rizia. I shall never quit acting!]

বেশমাধব :: [...] এ কে? এ তো আমার সৃষ্টি! এর সবটাই তো আমার! এই রূপ, কথা, চিন্তাধারা, খ্যাতি, অভিনয়, প্রাণ - সব আমি গড়েছি! [...] এক মুহূর্ত আমার শিক্ষা ফিরিয়ে নিলে এর জীভ আড়ষ্ট হয়ে যাবে, বিকৃত উচ্চারণে কদর্য ভাষা বলতে বলতে ভদ্রঘরের মেয়ে আবার নর্দমার ঘৃণ্য কুকুরীর রূপ পরিগ্রহ করবে! একদিন স্টেজে একটা আলোকে একটু তেরচা করে মুখে মারলে এর রূপ ধুসে কক্সানের অস্থিসার বীভৎসতা বেরিয়ে আসবে। এর সবই আমি দিয়েছি। সেসব ফেরৎ দাও, তারপর যেখানে ইচ্ছে যাও, আমার কিছুই এসে যায় না!

[Look at her! She is my creation! All mine! This beauty, uttering, thought, fame, acting, life - everything is my design. If I separate my spirit from her, she shall turn into an ugly speaking bitch by the side of a garbage floating drain, all her glamour shall obliterate once a light from a critical angle falls upon her face and she shall remain nothing more than a skinny skeleton. Whatever she owes is mine. Once she give me back what all I gave her, she is free to go anywhere she prefer, I don't bother.]

Although several male playwrights spoke about women's subjects, for obvious reasons, their production fail short of the genuine appearance of women's sentiments and sensitivity. The reverse is perhaps proper of the women writers.

Women as directors were rarely visible in Indian theatre since generations, but the situation has taken a formative turn when band of women directors come to improvise their creative desires while building theatre of their own or adopting a script as a tool to propagate the feminist approach to life and artistry. Few of such distinguished directors are like Laxmi Chandra, Chama Ahuja, Arundhati Rajee, Ipshita Chandra, Usha Ganguli, Sohag Sen, Neelam Mansingh Chaudhury, Amal

Allana, Rani Balbir Kaur, Bhagirathi Bai Kadam, Sheila Bhatia, Bombay Jayashree, Saumya Verma, Gauri Dattu, Nadira Babbar, Anuradha Kapur. These personalities have gone to create an indigenous and unique identity of Indian feminist theatre. Vibrant use of live dance and music, intense and reflective use of colour and darkness, majority numbers of female actors to interplay and most importantly a women's or group of women to narrate in their verbatim instead of a male Kathanak or Sutradhara marks a considerable reframing of theatrical language in India to support the case for a vivacious Feminist theatre in India.

Whilst women dramatists and directors were engaged creating the larger canvas for the appropriation of increasing number of female performers in theatre to act upon a women centric approach in theatre, participation of women as actors were being encouraged both qualitatively and quantitatively. A series of theatre festivals and workshops were organized by various theatre groups to celebrate the cause of women on, their women's experiences and shared thoughts. Whereas the workshops were being organize to train intended female actors the pros and cons of modern theatre, the festivals observed their contributions. IPTA worked as the first largest platform for the women to participate in theatre since 1943. "IPTA created actresses whose new societal and ideological commitments would create ultimately a new perception of the actress persona, a break with the domesticated personification" [Liu, Siyuan (ed); *Routledge Handbook of Asian Theatre; Routledge; New York; 2016*]. Dina Pathak, Shanta Gandhi, Gul Bardhan, Sova Sen, Geeta Sen, Reba Roychoudhury, Rekha Jain, Tripti Mitra, Preeti Banerjee, Chitra Sen were the stalwarts who travelled and performed extensively throughout the country with the Central Squad of the IPTA. Although, in fact, IPTA considered women's issues was only a part of a cluster of a range of social, economic, political and aesthetic problems.

In the subsequent phase number of ideologically committed Group Theatres and agencies hosting a plethora of theatre festivals, workshops celebrating the cause of women proliferated. To cite a few examples – *Akka* , the National Women's Theatre

Festival held in Mysore , 2001, National Women's Theatre Festival organized by *Yavanika*, a theatre group based in Hyderabad, National Workshop on Women, *Poorva* , Festival of Asian Women, 'Voicing Silence', Gendered Theatre by M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation organizes yearly festival and has held four interactive women's theatre festivals, called *Kulavai* or celebration, (*kulavai* is the Tamil name for the ululation sound made by women), *Samudaya* from Karnataka , *Kalashetra* from Manipur , Prithvi Theatre from Mumbai , *Alarippu* from Delhi (means blossoming, established in 1983), *Rangkarmee* from Kolkatta, *Rangayana* from Mysore and *Koothup-pattarai* from Chennai along with organizations/institutions such as the National School of Drama , the ICCR , *Natarang Pratisthan* regularly build up women centered theatrical productions and ideologically pledged drama to sought required social change to favour the cause of the women.

Acclaims towards this enthusiasm of women dramatists and directors in India is being regularly available in the major theatre journals like *Theatre India*, *Seagull Theatre Quarterly*, *Rang Prasang*, *Bharat Rang*, *Natrang*, *Sahamat* etc. These journals come to celebrate special issues on feminist theatre incorporating criticisms, historical and theoretical discourses. Compilation and single author publications on women's theatre in India is also in vogue. Tutun Mukerjee has edited an anthology of women dramatists titled "*Staging Feminism: Plays by Women in Translation* (2005)" published by the Oxford Press; "*Body Blows: Women, Violence and Survival* (2000)" published by Seagull books; Lakshmi Subramanyam edited a volume on theatre criticism named "*Muffled Voices: Women in Modern Indian Theater* (2002)"; Amrita Singh edited another volume on feminist theatre in India titled "*Gender, Space and Resistance : Women and Theatre in india* (2013)"; A. Mangai published "*Acting Up: Gender and Theatre in India, 1979 Onwards* (2016)" to explores the presence and contribution of women to the recorded history of Indian theatre. Several other noteworthy research works and commentaries has been recorded in publications of noted theatre critics like: Aparna Dharwardkar, Maya Pandit, Vasudha Dalmia, Kirti Jain, Deepa Gehlot and many others.

In the context of modern Indian theatre, the women's theatre is largely concerned nowadays with social change and feminist ideology. There is a fundamental difference between Western feminist theatre with that of India's in agenda setting. While the feminist cultural politics and theatre in West, according to Susan Basnett, is based on demands like Equal Pay, Equal Education and Opportunities; Financial and Legal Independence; End to Discrimination Against Lesbians; Women's Right to Define Her Own Sexuality; and Freedom Against Violence [Mukherjee, Tutun; *Staging Resistance: Plays by Women in Translation*; Oxford University Press; New Delhi; 2005; p. 14], in India agenda of women's theatre is a critical mixture of protest against the traditional feudal barriers on women's free thought, expression, movement and relation like Female Foeticide, Khap (Rural Caste Court to validate or invalidate an inter-caste marriage), Dowry, Domestic Violence and In-Law Rapes etc. with far sophisticated urban individualized women's issues like Single Motherhood, Sexual Harassment at Workplace, Living single in separation etc., the conflict with age-old patriarchy, however, remains to built the bridge between both perspectives.

Further, in the West, contemporary feminist theory regards feminist theatre in a political context. As to Lizbeth Goodman, " Feminist theatre will be defined in a flexible way as that theatre which aims to achieve positive revaluation of women's roles and / or to effect social change, and which is informed in this project by broadly feminist ideas" [Subramanyam, Lakhmi (Ed.); *Muffled Voices: Women in Modern indian Theatre*; Har-Anand Publicatons Pvt Ltd; New Delhi; 2002; p. 21]. But, here in India, while a genuine feminist political wave is still awaited, the women-centric plays emphasize the despair and deprivation of women's survival in the patriarchal society, which is gradually appearing to be an attempt to stimulate such socio-political movement on feminist agenda. Women's theatre aspires at advancing consciousness to recuperate the social statures for women. It is fundamentally bothered with the prognosis of women's approach and is created by women with feminine concerns intended for amendments. Feminist theatre in India, as in abroad, examines the present realities, social norms and traditions that are

hostile to women. Its foremost intention is to facilitate desired transformations in women's lives through theatrical interpretations.

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CHAPTER 3

Institutionalization of the Leftist Political Ideas through the Vibrant Group Theatre Culture in West Bengal.

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The term "Group Theatre" was coined by Harold Clurman, Cheryl Crawford and Lee Strasberg in 1931 who formed the first ever Group Theatre in New York to create a theatre cooperative, a group of actors skilled in a cohesive technique and devoted to performing contemporary plays. Among others included in the said group were Elia Kazan, Stella Adler, John Garfield, Luther Adler, Will Geer, Howard Da Silva, Franchot Tone, John Randolph, Joseph Bromberg, Michael Gordon, Paul Green, Clifford Odets, Paul Strand, Kurt Weill and Lee J. Cobb who used to subscribe to left-wing political views and sought to produce plays that dealt with crucial social issues.

While working at the Group Theatre Lee Strasberg cultivated the method of group acting based on the schemes of the Russian director, Konstantin Stanislavsky. It was an approach of schooling and rehearsal for actors which centres a performance upon inner emotional feel, determined largely through the means of extemporization and improvisation. The Group Theatre staged many noteworthy dramas like *The House of Connelly* (1931 by Paul Green), *Success Story* (1932 by John Howard Lawson), *Condemned* (1932 by Marc Blizstein), *The Black Pit* (1933 by Albert Maltz), *Men in White* (1933 by Sidney Kingsley), *Gentle Woman* (1933 by John Howard Lawson), *Awake and Sing!* and *Waiting for Lefty* (1935 by Clifford Odets), *Johnny Johnson* (1936 by Paul Green and Kurt Weill), *The Cradle Will Rock* (1937 by Marc Blizstein), *My Heart's in the Highlands* (1939 by William Saroyan) and *Native Son* (1941 by Richard Wright and Paul Green).

The Group Theatre broke up in 1941 as after the World War - II, the majority of the group members were investigated by the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Of them, Elia Kazan, Clifford Odets and Lee J. Cobb became a government witness under pressure and exposed the other members of left-wing groups. Those who refused to do so, such as Stella Adler, John Garfield, Will Geer, Howard Da Silva, John Randolph, and Joseph Bromberg were immediately blacklisted.

Emergence of Group Theatre in West Bengal was fostered both by the spirit of Indian Peoples' Theatre Movement and its decay. The IPTA wave was at its hue till 1947 by way of agenda setting, organizational strength, splendid aestheticism, and above all connectivity to the commons. No sooner the Communist Party was declared forbidden in independent India and the party went 'underground' split appeared in the IPTA and many dispersed from the organisation on various personal, ideological and political grounds and the theatre scene began to change radically. The wave of IPTA began to wane. Entertainment theatre faced a severe impede due to the contest of the more popular variety of cinema. Amateur theatre continued by concentrating in big cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Bangalore.

Shambhu Mitra, in 1948, founded Bohurupee, to be the first Group Theatre in West Bengal. He departed from IPTA advocating a distinguished stance in aestheticism and theatre named Sat Nattya (Honest Theaterism) that preached pure artistry at liberty from political dictums to claim that the creativity of an individual or an intellectual is spontaneous and must not obey any limits or restrain itself to any politically designed framework. If one intends to do so, he is dishonest to himself/herself and the artistry as a whole. In other words, he preferred the standpoint of "Art for Art's sake" rather than "Art as an instrument". However, it should also be noted that the initial productions of Bohurupee like *Nabanna*, *Pothik*, *Ulukhagra*, *Chhmera Taar* contained serious social and political messages. Bohurupee incessantly staged plays, having a repertory of nearly seventy major productions, balanced between original plays and adaptations, like that of Rabindranath Tagore's *Char Adhyay* (1951), *Raktakarabi* (1954), *Visarjan* (1961),

Raja (1964), *Malini* (1986) and *Muktadhara* (1996), one after another, and thereby disproved the prevalent allegation that Tagore's plays were non-performable. Bohurupee's production of Tagore's dramas were a surprising realization to many. Besides, Bohurupee has produced creations of great foreign playwrights like Sophocles, Ibsen, Chekov, O'neil, Brecht, Anouilh, Sartre and Sanskrit classic Sudrak's *Mirchchakatik* along with the works of established Indian post-colonial playwrights like Tulshi Lahiri, Manmatha Roy, Sombhu Mitra, Badal Sarkar, Vijoy Tendulkar, Manoj Mitra, Girish Karnad, Sisir Kumar Das, Budhhdhdeb Basu and also of the new generation Bengali playwrights.

Although, in most of the evident literatures testify that Bohurupee was the pioneer Group Theatre in West Bengal, the factuality suggests that the Little Theatre Group of Utpal Datta was far advance a Group to be founded to produce the dramas by William Shakespeare, George Bernard Shaw, Henrik Ibsen in English. May be due to his lately produced vernacular productions like *Ekei Ki Bole Savyata* by Modhusudan Dutta, *Sadhabar Ekadoshi* by Dinabandhu Mitra, *Buro Shalikher Gharer Rno* by Madhusudan Dutta again , *Chhayanat* by Utpal Dutta himself since 1953, Little Theatre Group is not recognised as the foremost Group Theatre in West Bengal. Little Theatre Group, however, could attain huge fame by producing 16 Shakespearian scripts into Bengali. *Macbeth* (1954), *The Merchant of Venice* (1955), *Julius Caesar* (1957), *Othello* (1958), *Romeo and Juliet* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* (both in 1964) were produced hundred times throughout West Bengal. Utpal maintained closed relationship with IPTA for quite some time. Little Theatre Group took Minerva Theatre Hall in lease to produce *Angar* (1959).

3.2. GROUP THEATRE CULTURE IN WEST BENGAL

Under the mutual influence of creative and commercial success of both Bohurupee and Little Theatre Group, several other such Group Theatre sprang under the leadership of noted theatre personalities and scholars during 50s. Famous Singer-Actor Sabitabrata Dutta founded Rupakar in 1951. Although Rupakar could not

produce any remarkable dramatic productions during its early days, but in later phase of its career it could attain fame by producing *Chalachittanchari* (1956) by Sukumar Roy and *Byapika Biday* (1960) of Amritalal Basu. Rpakar was formed after a split in Bohurupee when Sabitabrata Dutta with several others like Tulsi Lahiri, Kali Sarkar, Md. Israil, Shibu Mukhopadhyay walked out, but could not sustain very long.

Shoubhanik was formed in 1957 by Bires Mukhopadhyay and Nibedita Das, the lead actors of *Rahumukhta* (1956) produced by IPTA South Calcutta wing. They divorced from IPTA to form Shoubhanik to spread the spirit of Mass Theatre or Community Theatre or Open Theatre that culminated scientific methodology with traditional folk form of performance in theatre. The group produced many milestone production like *Rahumukhta* (1957), *Maa* (1958) by Maxim Gorkey, *Gora* by Rabindranath Tagora and *Ghosts* by Henrik Ibsen (both in 1959), *Mrichchhakatik* (1960) by Shudrak. Shoubhanik was the pioneer to host the first Theatre Festival in 1958 named Gana Rangmahal. (The concept of such a festival was, however, first proposed at the Bombay Session of IPTA). In 1960, Shoubhanik built a theatre hall of its own in Calcutta named Mukta Angan. The group also took initiative to built 12 such open theatre halls at other sub-divisions of the district, publish a theatre journal at regular basis, develop a library of dramatic literatures, and most importantly a theatre school to train the young minds. Therefore, their efforts and approaches can be marked as epoch-making.

During 1958-59 section of students of Maharaja Manindra Chandra College of Calcutta formed a cultural forum called Khasara under the inspiration of Ajitesh Bandopadhyay to enact one act dramas every Saturday after the regular college hour. Later, in association with Amitava Sen, Subandhu Bhattacharya, Subarna Raha, Deependranath Sengupta and others, Ajitesh founded the Nandikar in 1960. The group produced *Setu Bandhan* (1960) written and directed by Ajitesh Bandopadhyay as its debut appearance at Biswarupa Hall in Calcutta. Nandikar remained as a branch of IPTA, primarily to avail the rebate on the Amusement Tax to be paid to the government for theatrical production. But in 1962 the group

withdrew its linkage with IPTA after an ideological clash over producing *Nattyakarer Sondhane Chhoyti Choritro* by Luigi Pirandello (translated by Rudra Prasad Sengupta), as IPTA claimed the production to be 'reactionary'. In subsequent years Nandikar has produced and is producing major productions like *Manjori Amer Manjori* (1964), *Sher Afgan* (1965), *Tin Poyshar Pala* (1969), *Bitangsha* (1971), *Bhalo Manush* (1974), *Antigone* (1975), *Saudagarer Nouko* (1976), *Football* (1977), *Khorir Gondi* (1978) etc. Nandikar hosts one of the largest Inter-national Theatre Festival in India every year since 1984.

Gandharva was established in 1957 and produced *Dalil* (1958), *Thana Theke Aschhi* (1960), *Baikunther Khata* (1962), *Moroger Daak* (1963), *Shankha* (1964). Bijan Bhattacharye, the acclaimed playwright of *Nabanna*, formed his Calcutta Theatre in 1960 and in subsequent years produced dramatic presentations based on his own scripts like *Gotrantar* (1960), *Mora Chaand* (1961), *Kalanka* (1962), *Jiyon Konya*, the musical opera (1964) etc. Sekhar Chattopadhyay founded his Theatre Unit, Jochan Dastidar formed Rupantaree during the same period to produce theatrical productions that left some effect in the minds of learned middle-class audience of Calcutta.

The 70s decade was seemingly the pinnacle of the accomplishments of the Group Theatre movement. Yet it characterized and ensnare all the contradictions and inconsistencies, not only of the Group Theatre movement, but also the whole historical ambiguity of the aesthetics models applied in the Indian context. The 70s saw, post-Sambhu Mitra, Bohurupee under the supervision of Tripti Mitra and other near deputies of Sambhu Mitra still coming up with new plays and productions; the People's Little Theatre was at the height of its reputation; Nandikar and Ajilesh Bandopadhyay, even after his break up with Nandikar, continued with experimentations of adaptations; Theatre workshop, Chetana, Theatre commune, Sudrak were all performing at a regular basis with wide level of success.

In 1967 the 14 actors who left Nandikar to figure Theatre Workshop, Bibhash Chakraborty, Maya Ghosh, Ashok Mukherjee, Satyen Mitra, Ajoy Ganguly, Chinmoy Roy were some of them. The first production of Theatre Workshop was

Rajroktto staged in 1971. Most of the productions from Theatre Workshop was based on original scripts and was highly acclaimed. *Chak Bhang Modhu* (1972), *Ashwathama* (1974), *Tringsha Shatabdi* (1975), *Narak Gulzar* (1976) etc. are name some of these.

Chetana started its theatrical journey since 1972 with its all time hit *Marich Sangbad* (1973) in the backdrop of Vietnam War under the direction of Arun Mukherjee. In following years Chetana went to produce *Ramjatra* (1974), *Bhalo Manusher Pala* (1974), *Spartacus* (1974), *Jagannath* (1977), *Kabir* (1989), *Tista Parer Brittanto* (2002), *Mephisto* (2002) etc. Arun Mukherjee's elder son Suman Mukherjee, who once use to act as the lead actor in the group, later started giving direction in the group.

Theatre Commune came into being in 1972 to produce theatres under the direction of Neelkantha Sengupta. Theatre Commune produced several adopted scripts like *Bibhur Bagh* (1972), *Paraborti Biman Akramon* (1974), *Daansagar* (1976), *Julius Caesar'er Sesh Satdin* (1983) and also contributed in original script based productions like *Swadeshi Noksha* (1978), *Jibika* (1981), *Mohamas Toilo* (1986), *Sadhabar Ekadoshi* (1988) etc. The group gradually faded after the untimely demise of Neelkantha Sengupta in 2010.

Sayak, through its journey of more than 44 years, having assumed the formation in 1973 with the objective to nourish progressive modern theatre. Sayak, has roused to a place of honour and admiration in the hearts of theatre lovers through making productions of various original plays as well as translated or adapted from remarkable works of great playwright which carries a clear evidence of a rendezvous of reputation and popularity. *Avishapta* (1974), *Naramedh* (1978), *Dui Hujurer Gappo* (1979), *Sonar Mathawala Manush* (1983), *Gyan Briksher Fal* (1985), *Daybaddha* (1991), *Karnabati* (1996), *Badhutantra* (2002) etc. are some its best known productions. Meghnaad Bhattacharya remained the director of the group since last 40 years.

Founded and led by theatre activist, actor, playwright, and director Usha Ganguly since 1976, Rangakarmee is one of the celebrated theatre group in Kolkata. Although Rangakarmee have produced a few Bengali plays, they are mainly known for producing Hindi theatre in the city. The group has a repertory theatre with one of the largest assembly of activists in the country. They also facilitate a section consecrated to children's theatre termed "Rangoli" as well as a musical troupe called "Ranga Suravi". With a talented troupe of artists and a colourful theatrical experience in India and abroad, Rangakarmee uses the stage to raise its voice against social issues, oppressions and evil. *Mahabhoj* (1984), *Holi* (1989), *Vama* (1990), *Rudali* (1992), *Beti Aayee* (1996), *Maiyaat* (1997), *Himmat Mai* (1998), *Shobhajatra* (2000) are few amongst the highly acclaimed productions of Rangakarmee.

Charbak started its journey from 1976 under the leadership of late dramatist and director Jochhon Dastidar. Charbak's list of Bengali plays include *Padya Gadya Prabandha* (1976), *Thengarey* (1977), *Aajker Spartacus* (1977), *Karnik* (1978), *Bhuter Begaar* (1978), *Uttar Purush* (1980), *Otho Shikkha Bichitra* (1980), *Kortar Bhoot* (1980), *Shaarey Nota* (1982), *Ashol Jinish* (1983), *Atmar Shanti* (1984), *E Ek Itihash* (1984), *Sitaar Agniparikkha* (1985), *Sati* (1987), *Pratyasha* (1989), *Banjara* (1991), *Aaloye Phera* (1993), *Mukhomukhi* (1996), *Par Mile Nai* (1999), *Thikana* (2001), *Kande Keno Behula Shondori* (2003), *Cholo Potol Tuli* (2005), *Apsara Theatre-er Mamla* (2007), *Dudh Kheyeche Myao* (2012), *Ekhon Tokhon* (2013).

Shudrak, established in 1977 is a theatre group based in Calcutta that has had patrons like acclaimed movie director Satyajit Ray and famed painter Ganesh Pyne, among others. Shudrak has many acclaimed production to its fame like *Amitakshar* (1977), *Samabartan* (1979), *Asamapta* (1981), *Chandalini* (1982), *Ishabasa* (1984), *Pratinidhi* (1985), *Swapna Santati* (1986), *Rangamati* (1999) *Dahananta* (2000). Debashish Majumder is the founder director of Shudrak and is a noted playwright to have conferred the prestigious Sangeet Natak Academy Award. All the productions of Shudrak is his script and design.

In 1979, a bunch of young, enthusiastic artists started a theatre group called Sanglap to produce impressive theatres under the direction of Dr. Kuntal Mukhopadhyay. The best known productions of the group are like *Disha* (1993), *Sudrayan* (1998), *Hay Ram* (2002), *Bhavam Cholechhe Juddhe* (2004), *Astaraag* (2006) etc. Sanglap has also been organising an annual drama festival named Sanglap Natyotsab since 1993.

In the same year Nandipat appeared to produce many remarkable plays including *Mrityu Na Hotya* (1999), *Ramani Mohan* (2005), *Shrinwantu Comrades* (2010), *Ballabh Purer Rupkotha* (2007), *Manasa Mangal* (2006) in recent years. The group also hosts regular workshops, seminars, exhibitions on theatre.

The saga of splits in Group Theatres is almost old as its origin. Perhaps this is the most creative division in the world to have multiplied its productivity. Bohurupee split apart to form Rupakar (1954), Theatre Workshop (1966) was an outcome of rift in Nandikar, Little Theatre Group was parted to Chalachal (1964) and Peoples' Little Theatre (1965), Gandharba was divided to build Nakshatra (1967). Almost in all the splits the conflict between headman of the group and a fraction thereof has been the dynamics behind the faction walking out to form a new Group Theatre. This is such obvious that it became proverbial to have marked that the number of Group Theatres in West Bengal can be attributed to the number of theatre personalities per head, each individual having mastered, through experience and learning, the art of building a theatre forms a Group thereby. And by 1980, the number of Group Theatres in Kolkata and surrounding grew up to around 110, as of today there are more than 932 registered and non-registered Group Theatres operating from the remotest part of Kakdwip to Kurseong and from Dubrajpur to Dalkhola.

But it was no soothe before a storm as inharmony and deterioration were above intrinsic and were gaining in colossal proportions. It was in the 70s that Sambhu Mitra, for no ostensible rationale left the doorstep of theatre and apart from a few infrequent guest appearances, the utmost acting genius of the decade went to hibernation. Nandikar come apart. Theatre workshop was torn by conflicts. The radical, fuming Utpal Dutta, occupied with steadfastness in cinematic shooting at

Bombay and Calcutta, was also compelled to become pro-establishment. The Peoples' Little Theatre's (the renewed version of Little Theatre Group) reputation in the 70s was established on the public craze for Dutta's anti-Congress dramas, some of which were even banned and Utpal himself got arrested. Since the arrival of the Left Front Government in West Bengal, the Peoples' Little Theatre performed those plays frankly all over West Bengal, yet the popularity and craze which was not to have a repeat.

Sl.	District	No. of Group Theatres
1.	DARJEELING	13
2.	JALPAIGURI	23
3.	COACHBEHAR	25
4.	UTTAR DINAJPUR	07
5.	DAKSHIN DINAJPUR	07
6.	MALDA	05
7.	MURSHIDABAD	23
8.	BIRBHUM	30
9.	BARDHAMAN	65
10.	NADIA	51
11.	PURULIA	20
12.	BANKURA	07
13.	PASCHIM MEDINIPUR	04
14.	PURBA MEDINIPUR	38
15.	HOOGHLY	81
16.	HOWRAH	54
17.	KOLKATA	324
18.	NORTH 24 PARGANA	126
19.	SOUTH 24 PARGANA	29
TOTAL		932

Table :: 1 District wise Distribution of Group Theatres

Political Emergency of 1975 brought the increase of Group Theatre in West Bengal into a unexpected fester. The entire contingent of existing Group Theatre was muffled by the government; drama censorship, hitherto unprecedented, was imposed all over the states; in each and every local Police Station, some government officials were assigned to scrutinize and supervise each and every script before production. [Sengupta, Barun; *Pala Badaler Pala*; Ananda Publishers; Kolkata; 1982]. Also, power cuts was wreaked on drama shows, mainly not so much to check

attempted insubordination but to facilitate the government to obtain spell to exercise modalities to put in force censorship [Palmer, Norman D.; India in 1975: *Democracy in Eclipse* in Asian Survey, A Survey of Asia in 1975 : Part II, Vol 16, No.2; February, 1976]. Greater part of the productions were compelled to campaign either in the favour of government or forced to remain silent on the critical social, economic and political issues; a theatre has to mandatorily be a theatre of the government, by the government and for the government. Thus, theatre could speak only what government wanted them to talk on. All form of performing arts virtually played into the hands of the Indira Gandhi Government who silenced every voice during the emergency. Not only were the anti-government sentiments curbed, all voices of dissent including that of the renowned theatre personalities were also put down from time to time and were arrested and taken to custody during the Emergency by the Government.

During the Emergency when Indira Gandhi's clout swelled to incredible amounts and slogans for instance 'Indira is India' gushed heavily, larger than life blow-ups of her image came into view everywhere, it was generally agreed that Mrs. Gandhi appeared rather distasteful in majority of these enormous visual depictions and she later had some of them pulled down. But the outcome was that the urban and semi-urban areas of the country were infused by horrific representations of the female leader of the nation, who had by then started to be widely hated for her candidly dictatorial ways of governance.

But West Bengal has been practically under Emergency since the depose of the United Front government and the engineered elections of 1972. These days were of great loom of white terror against the theatre. About 150 Group Theatres were broken up by hooligans and police raid. Dramas were banned, actors and directors were beaten up and draged to court. Unity Theatre of Uttarpara and the Workers Club of Batanagar were attacked at least for five times. The actors were pulled out of the theatre and hauled down the streets by the police. IPTA was rehearsing a play called *Kimlish* (1973) and gangsters heaved the director out and poured boiling

water over him from a tea-shop nearby and then they burned the rehearsal room. Peoples Little Theatre's play *Barricade* (1971) was attacked five times and *Dushapner Nagri* (1972) was attacked on August 26, 1974 at the Star Theatre. The actors were beaten up. Tapas Sen, well known theatre lights-man, was also thrashed on the street. Sets were burnt and even the audience was thumped as they tried to enter the theatre and the armed police was standing by protecting the gangsters.

In Sambhu Mitra's *Chandbaniker Pala* (1978) the goddess Manasha appeared as a monstrous and all-insidious female character. As a playwright, Mitra also explores gender relations in *Chandbaniker Pala*, but with a sort of misogynistic dismissal of 'woman' as reactionary, which leaves the male hero very much at the centre of political action at the end.

The Peoples Little Theatre's sensational input during the Emergency was a play *Ebar Raja Pala* (1975). This play is about a man who acts the king in a Jatra and really becomes the king and promulgates the Emergency and has the entire opposition into jail. After the Dushapner Nagri episode, the youth leader Priya Ranjan Das Munshi went around holding mass meetings to educate the public on the evils of the Peoples Little Theatre.

However, both these playwrights imagine in their texts a face-off between notions of the 'ideal nation' and the then degenerated form of the postcolonial state. In setting of the plots by these playwrights and their texts in dialogue, we can see how the cultural products of a postcolonial state that is locked in a near-fatal struggle with its own repressive visage at this time may strive to expose each other.

Samik Bandyopadhyay came across the theatre in its left-leaning energy to criticize state violence in the 1970s and the state's repressive policies to repress or silence it, and induced theatre workers to advance different communications of a counter-narrative about the worth of violence as a political weapon. Spotighting on theatre in West Bengal, Bandyopadhyay reviewed a landmark production in 1965 that

openly contended that state violence required to be encountered with similar aggressive resistance since non-violence would not guarantee justice. Utpal Dutt's *Kallol* at the Minerva Theatre turned to the past to glorify the contributions of armed struggle in the Indian freedom movement and to challenge the recorded history of the nation that underestimated to showcase the achievement of the ideology of nonviolence in gaining independence. The play was fiery, and according to Sudeshna Banerjee, "Dutt was arrested; the vernacular press, under pressure from the government refused to carry advertisements for *Kallol*, prompting Tapas Sen to draft and spearhead a whole new advertisement campaign. He created a slogan: 'Kallol cholcche cholbey' ['Kallol continues, and will continue']; and the city was plastered with thousands of small posters inscribed with these words. 'Cholchhey cholbey' was to become a standard slogan for any movement, and continues even to this day. This was the first time that violence and its representation did not cease within the confines of the theatre alone; it became an issue, with the entire organisational structure of a theatre group facing violence from the State, and countering it. [Banerjee, Sudeshna; *Between Violence and Democracy: Bengali Theatre 1965-1975*]

Staging productions that encouraged defiance to oppression at public spaces also became an irritation for the state. In the early 1970s, Badal Sircar, especially conscious of the urban-rural segregation and in need to create a more closer, more interactive connectivity between actors and audience, moved out of proscenium and started performing either into redesigned indoor spaces with flexible seating or outdoors into public spaces such as parks. In 1974, police tried to stop one such performance in Surendranath Park, Calcutta (Curzon Park), killing a young spectator, Prabir Dutta and arresting some members of the theatre group. Ten thousand artists and ordinary citizens protested at a rally against the police brutality and demanded the right to perform in the park. A theatre delegation went to meet chief minister Siddhartha Shanker Ray. Mr Ray's answer was extremely plain. "Political plays will be politically fought".

Finally, in 1977, in opposition to Emergency and with allegation of corruption against Indira Gandhi combined with serious economic crisis, the Janata Party (a coalition of several parties and factions of Congress) came into power. The new government overturned many decrees proclaimed during the National Emergency and opened formal investigations into the complaints of abuses during Emergency period. However, the new government had its own troubles to meet good like corruption, inner contradictions among the allies etc. that was making it difficult for the government to introduce effective reforms. Theatre artists who expected a markedly enhanced situations, were disappointed. Asit Bose, who had a long association with Peoples Little Theatre, wrote an impassioned play *Kolkatar Hamlet* (1973) insisting on the contrast between a people's theatre with ideological and political objectives and theatre produced to meet personal economic gain. He was disillusioned about the Janata government period as it was changing the character of the left theatre as well, causing it to lose its dynamic focus and force. About this period and its fallout, he commented, "The present government has destroyed the guts of this theatre by distributing awards and favours to those who kowtow to them, and by leading those engaged in theatre to promote one another within the coterie of the favoured." [Basu, Asit; *Kolkatar Hamlet*; Jatiyo Sahitya Porishad, Calcutta, 1989]

This point of view, that being artists in opposition is more radical and productive than being linked to those in power, is an unique axiom of the Group Theatre movement in West Bengal. In the face of political repression different attempts on the part of Group Theatres to foster and maintain a counterculture were common. Sometimes these were radical and explicitly political, but other strategies were dissident too, though not overt in nature and in either position these counter-culturalism fell under the radar of state vigilance.

However, since its inception with the formation of Bohurupee in 1948, the Group Theatre culture has evolved much in the next three decades to develop some distinguished feature of its own in comparison to the IPTA movement. These

contributed to its identifiable nature as well. Firstly, while IPTA was a dynamic organisation and emphasised on building productions those would be mobile in nature to reach any destination as and when instructed, Group Theatre was moderately dynamic and active with in a particular section of audience, if not invited for a call-show. Secondly, the organisation of IPTA was based on few whole-timers and majority number of part-time activists, whereas Group Theatre is combined of part-time activists and that too temporary in tenure (as very often they float among groups as per their individual choice). Thirdly, IPTA was strictly committed to the communist ideology and politically associated to the Communist Party of India, but Group Theatre do not subscribe to any specific political ideology neither is associated to any political party (however, individual members are at their liberty to support or associate themselves with party-politics). Fourthly, IPTA, while selecting scripts to construct dramatic productions, has targeted the working mass, peasants and labours to communicate, while Group Theatre has their target audience among the middle class population. Fifthly, IPTA considered theatre in particular and cultural activism as a whole has an aim to spread the message of revolutionary reconstruction of the society, whereas Group Theatre consider theatre as an activism motivated towards spreading social awareness and experimentation in aesthetics of drama making.

Although the Group Theatre movement is not a uniform or homogeneous sum and includes within it activists from range of shades and hues, some of these groups supported the Left, more precisely the CPI(M) in particular and the Left Front in general in the face of assail from right wing political forces. Many of these groups or individual activists have frequently partook in the election campaigns with their street plays, poems and lectures, dance and songs in espousal of the contenders and parties of the Left Front. More significantly these groups persisted to perform Avant Garde experiments and supplemented to a vibrant theatre going tradition in West Bengal - a tradition which has in general windswept the contests of globalization. Group Theatre shared its experimental passion with theatre of the 1960s and 70s in almost all language of India.

This phenomenal growth of Group Theatre culture has been backed by at least three influential factors viz. firstly, planned and unplanned urbanization giving birth to sophisticated cosmopolitan culture in various parts of the state at different intensity; secondly, sprang of Naxalite Movement which was favoured by a section of theatre intellectuals who fled from Calcutta in the face of government repressive attitude to spread revolutionary basis of contemporary theatre all over West Bengal; and thirdly and perhaps most importantly, the attitude of the Left Front Government towards vibrant Group Theatre culture in the state and the policies taken thereof to nurture the same.

3.3. SPREAD OF URBANIZATION AND GROUP THEATRE CULTURE IN WEST BENGAL

Although the recent trends of Urbanization in West Bengal is in evolution and this, along with the persistence of a 'top heavy' urban arrangement and slow but sure deindustrialization, is distinguished by speedy expansion of informal employment, a diminishing tendency of urban-ward migration of male workers, the decelerate in the growth of cities and towns and the emergence of new urban centres. The processes and emerging forms of urban transition in West Bengal exhibits its longstanding history of 'mono-centric' urbanization. Where sub-urban conglomerations and settlements use to develop as satellites of the metropolitan centres following the British legacy of urban development. The cultural and social ethos and practices of such suburban settlements was, then, highly influenced by the 'centre', if not dependent. The observation is similarly applicable in the emergence and growth of Group Theatres in the district headquarters adjoining to Calcutta. Popular Group Theatres of Calcutta were being invited to these towns and semi-urban localities to perform at temporarily decorated stages with rented infrastructures brought from Calcutta. Although IPTA worked to spread the socialist cultural spirit through mobile campaign and establishing the branches of the organisation throughout West Bengal, it remain limited, again, to the district headquarters.

But since 1970s it revealed that urbanization in the state is no longer confined to a few pockets, as many new urban centres have emerged away from them and small towns are growing at relatively faster rates compared to the cities. Durgapur in Burdwan district, Kalyani in Nadia, Baharampur in Murshidabad, Balurghat in South Dinajpur, Siliguri in Darjeeling, Haldia in Medinipur emerged as grown urban centres with gradual expansion of civic infrastructures like universities, medical colleges, wholesale markets, administrative offices etc. and due to 'pull factor' of urbanization people migrated from outskirts to settle down in these areas. Sooner these areas were elevated to be served under Municipal administration from their previous status under Panchayat system. These settlements became the melting pot of traditional folk and educated middle class culture and sophisticated urban post-colonial culture brought in by professionals like university teachers, doctors, administrators, bank officials and many such persons who returned to their homes after pursuing higher studies in Calcutta and brought back their experiences of remaining associated with the mainstream cultural activism there. Since these small locality grew crowded, few dynamic gentlemen use to take initiative to produce a drama getting youngsters together on the occasion of Vijaya Dashami, the final eve of the worship of goddess Durga along with other cultural performances. These amateur ventures gradually became an annual ritual and quit popular. Most of the productions were recreational comedy or based on certain social issues. Initially for the female casting young men use to make up and act like women, however, in later periods women from respectable families were invited to take part in these roles under the careful observation of their in-laws, yet unmarried young girls were debarred of such opportunity. All these gave the impetus to a theatre enthusiasm amongst the new generation organisers of various clubs and associations and the dramatic productions increased in numbers in different occasions like celebration of Tagore's Birthday, observing the Annual Day of the organisation etc. Donations from elite families were available to fund the productions. As soon the vital input of Calcutta-bound 'Director' for the theatre was available in these small towns, who brought with them modernised language in theatre being experimented and improvised at Calcutta a serious boost came in. Associations and clubs took initiative

to built permanent stage and hall to rehearse and perform theatre at regular interval. Number of Group Theatres appeared in the district headquarters and surroundings. The number increased rapidly as their productions could attain large viewership.

Few such instances can be cited in this context.

Shri Hari Madhab Mukhopadhyay took his Master's degree in commerce from Calcutta University and started his career as a lecturer in commerce at Balurghat College in 1967. During his formative years he learnt the skills of theatre working under the guidance of directors such as Jagamohan Mazumdar and Ajitesh Banerjee. In 1969 he established the Triteertha theatre group at Balurghat which produced many plays including *Teen Bigyani*, *Jal*, *Galileo* and *Devanshi*.

Asit Bandopadhyay, a veteran actor of Nandikar who accompanied Ajitesh Bandopadhyay, the stalwart of modern Bengali theatre, in many plays came to Siliguri during 1971 on official assignments as sub-registrar of land settlement department of West Bengal. He became associated with Mitra Sammilani, the oldest dramatic club of the town and directed productions like *Bitangsha*, *Kobi Kahini*, *Ek Je Chhilo Ghora*.

Sandip Bhattacharya graduated from National School of Drama, New Delhi specializing in Design and Direction in 1994, that too after doing Spl. Honours in Dramatic Arts at Rabindra Bharati University. As the director of Rangashram, a renowned group theatre from Baharampur he has produced many acclaimed dramatic productions like *Madhyanya Surya*, *Mobarak*, an adaptation of Shakepeare's Macbeth, *Monideepa*, *Protarak*, *Santaap*, *Aamar Mukher Ancholkhani*, bio-theatre based on the life of Zohra Saigal.

Santanu Das completed his graduation in Dramatics from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata and later obtained Diploma in Dramatics from National School of Drama, New Delhi. He started his career as director in Kalyani Kalamandalam to produce Leo Tolstoy's *Power of Darkness*, Badal Sarkar's *Ebom Indrajit*, Bertolt Brecht's *Aiin*, Satinath Bhaduri's *Dhorai Charit Manas*, Jean Anouilh's *Romeo Jeannette*,

a Bangladeshi Ballad *Malua Sundarir Pala* based on Moimansingha Gitika, and his own *Asangati, Raisin in the Sun, Paglir Danga, Manush - Manushi, Oedipus Turranus, Ghare Baire, Seturam, Durghatanabasata and Gollacuht*.

The underlying factors of this transition are associated with the dispersal of economic activities and employment opportunities away from the metropolises. Until recently, trade and commerce were the mainstays of these settlements' economies. Since the beginning of the last two decade, real estate developers and private industrial and mining companies have begun to show a keen interest in these settlements, as they are outside the purview of the stringent rules and regulations applicable to statutory towns. In these marginal urban territories, access to and transformation of land is far easier. Some of these towns retain their 'census town' status for decades without achieving an urban status, even if they fulfil the threshold conditions. Furthermore, such sporadic urbanization fuelled by the growth of small cities and towns which have a weak economic base, a crisis of urban governance and inadequate access to basic amenities within a short period face several civic, criminal, political, and lifestyle-value crisis. The traditional ethos of semi-urban localities were being greatly challenged by an outgrowth of cosmopolitan mode of socio-cultural affairs and critical mixture of cross-community values.

A resourceful band of indigenous playwrights emerged to highlight and seek solutions to the surfaced and perpetuating problems of common middleclass in the growing towns. Mohit Chattopadhyay, Manoj Mitra, Chandan Sen, Ramaprasad Banik, Indrashish Lahiri, Debashish Majumdar, Shyamaltanu Dasgupta, Amal Roy, contributed to the plethora of original plays. In fact, the brilliance of the restricted number of worthwhile plays and productions made people aware of the generally inspiring theatre prospect. During these decades, we find new group of actors and directors who held out pledge of trailblazing imagination and originality appeared in these growing cities. Many of them showed enough competence and innovation in their productions even to the extent that talented actors from small towns were being pulled to the theatrical affairs in the metropolis. Rita Dutta Chakraborty from

Balurghat, Bindia Ghosh from Kalyani, Goutam Haldar from Ranaghat, Sanjib Sarkar from Gajol, are few names that readily came into mind. But such number has remained sadly small. But back in the growing urban areas, this affluence of actors, directors, playwrights favoured the plenty naissance of group theatres.

There was a favourable growth in the viewership of these theatres also, among various sections. Following the commendable endeavours of Shoubhanik to establish an alternative stage at the makeshift Mukta Angan in south Calcutta during the sixties and seventies, when several important experimental productions were performed there, number of Group Theatres came together to form platforms to popularise theatres and had the conviction to establish Mukta Mancha or an open air theatre shows at the weekend constructing temporary stages made of wooden planking and back curtain fixed from two bamboo pillars. Associated groups used to perform there at regular basis in rotation before the audience free to watch the shows. Little by little the increase of number in audience was visible as there were limited sources of entertainment available to these localities. Slowly but steadily Group Theatres could attain the central position of mass-entertainment during this transition period and men associated with theatre activism were being considered progressive cultural workers dedicated to the emancipation of public taste from mere recreational need to thoughtful viewership.

Group theatres gained a position of leadership since the late 60s, but this did not mean that the commercial Bengali theatre went to decline. Seasoning periods of uncertainty, crises and temporary closures it tried to bounce back to recover during the same period, its lost ground of lack of patronage of the general audience. Astutely, it introduced in its menu of sentimental blend, melodrama and spoonful of sex, fake orientations to social purposes and gimmicky stagecraft. Group Theatres spoke loud against such denigration of social values and culture. A stormy wave of protest emerged in the leadership of Group Theatres when *Samrat O Sundari* was launched at Sarcarina in North Calcutta that contained some seductive content and luring cabaret dance in 1980.

Another aspect of the then Group Theatre culture was a renewed questioning mood about the nature of social problems and searched for the answer even to the springs of individual motives and behaviour. There has been a shift from excessive fixation with politics, on the whole. Group Theatre in its long history has shown a surprising resilience. But when there was an disturbing plunge in social values and standards in, it would be unrealistic to expect resurrection of social ethos by the creative enterprise of Group Theatres only.

There was no scarcity of talent. Therefore, the willingness of Group Theatre to accept risks and venture into untried but well-thought-out experiments was of course a affable ambience for nurturing talent. The boast of enterprise which is symptomatic of dynamism have been compounded by patronage from the government and institutional or corporate bodies. It was a phase when Bengali theatre has no more been prone to rely on foreign plays and ideas, but also sources other than the sustaining support of ticket-buying discerning viewers in various theatre festivals.

3.4. NAXALITE MOVEMENT AND GROUP THEATRE CULTURE IN WEST BENGAL.

The Naxalbari peasant insurrection of 1967 was the dawn of a new thoughts that left a profound, pan-India impression on art, culture and literature. The creative imagination of movements stimulated by Naxalbari, and the firmament of their ambitions are far more immense than their geo-political scope.

The very traits of Charu Mazumdar, the engineer of this upheaval, was genuinely cultural. Since his youth Charu Mazumdr along with his political work in Siliguri, took initiative of organizing innovative cultural programmes on occasions like the 'Ravindra-Nazrul-Sukant-Jayanti' (celebration of birthdays of three most prominent poets of Bengal) and the 'Poila Baishakh' (first day of the Bengali calendar year) at the Mitra Sammilani club. During 1967 uprising, journalists from national and international media used to frequently visit Charu Majumdar's house. A journalist

from Dharmyug once asked him, "There is a photo of Rabindranath Tagore in your home, do you believe in him?" Charu Majumder replied, "It is not a question of believing or not believing. It is a question of interpreting the positive aspects of a great craftsman". He then melodiously went on to recite Rabindra's poem 'Mrityunjay'.

The pioneer Group Theatre of Siliguri, Kotha O Kalam used to rehearse at his residence. While staging Utpal Dutta's *Kallol* in 1968 at Mitra Sammilani under the direction of Asit Guha, the actors as rebellion sailors of Naval Mutiny (1946) shouted the slogan "Naxalbari Zindabad". In 1964 when doctors detected Charu Majumdar with a critical heart ailment and his Party was unresponsive to take responsibilities of his treatment, Katha O Kalam staged performances to collect money to raise fund for his treatment. Charu Majumder did not attend the CPI's 6th Vijayawada Congress in 1961, as in those days he remained busy in directing plays. He spent his time conducting rehearsals for 'Katha O Kalam' preparing Manik Bandopadhyay's *Padma Nadir Majhi* to play.

His friend Saroj Datta was not only a revolutionary but also an exceptional Bengali poet. Sameer Mitra, Murari Mukhopadhyay, and Dronacharya Ghosh were also Bengali poets who took part in the Naxalbari insurrection and died due to atrocity of the police. Malayalam poet Satchidanandan, Telugu poet Jwalamukhi and Bengali playwright Badal Sarkar had given statements against such violence and noted down their protest in writing to the Governor of West Bengal. Srijan Sen's 'Thana Garad Theke Maake', Ranjit Gupta's 'Open Letter' and Mahashweta Devi's novel 'Hazar Churasir Maa' are also some esteemed rendering of this feeling of pain. Besides, Vinay Ghosh, Kamlesh Sen, Partho Bandopadhyay, Virendra Chattopadhyay, Amit Das, Kesto Podel, Shobhan Som, Anindya Basu, Satyen Bandopadhyay, Tushar Chand, Sameer Roy, Arjun Goswami, Amiyo Chattopadhyay, Manibhushan Bhattacharya, Indra Chaudhury and Alok Basu left their ineffaceable mark on the Bengali poetry of the 70s and 80s in the spirit of Naxalbari Movement.

"Theatre was another space in this cultural milieu where Naxalbari emerged as a major theme. The subversive potential of theatre - of representing an alternative reality through performances - has always appealed to the political activists. The significance of this space could be felt when Utpal Dutta [...] wrote and produced *Teer* (Arrow) in December 1967, based on the Naxalbari uprising, and was arrested even before he could appear in its first performance. Several other plays were written at that time with Naxalite protagonists, for example Anal Gupta's *Rakter Rong* (Colour of Blood) (1978) and Amal Roy's *Aat Jora Khola Chokh* (Eight Pairs of Open Eyes)(1970), and their political ideology has been analysed, questioned and appreciated from various perspectives. The Government Reactions to performances of these plays was predictably repressive." [Sinha Roy, Mallarika; *Gender and Radical Politics in India : Magic Moments of Naxalbari (1967-1975)*; Routledge; New Delhi; 2010]

The indomitable guts of Naxalbari struggle, both directly and indirectly, spirited the Group Theatre movement for quite a long period. The productions of various Group Theatres became the mirror of a turbulent time. Other than Little Theatre Group of Utpal Dutta, Charbak, under the direction of Jochhan Dastidar produced **Amar Vietnam** (1967) and Theatre Workshop produced *Vietnam*(1967) under the direction of Bibhash Chakraborty to show solidarity to the revolutionary guerilla fighters hailed by the Naxalites, Theatre Study performed *Samadhan* (1967) by Bertolt Brecht under the direction of Anal Gupta. In 1968 Little Theatre Group of Utpal Dutta staged *Manusher Adhikare*, Anamika under the direction of Shyamananda Jalan produced *Evam Indrajeet*, Simantik produced *Palabadal* directed by Chiraranjan Das. Utpal Dutta joined Bibek Jatra Samaj to compose *Shon Re Malik* (1969) while his Little Theatre Group produced *Leniner Dake* (1969), Mass Theatre produced Manik Bandopadhyay's *Haranaer NaatJaamai* (1969) directed by Jnanesh Mukhopadhyay, Charan Dal staged *Laal Lanthan* (1969) directed by Indrajit Sen. These years experienced remarkable allegiance of Group Theatre movement with the radical spirit of Naxalbari movement.

Many other popular groups also revealed their sympathy, if not directly, to Naxalbari movement in different ways. Like in Chak Bhanga Modhu produced by Theatre Workshop and written by Manoj Mitra loudly pronounced the line of killing of class enemies. Nandikar, passively protested against the cruelty of the police over the Naxalite political workers in the publicity of their production Antigone saying "Up in the sky, vultures are flying over Kolkata in search of dead bodies, down there on the stage we are producing Antigone". (my translation) [Mitra, Partha Pratim; *Naxalbarir Fulki - Sanskritir Ful Ki ?* (Is the sparkles of Naxalbari blooming flower in cultural world?); Uttarbhumi; April Issue; 2005]

Playwrights like styled their dramatic creations in tune with the Naxalbari movement. Manoranjan Biswas wrote *Padatik, Ranaskhetre Achhi, Ekmatra Ashtra*; Shyamaltanu Dasgupta scripted *Sheeter Aagun, Agnigarva Hekempur, Teerbiddha Shikar*; Amal Roy penned *Biplaber Gaan, Bastil Bhangchhe, Bidroher Theatre*; Jochhan Dastidar composed *Gadya Padya Prabandha*; Amitava Gupta wrote *Himalayer Cheya Bhari*; Satyen Bhadra developed *Jabanika Kampaman* and many more. Amal Chakraborty wrote and directed *Shatabdir Pare* to be produced by Damama, followed by his other productions like *Tajmahal, Pratishruta Abhimunya* and *Pother Dabi* based on the novel by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay.

Rustam Bharucha writes that in 1970 Calcutta was a city almost under cordon as the presence of paramilitary troops and police search parties could be experienced almost everywhere in the city, and yet the audience would multitudes to gaze at dramatic productions on Naxalbari movement. [Bharucha, Rustam; *Rehearsals of Revolution: The Political Theater of Bengal*; Seagull Books; Calcutta; 1983]. Under the threat, many political radical activists and intellectuals escaped from Kolkata on the advice of the party to go undercover or were sent to form grass root level organization or consolidate the cultural spirit of villages and suburban areas to the spirit of revolutionary culturalism. Thus, a boost was received in the Group Theatre culture in the growing towns throughout West Bengal. That also helped in the

growth of Group Theatres in number. And among all form of cultural activism, Group Theatres took the leading role towards ideolizing the performing spaces. Charu Majumder, consecrated to revolutionary songs and drama, was in opposition to the formation of people's theatre organizations as he felt that these would become middle class hubs. But several cultural and literary associations were born as the self-styled cultural front of the revolutionary movement he led.

When Kanu Sanyal headed a mass gathering to affirm the party's severance from the CPI(M) in May 1969, he chose Calcutta's largest open area, Maidan, to do so. Certainly, public spaces such as the Maidan and alike urban playgrounds such as the Azad Hind Park in College Square were the most commonly used spots of accumulate and amass before the party was proclaimed to be illegal. The Naxalite activists also utilized public squares and avenues for other forms of Agit-Prop, such as disseminating leaflets, writing on walls to announce solidarity with Vietnam and China, and metaphorically glorifying the martyrs who died in police encounter. It was perchance within these common spaces that the Naxalites and their enthusiasts also retained their most creative designs of mustering urban populations - by means of street theatres and performances. At Curzon Park in Kolkata where Prabir Dutt was victimized during the show of *Mukti Ashram* (1974), Badal Sarkar staged his play *Juloos* in his memory at the same place exactly one month later on 24 August 1974. Badal Sarkar founded the Third Theatre in the 70s. Third Theatre was less expensive, extremely flexible and could be easily taken to remote countryside. His debut production to have experimented with the new form was the play *Sagina Mahto* in 1969. In subsequent period he went on producing *Juloos*, *Voma*, *Basi Khabar* and *Khat-Maat-King* in this genre from his group Shatabdi . The image of resistance of the 70s can be seen in many excerpt from *Voma*. Often symbolic and always moralistic, Third Theatre had the competence to create a center of attention and address a big and diverse audience. This is because of their non-institutionalized nature, as they were extemporized performances in public areas and allow in audiences free of expense. Their most significant purpose of their capability to actively connect audiences was to involve them with the fundamental ideology of

the movement and to provide visual presentations of the ideal proletarian hero or heroine, whose actions preempted the formation of a revolutionary society.

3.5. EFFORT TO INSTITUTIONALISE THE GROUP THEATRE CULTURE BY THE LEFT FRONT GOVERNMENT.

The first ever non-congress government to have come to rule in any province of the nation were the Lefts at Kerala that showed the path and possibilities of breaking the myth of personal influence over the population by the gigantic nationalist leaders of Congress. Facts have shown that the cultural activism played a pivotal role in the installation of the Communist government in Kerala. Although the experience was not much similar in the case of West Bengal, the cultural activism worked as a stimuli here as well. The Lefts in West Bengal had been associated to many anti-incumbency movement of the people like Te-Bhaga Movement (1946-47), Anti-Tram Fare Hike Movement (1953), Teachers' Movement (1954), Movement against proposed merger of Bengal and Bihar (1956), Food Movement (1959), Second Food Movement (1966) along with their attempts to intense political mobilization on the issues since independence and partition of the nation. There can be hardly any denial of the fact that the Lefts could retain the ruling power for such a long period due to their longstanding record in labour and peasants movement backed by the strong mechanism of propaganda through its cultural wings.

Sooner the Left Front government came to power, the millage the Lefts took from the committed cultural workers' relentless campaign and propagation was to be recognised and acknowledged. The Left Front government made no mistake to extend its patronage and support to nurture the revolutionary cultural activism to virtually turn it to pro-establishment advocacy. This gradually led to institutionalization of what was predominantly a movement and activism. But the task was not that easy. The variety of cultural activities from a range of Folk Cultures to Group Theatre was a complex arena to deal. There were sustained difference of opinion, ego-centric contradictions, charges of nepotism and much more melodrama. But in

ultimate, the highly regimented and cadre based organisation of the Lefts took an effective control to stabilise the situation and bring it to their favour as the government on the other hand was extending institutional support in the form of establishing co-ordination organisations, funding, awards and honours to the activists, study and research facilities etc.

Amongst the popular theatre groups working towards excellence in theatre, Bohurupee was the first to have received production grants from Sangeet Natak Akademi, regularly. Since 1956 Bohurupee received financial assistance in lakhs. One probable ground behind this special treatment to Bohurupee might be the closeness of its mentor, Sambhu Mitra, with the governing Congress Party at the centre and the state [Chaudhuri, Darshan. *Theatrewala Utpal Dutt*; Sahitya Prakashan; Kolkata; 2007; p. 381].

In 1965, *Sanjukta Ganashilpi Sanstha*, a joint forum of Groups Theatres protested against such discrimination on the part of the central government in distribution of grants and issued a public avowal which proclaimed that "A comprehensive conspiracy has been initiated by the government to take advantage of the poverty of artists and theatre groups by luring them with grants and awards and turning them into sycophants by dissociating them from common people. But this forum will carry on its continued ideological struggle against those opportunist, compromising theatre groups, dramatists and theatre workers who today are showing extraordinary zeal to create Nabanatya by totally ignoring Gananatya movement and trampling on its great heritage" [Sarkar, Pabitra; *Natmancha Natyarup*; Dey's Publishing; Kolkata; 2008; p.302].

As the Left Front government arrived to power in 1977, the foremost steps of Ministry of Information and Culture of the government was to streamline the rapidly increasing alternative cultural activities in the state. To that purpose, *Jatra-Natak-Lokranjan Advisory Council* was constituted on 12 August 1978 and the ministry decide to extend an annual financial grants of Rs. 1,15,000 that would be given to

groups as well as individuals operating in the field of jatra and group theatre. But with in a while a massive controversy surfaced with the allegations of deliberate nepotism against a few members in the advisory council by a section of the print media. The media brought into light that the panel of the advisory council that included the mentors of Theatre Workshop, Mass Theatre and Charbak, decided to award onetime production grants of Rs,10,000 (each) to their own groups. The panel which selected Chetna, People's Little Theatre and Theatre Commune as the recipient of best production awards of Rs.8,000(each)constituted of Arun Mukherjee, the director of Chetna, Utpal Dutt, the headman of Peoples' Little Theatre and Nilkantha Sengupta the mentor of Theatre Commune. Bibhas Chakrabarty and Rudraprasad Sengupta were also the members of the selecting committee who were adjudged to be the best director and best actor, respectively, in the individual category. Furthermore, no single award in the individual category was conferred to any artist from outside Kolkata. The government, however, tried to save its face by submitting that "the committee [could] not leave out such experienced theatre people" and that "their mere presence" as members of the expert panel hardly proves charges of "nepotism" [Ghosh, Dharani; *Towards a Rich Theatre; The Statesman*; 5 Dec. 1983].

However, on 14th May 1980 through a gazette notification issued by Ministry of Culture of the Government of West Bengal, existing committee was announced to be 're-formed' and reconstituted as a course correction measure. Yet the indictments of alleged 'error of judgment' by committee members prolonged to stumble the public sphere. Eminent journalist Dharani Ghosh wrote in the article referred earlier published in the Statesman that, although Arun Mukherjee won the award as best director in the individual category for the year 1981-82, "his last production, Jagannath was produced in 1977". It was rather unfortunate to have observed that groups theatres led by famous directors or actors like Bohurupee, People's Little Theatre, Chetna, Theatre Workshop, Sudrak, were being favoured in two ways like firstly being chosen over other smaller groups operating from small provincial

towns in distribution of grants and secondly being represented by their mentors in the committee to decide the distribution of funds.

In a letter to the Minister for Information and Cultural Affairs written on 16th August 1979, Tapas Sen a veteran theatre artist and a member of the *Jatra-Natak-Lokranjan Advisory Council* expressed his mental languishment and disappointment over the activities of the council that could achieve very few of its objectives within the span of an year of its constitution. He indirectly charged the bureaucratic way of thinking of the Ministry for such a stalemate in making decision to have received a rather impolite reply on 21st November 1979 by Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, the Minister in Charge for Information and Cultural Affairs countering that the way the matter was brought to him by a member of the council " was neither necessary nor desirable". [Bhattacharya, Buddhadev; *Letter to Tapas Sen :: 21 November 1979*; Natyashodh Sansthan Library; Calcutta. 1979].

Tapas Sen issued a press statement on 16th September 1980, wherein he held the Left Front government responsible for assuming a careless move towards working out the hindrances of progressive theatre movement in the state saying "The Working Committee and the two other Sub-committees took up their work in right earnest and met quite frequently, going into various problems in the field. But within a year they had lost their earlier enthusiasm with all their initiatives virtually suppressed by the bureaucracy. Decisions were taken at the meeting after great deliberation, the recommendations were forwarded to the Minister concerned, but they were never implemented..." [Sen, Tapas; *Press Statement: Theatre - Jatra - Folk Entertainment Advisory Committee and other activities*; 16 September 1980. Natyashodh Sansthan Library; Kolkata].

The most elaborated enterprise implemented by the Left Front government to actualise authoritative control over the group theatre movement by the mechanism of the state was accomplished through the establishment of Paschim Banga Natya Akademi in 1987. Soon after its establishment it extended special production grants

of Rs. 1,62,950 and Rs.3,61,000 was given to Peoples' Little Theatre in 1989 and 1990 for producing *Chaitali Rater Swapno*, based on the translation of A Mid-Summer Night's Dream of William Shakespeare by Utpal Dutta and *Balidan*, a Rabindranath Tagore's play. In 1996 seven veteran directors from various theatre groups were given one time honourarium of Rs. 20,000 each for their outstanding contribution to the cause of Group Theatre movement. During March next year more than 61 such veteran actors, directors, dramatists, production artists and critics were felicitated by the government for their commitment and role in the progress of group theatre movement.

Since 1970s the vibrant group theatre culture in West Bengal has been hegemonized by the Left Front with an organized manoeuvring of amateur group theatres through grants, awards and other formats of benefaction and patronage. Furthermore the bureaucratic machinery functioning under the Ministry of Culture have extended its absolute throttlehold on less popular group theatres by sustaining a scrupulous dictate on allocation of theatre halls like Rabindrasadan, Girish Mancha and others that run under the state subsidies.

The present study conducted throughout 19 districts of the state where 932 Group Theatres are regularly performing to produce theatrical productions has someway been facilitated by the Left Front Government during decades under scrutiny. Some has received the production grant from Paschim Banga Nattya Academy, majority of these Groups has been invited to produce dramatic shows at theatre festivals in various districts at terms on rotation and were paid lump sum production cost and travelling expenses, some received special grants to host theatre workshops where all resource persons were paid handsome remuneration by the Department of Information and Culture, mentors of many of these Groups remain associated with Nattya Academy as members representing their respective districts or region, many of them were awarded with prestigious awards named after the doyens of modern Bengali theatre. Following are the distribution of benefits by Left Front Government availed by the Group Theatres.

Recipient of State Govt.'s Production Grants	369
Recipient of State Govt.'s Asset Development Grants	473
Recipient of State Govt.'s Theatre Workshop Grants	118
Invited to State Govt. sponsored Theatre Festivals	873
Recipient of State Govt.'s Awards for Theatre	614
Member of the various Govt. Committees on development of Theatre	199
Resource Person in Theatre Workshop	118
Total number of recipient Group Theatres	932

Table :: 2 *Distribution of Government Grants and other benefits to Group Theatres (1977-2007)*

By means of this the mainstream Group Theatres were tamed to act pro-establishment and as a machinery to champion the cause of public policies adopted by the Left Front Government from time to time like Land Reforms, Panchayat system etc, and many of these Groups even went to produce electoral street plays in favour of the Left Front during electoral campaign.

As the Group Theatre were participating in the in the electoral campaign process of the state being a influential mechanism of propaganda, the unease of the ruling government heightened further, by mid 50s. A group of Leftist theatre performers both from Group Theatres over and above disintegrated sections of IPTA's Bengal faction underwent producing and performing street plays filled with political messages on behalf of the Communist Party of India as effective apparatus of election campaigns. The majority of these street shows were developed to visualize and predict a definite adherent ideology, the central theme being the "class-conflict" yet bespoke according to the requirement of the local conditions and concerns.

Two general tendencies was visible within the subject matter of such 'election drama' - (a) to reveal the rampant corruption, enormous torture and communal conspiracies of the imperialist forces and their bourgeois agents as anti-Left ruling political parties; and - (b) to implant the very fundamentals of communist ideology in the mindset of the electorate.

Like Panu Pal's *Vanga Bandar* (1951) and *Voter Vet* (1952) or Utpal Dutta's *Janatar Afim* (1991) numerous such explicitly propagandist 'election drama's were produced and performed by Leftist campaigners through theatre activism that played a momentous job in the installation and consolidation of Left Front's rule in West Bengal. Utpal Dutt contributed a lot in the scope of this "election drama" with his *Naya Tughlak* (1955) and *Special Train* (1961) and many more in later years. Dutta's *Din Badaler Pala* (1967) was the first of its kind street theatre in West Bengal, that portrayed the court case scene against a Communist leader who was wrongly blamed by the state machinery of assassinating a policeman during the Food Uprising in 1966. This short span play is regarded as a genuine trend setter in the history of Bengali street theatre. Pramode Dasgupta, the front rank leader of CPI(M), acknowledged the role of this street play, *Din Badaler Pala*, in achieving the espousal of voters in favour of the Left Front.

During 1960s and 1970s abundant such dramatic pieces scripted and acted by a range of Group Theatres played a imperative task in strengthening the political perceptions of the working class of the pastoral in addition to municipal area on the side of Leftist political parties. It was obvious, then, that the course of the progression of an artistry branded for its spirit "of resistance" in postcolonial Bengal, at this very critical juncture of the history, came to be seized by particular brand of political ideology. But the previous generation of theatre activists, particularly the vigorous splinter group allied with IPTA, deliberately refused to accept the barefaced intrusion of politics in their artistic creations. It was clearly visible that during the late 1970s and 80s the issue of belonging or not belonging to a specific kind of political creed became dominant zeal to debate among the Group Theatre performers. Thus came the famous saying of Sri Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, the then Minister of Information and Culture, Govt. of West Bengal, " We have numerous group theatres [sic] in the state [West Bengal]. They are primarily perceiving the dialectics and problems of this social-system and explaining them in their own way. To them our question is that in this cultural revolution there are two rival camps

Congress and Left Front...to which do you belong" [Mukherjee, Kuntal; *Theatre O Rajniti: Ekti Samajtattik Bislesan*; Natyachinta Foundaion; Kolkata; 2002].

As a matter of the fact, the promising variety of 'progressive' Group Theatres, spirited high in Leftist ideological cultural tradition, harbingered a marked deviation from the essence of political theatre of IPTA in pre-independence and next-to-independence period, that gave a clarion call for a radical conquering of the bourgeois political system. One may note the most fundamental fixations of cultural agitation of the Leftist political theatre of the IPTA paradigm as to stand in protest against colonialist legal system, the rural-urban socio-economic divide, the hegemonic domination of fascist/imperial forces on administrative power etc. Gradually these ultimate had been toned down to a momentous extent through the post-independence Group Theatre movement. Involvement of the Leftist political parties in a election-oriented, quasi-liberal parliamentary politics created an inexorable bearings on the kind of party line propaganda plays that were being developed to serve the immediate political interest of the Left political party, and not the ideology at large.

Majority of the plays of such election campaign theatre endeavoured neither at an absolute denunciation of the existing political edifice nor does it demand a revolutionary deposing of the bourgeois state machinery. Rather such theatrical adventures were aimed at a 'constructive criticism' of the intrinsic shortcomings in the contemporary socio-political systems. As the first Left Front Government was formed in 1977 in West Bengal, the time-honoured characteristics of the Leftist theatre activism towards a 'resistance theatre' was, ultimately, terminated. This was a critical phase of grave ideological predicament for 'resistance theatre' in West Bengal because, for the first time in its convincingly drawn out history, the very reason of its origin and existence, that is the removal of the government of the bourgeois parties had become a reality.

Since that phase of its span Group Theatre movement momentarily became the 'instrument of apology' for the lacunas in public service of the ruling coalition rather than an 'instrument of protest' for the downtrodden. [Majumder, S. S; *Political Theatre in Calcutta : Bertolt Brecht in Context*; Unpublished dissertation; Department of English, Guahati University; 2009] The ideological stalemates on aesthetics encountered by the theatre activists ever since the Left Front came to power in West Bengal has been summarised by Harimadhab Mukhopadhyay, one of the leading actor, director, playwright from North Bengal - "Before the Left Front came to power we thought we were moving towards a definite ideological stand (even if we shelved direct ideology and direct politics) which would herald some kind of a change – a social change, a progressive change...This was before the Front took over. When the desired change in politics came through, with the Front coming to power, the relationship started changing and dilution set in"[Ghosh, Nema; *Dramatic Moments: Photographs and Memories of Calcutta Theatre from the Sixties to the Nineties*; Seagull Books; Calcutta; 2000].

Noted playwright, director Asit Bose, also expressed his frustration as is experienced by a segment of group theatre practitioners, who are already totally disheartened by the policies of Natya Akademi. To quote him - " If I have to go to Writers' Buildings, to plead for the basic facilities for my theatre, I'd rather give up theatre. The present government has destroyed the guts of this theatre by distributing grants, awards and favours to those who kowtow to them, and by leading those engaged in theatre to promote one another within the coterie of the favoured. Theatre in West Bengal had traditionally taken pride in its leftist orientation and its spirit of protest. Nothing remains of that theatre, once the core of that protest has been nationalized" [Bose, Asit. *A theatre idiom of my own*; in Anjum Katyal (ed.) *Nine Lives*; Special issue of *Seagull Theatre Quarterly*; 29/30 June 2001; p. 76-96]

It is proved that extreme intercessions of political leaders in affairs of organization and routine operations of the Group Theatre had a calamitous and tragic effect on

their augmentation. Sooner the Front government began erecting stress on the Group Theatre by means of the interference of party leaders, for example, in course of the campaign for the state Assembly Election of 1988 leaders of Left Front urged the Group Theatre fraternity to "...showcase the achievements of the Left Front Government...and...expose the torture and the reign of terror of Congress rule...and inform people about what we [Left Front] are doing", and the Group Theatre started to comply with such irrelevant propositions, the movement gradually derailed. [Mukherjee, Kuntal; *Theatre O Rajniti: Ekti Samajtattik Bislesan*; Natyachinta Foundaion; Kolkata; 2002]

As long as the left was in the opposition, it seems, the activists thought there was a point to it. After 1977, and more so after 1982, it appeared to many among them that the exercise had lost its raison d'être.... the crisis in the Group Theatre as a fallout of the much bigger crisis in the constitutional left movement of the country. The rhetoric began to sound empty, meaningless, as a political practice inevitably veered round towards pragmatism with all its unpalatable consequences. One of them was that the romantic 'bhadrak' fantasy of a revolution gradually faded away. [Ghosh, Parimal; *Rise and Fall of Calcutta's Group : Theatre The End of a Political Dream*; Economic and Political Weekly; Vol. XLVII No. 10; March, 10, 2012]

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CHAPTER 4

Women's Issues Staged : A Critical Survey of the Contemporary Dramatic Productions of the Group Theatres of West Bengal Envisioning the Women Issues.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Commentators note that, feminist theatre, as a category has emerged in India in recent times with distinctive formal and informal features and there has been a sincere effort on the part of the commentators to built the chronicles of feminist theatre in India while experts of performance studies has made attempts to built theories on feminist theatre with all its local intellectual capacities. Feminist theatre as a conscious enterprise envision the locus or stand of woman as individual or a group in relationship and autonomy, sexuality and rejection to gender stereotype, attainments and depression, inner self and the worldview and many more.

By nature, feminist theatre in India do not always indulge into a unidirectional story-telling that comprises exposition-conflict-resolution, rater it is focused on the recognition of biases of many orientations like social, religious, political, cultural, and injustice thereof. Regards to conclusion, feminist theatre has often led to open-ended inferences. The specialty of the aesthetic treatment of feminist theatre in India is its narration of lived experiences, in contrast to an imagined cases; flexible reach between the past and the present to substantiate the narration, the principal understanding being the position of the women has not changed much since past till date in realm and reality. One major aspect of feminist theatre in India is the assertion through symbolic representation of protagonist ego in varying capacity, women as self or women as community. The marked difference between the Western version of feminist theatre with that of Indian is found here in the core

symbolism. The Indian version has moved from the Western prejudice of 'Women and the others' to have cultivated 'Women amongst the others', from isolate and highlight approach to focus and highlight approach. Furthermore while Western feminist theatre emphasizes that their aesthetic women is made of her free body and free mind, the Indian feminist theatre has hailed the free spirit of womanhood.

Feminist theatre or in a more broader sense theatre on the issues of women in West Bengal in last three decades has been a small but significant part of the feminist discourse in the country that needs documentation and appraisal. The present study across the 19 districts of West Bengal and through 932 Group Theatres producing a huge number of dramatic productions during the rule of Left Front Government in the state since 1977 up to 2007, of which a sizable portion was dedicated to highlight the women's issues affirm the claim that there has been a slow yet steady gender-sensitization amongst the Group Theatres who has played pivotal role in socio-cultural and to a great extent political movements in West Bengal since their origin.

While seen from a holistic point of view, one major ground of lack of pace in the process of gender-sensitization among the Group Theatres was the traditional deprivation towards women to participate in the public performances in theatre. The nineteenth century cultural history of Bengal reveals the deprivation of the women folk as actress in the dramatic productions in the contemporary Bengali theaters. Male actors used to appear in the roles of the heroines in disguise. Noted maestros like Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi, Amritlal Basu, Amritlal Mukherjee Mahendralal Basu, Tinkori Mukherjee, and Kshetra Mohan Ganguly played the role of the leading lady characters in many 'Pala's (drama productions) like *Sadhabaar Ekaadashi*, *Neel Darpan*, *Jaamaai Baarik* etc. The appointment of the female actress was disregarded by both the petty-bourgeoisie popularly known as the 'Babu's, and the stalwarts of nineteenth century Bengal Renaissance. Many of the native News Papers vehemently opposed a case for women to enter the 'stage'.

Michael Madhusudan Dutta, was the first protagonist to have introduced three women, named as Golaapbala, Elokeshi and Jagattarini, in three characters of his

drama 'Sharmistha' produced on 16th august, 1873 at Bengal Theatre. It would have been hardly any possibility if the owners of the Hall did not care for the 'profit' motive. However, all these actresses were prostitutes of local brothels. And of course, Michael Madhusudan had to face enormous criticisms, social boycott, gossips, and humiliation for that. The history of Bengali theater is as old as 210 years considering *The Disguise* by Gerasim Stepanovich Lebedyeff at Mallick's residence at Bagbajar in 1795 as the pioneering effort, yet the participation of the women on the stages was as late as 1873.

The notable point is, that although the women education was in vogue in those days, ladies were joining the medical studies, riding horses with their husbands at the Garer Maath field, meeting the Governor at supper on invitation along with the spouse, editing literary magazines, writing in contemporary creative journals, yet they were kept at a strange distance from the proscenium. The reason behind is obviously the age old patriarchy that allows no way for such inception that a girl from a 'Vadralok' (Gentleman) family would join the carrier of a theater actress crossing the limits of the typical nineteenth century Bengali family values. [Banerjee, Sumanta; *The Parlour and the Streets: Elite and Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Calcutta*; Seagull Books; Calcutta; 1989.]

It was Ramakrishna Paramhansa, who acknowledged the contributions of women in Bengali theaters for the first time as he blessed Binodini Dasi, the noted actress of the age, and called her "Choitanyadayini" (donor of the senses). He also encouraged Girish Ghosh to bring more numbers of women to theater for their emancipation. However his wishes took long time to have realized. Due to the initiatives of Girish Chandra Ghosh many women joined the career of actresses in his Great National Theatre by the last few decades of the 19th Century. Many of them had marvelous spirit and talent as well they left noteworthy contributions to modern Bengali theater. The dedications and offerings of these women are great debts to the present Bengali Theater, and should be acknowledged with due respect.

4.2. GROUP THEATRE PRODUCTIONS ON WOMEN'S ISSUES DURING LAST THREE DECADES.

During period under study, i.e. the rule of Left Front Government in the state since 1977 up to 2007, three decades at the most, there has been considerable growth of participation of women in the mainstream Group Theatre, although not as an universal phenomenon all over the state, yet this has broaden the scope and framed a perceived factor behind the number of theatre productions on women's issues to be increased. The study was initiated to understand whether the genuine spirit of feminist theatre has developed in the mean time in the state within the rich tradition of protest theatre or in visualizing the women's issue through theatre the Group Theatres maintained its left political bias to a large extent, and in either cases how far the participation of women in numbers at the decision making body of Group Theatres is a fundamental factor.

The primary investigation carried out through 19 districts (Districts like Alipurduar, Jhargram, Kalimpong was not created and the district of Burdwan was not bifurcated by 2008 as of today) in West Bengal to collect information from 932 numbers of Group Theatre highly active, moderately or occasionally active or now stagnant in their creative endeavor has revealed certain interesting tendencies about their attitude in conceiving the women's issues. I would, then, categories 428 theatrical productions produced by various Group Theatres on women's issues during the last three decades, so far the collected information substantiates, in five broad categories :

A. **Reinterpretation of mythology as subverting narratives** as in *Nathaboti Anathbot* (1983) a monologue of Draupadi, the wife of Pandavas from Mahabharata, *Madhabi* (2006) whom her husband, Galob sold to many Kings to earn his offerings for his Guru, *Shudrayan* (1999) depicting the story of Surpanakha, the sister of Ravana from Ramayana, *Kotha Amrita Saman* (2005) based on the repentance of wives of non-Ariyan heroes who lost their lives in the battlefield of Kurukshetra in either sides, *Shuk* (2007) the story of the womanizer scholar who have cheated many

Apsaras at Amaravati by his cleverly arguments and finally come to be defeated by a milk woman, *Manasa Mangal* (1987) based on the ominous grandeur of the serpent goddess and her tussle with the elite male supremacy reflected through Chand Saudagar, *Tapasyi O Tarangini* (1981) based on the sideline story of Ramayana where a woman searches her true self, *Shikhandini* (1984) is the story of the eunuch prince of Mahabharata who helped Arjuna to kill Bhishma. All these dramatic productions are the reinterpretation of mythology through subverting narratives. These productions contrasts the women from the mythology with the contemporary modern female sufferings. There the mythological woman are not submissive wife, lover, sister, or mother, but a vocal and questioning woman who vows to rewrite her story the next time around.

B. Narratives of deprivation of women as community as shown in *Rudali* (1992) is the story of age old exploitation over a group of women who uses to professionally mourn at the death of wealthy persons in Rajasthan, *Nachni* (2006) is based on the lives and endless miseries of the poor Jhumur dancer and singers of Purulia in West Bengal, *Biye Gauni Kadnon Chapa* (2007) is based on the pains and sufferings of Muslim women who sing traditional ritual songs during marriages, *Banzara* (1988) depicts the hard struggle for existence of the women from the nomadic community who are often trapped to flesh business, *Haraye Khnuji* (2002) is the story of the ill-fated women who breaks stone into pebbles by riverside for construction business, *Bedeni* (1984) was built up on the depiction of exploitation of multi-national medicine companies over the risky earnings of the women snake-charmers. These production highlights the shared stories of abuse, assault and agency of a group of women focusing on their mass abduction, rape and mutilation that took place during their attempts to earn bread.

C. Women as the victim of social and religious orthodoxy as exposed in *Sati* (1987) is a story based on the continual oppression of a woman in her marital home and the jeopardy of double standards of her so called progressive life partner, *Debi Garjan* (1979) based on a true story of a woman been pronounced to be a goddess with

super natural power whose husband deny to live together with her out of fear and devotion and she was compelled to sacrifice her life in high priest rituals being caged in a closed temple, *Alakanandar Putra Kanya* (1989) story of a middle-aged heroine who goes on adopting orphans bearing the burden of all the mishaps and problems that accost her, *Darpane Sharatshashi* (1992) the story of subjugation of a female performer of 19th century Bengal, *Jogajog* (1990) based on the novel by Rabindranath Tagore where Kumu is harshly treated and mentally tortured by his elite husband to have died at last, *Jara Brishtite Bhijechhilo* (1997) narrative of an oppressive life of a middle aged woman who has been sexually harassed by in-laws within her family, *Je Jon Achhe Majhkhane* (1995) story of a women who has broken the conventional boundaries of society herself yet could not accept the inter-caste marriage by her son, *Chhayabrita* (2000) states the condition of a rape victim after she return to her well educated marital home from hospital, *Merry Farrar* (1981) states the struggle and of a lady advocate against the state power who fights in the court on behalf of the victims of homicide.

D. **Bio-Drama of an eminent women exhibiting her struggle within the system** as in *Apurba Golap* (1987) based on the life of late 19th century Golap Sundari Dasi, *Kamalekamini* (1978) based on the life and creative journey of actress Ketaki Dutta, *Jaan-E-Kolkatta* (1999) based on the life of Gawaharjaan, the famous Hindusthani classical vocalist, *Noti Binodini* (1995) the bio-drama based on the actress's life, *Kamala* (1989) based on the life and career of freedom fighter Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay, *Rani Kadombini* (2007) based on the life of Kadombini Ganguly, the first Bengali lady doctor, *Tumi Daak Diyechho Kon Sakale* (2007) based on the real life and dramatic career of Smt. Keya Chakraborty, one of the foremost actresses of Group Theatre in the 1960s and 70s etc.

E. **The victorious women in fiction** as shown in *Himmat Mai* (1998) the adaption of Bertolt Brecht's "Mother Courage", *Maa*(1985) based on the novel by Russian writer Maxim Gorkey, *Shanu Roy Chowdhury* (1998) story of a middle class women's venture to liberate herself from family bindings, *Hypatia* (2007) is based on the life

and struggle of ancient Greek lady mathematician who stood against Christian orthodoxy, *Raktakarabi* (1978) a Rabindranath Tagore allegorical drama illustrating a woman's fight against the mechanical system of production, *Bilasibala* (2007), *Karnabati* (1996) based on a Rajasthani folktale of a woman's search for an ideal life partner becomes frustrating unless she decides to remain single mother of the child she conceived, *Madhab Malanchi Kainya* (1988) a folktale based on the Maymonsingha Giteekaa whereby a prince saves the life of her beloved prince.

Group Theatre productions centered around the women's issues has provided a space for femme voices – whether for self-exploration or for criticism.

Span Of years	A. Reinterpretation of mythology as subverting narratives	B. Narratives of deprivation of women as community	C. Women as the victim of social and religious orthodoxy	D. Bio-Drama of an eminent women	E. The victorious women in fiction	Total
1977-1982	14	7	10	1	9	41
1983-1988	21	15	14	6	18	74
1989-1994	28	14	20	7	19	88
1995-2000	29	12	27	9	25	102
2001-2006	24	16	27	12	20	99
2007-2008	8	2	6	3	5	24
1977-2008						428

Table :: 3 Types of Group Theatre productions based on women's issues

As the distribution in Table :: 3 shows, there has been a steady and considerable growth in number of dramatic performances by Group Theatres over last three decades based on women's issues. It also indicates that Group Theatres has shown a lob-sided balance to show interests in the illustration and counter-interpretations of socio-religious customs as the predicaments of emancipation of women, and of

course the proverbial patriarchy, rather than exhibiting the champion grounds on which real life or fictitious woman characters have overcome the hurdles and burdens while building productions on women's issues. One reason behind such point of view is that "majority of the Group Theatres consider the women issues as a part of the greater question of social inequalities and deprivation of the larger section by a handful. They are reluctant to judge gender inequality being something more than the class inequality. They find it comfortable to draw an inference, that once the social revolution is ensured and completed, all sorts of such issues of inequality or deprivation shall wither away overnight. So it is better to encourage women to fight against the system as a whole, not the patriarchy which is worst, yet only a part of the exploitative system" opines Rudra Prasad Sengupta. [*Interview with Rudra Prasad Sengupta, Director, Nandikar*, by me; 3rd January, 2007 at Dinabandhu Mancha VIP Guest Room]

Another aspect of the study shows variations of conclusions the productions drew to leave a message for the audience. Evidently the Group Theatres remain keen to send messages to the commons through the dramatic productions as they believe theatre as an instrument of propagation. And while concluding the artistic representation of the message they intend to percolate to their audience they expose their stance or takes on the issue. It has been a longstanding debate in the creative arena of Group Theatre whether 'a theatre is the director's game' or it is predominantly a community affair that culminates cross-cutting opinions. There may not be any common position universal to range of Group Theatres in regards to this question, yet the origin and development of the Group Theatres since generations show that they remain persona-centric, one theatre intellectual being at the nucleus and others gathered to farm the group to produce theatre, sometimes by split from a large group. What are the influential dynamics of selection of scripts and building the conclusion of Group Theatre productions can be a separate and interesting field of research altogether, but for now I would again categorise the concluding scenario of the 428 dramatic productions based on women's issues under study into four major approaches :

1. The arrogant protagonist or the victim takes her revenge and inspire as shown in productions like *Fera* (1985) based on Freidrich Durrrenmatt's story where a rich women return to her ancestral village instigate the villagers to kill her ex-lover who betrays her when she is pregnant and as a result she is forced into the dark world of prostitution, *Medea* (1983) Medea takes vengeance on Jason, her husband who leaves her for a Greek princess of Corinth, by killing Jason's new wife as well as her own children, after which she escapes to Athens to start a new life, *Muchi Bou Chamatkarini* (1999) a drama by Federico Garcia Lorca is concluded as the shoemaker's loyal wife treats cleverly and punishably the opportunist mayor and young businessman who use to swoop in as soon as the shoemaker leaved his house trying to woo her, *Alibaba Pnachali* (1978) was based on an Arabic folktale where a housemaid trapped a gang of robbers and chastised them who came to loot her master's wealth, *My Story, Our Story* (1992) concludes with a strong protest from the central woman over the domestic violence of whom she remained a victim and she seek the intervention of administration to get the perverts arrested.

2. The protagonist or the victim woman dies to raise sympathy as envisioned in *Shashti* (1987) based on Rabindranath's story where the innocent housewife silently accept the punishment of death for the crime committed by her brother-in-law, *Aguner Pakhi* (1984) where Joan of Arc the French freedom fighter was burnt alive by the English and Burgundian rulers, *Ehudi Stree O Guptachar* (1983) based on Bertolt Brecht's 'Jewish Wife' where the Jewish lady leaves her home out of fear of being lynched by the Storm Police of Hitler and her non-Jewish husband do not stop her out of similar fear and she feels more helpless while escaping, *Tara Tin Bon* (1998) based on Anton Chekhov's drama where full of ambition, the youngest sister wants to have a real purpose - to work, to give back, the middle sister stuck in what has become a loveless marriage, wants to feel the electric rush of passion once more, while the eldest, gives and gives until there is almost nothing left, but all of them meets ill fate to be moved from their ancestral shelter, *Nij Bhunikay* (1998) concludes with the death of an actress in the shooting spot being filmed on her real life.

3. Documentary form of drama concluded like 'and the saga continue'... as shown in *Kamala* (1984) by Vijay Tendulkar where the theme exposes flesh trade of buying and selling of tribal women, it also pinpoints how a male dominated society treats women under patriarchal hegemony, *Nun Cha* (1980) depicted the inhuman treatment and exploitation of tea garden women workers and the hypocrisy of the trade union leaders, *Antardahan* (2002) revealed that the victims of acid attack has no place to go as the administration, neighborhood, family turns their face after few days, *Hate Hate Aday* (2000) based on Rabindranath's 'Dena Paona' where the central woman dies of malnutrition after facing harassment from the in-laws for dowry and the family plans for the re-marriage of their son in spot payment of dowry, *Care Kori Na* (1993) is focused on the continuing problems of an over-protective single mother.

4. She frees herself from all bondages and walk alone as exhibited in *Jatodur Roddur* (2004) where a young maid leaves her marriage with an old village clown and her extra-marital wealthy lover as well and runs away when she felt both of them were eager for physical pleasure and nothing more from her, *Bodnam* (1977) based on Rabindranath Tagore's short story where the wife of a police inspector helps a revolutionary freedom fighter to escape every time from the trap of police to catch him and ultimately confess to her husband that she loved her native land more than her family duties, *Mukti* (2000) story of a aged widow who sets her journey alone crossing all the limits of relationship to hold the hand of the man who once fallen in love with her, *Putul Khela* (1977) and *Guriya Ghar* (1978) both based on Henrik Ibsen's drama where the leading character ultimately leaves her keys and wedding ring leaves the house slamming the door behind freeing herself from the family where she lacked reasonable opportunities for self-fulfillment in a male dominated world, *Ros* (1993) based on Narendranath Mitra's story where a poor village popular jaggery-maker woman ultimately leaves her husband who took the profit of selling the jaggery and married another woman for her looks.

5. She convinces others to reform the system all together as dramatized in *Malo Parar Maa* (1983) based on the true incident of massacre at Malo Para in Malda

district where Fourteen people were butchered in clashes between the Congress and the CPM in 1983 to claim control over the area and the old lady concludes in a political campaign to defeat Congress led hooliganism in the state, *Mrichchhakatik* (1979) where a courtesan of great wealth and reputation intervenes in time to save her lover from execution and his wife from throwing herself onto the funeral pyre and together the three declare themselves a family, *Hajar Churashir Maa* (1985) based on Mahasweta Devi's novel where the story starts with a middle-aged lady on the eve of her son's death anniversary who was brutally killed by the state because of his ideology of advocating the brutal killing of class enemies and the lady meets her son's close accomplice and tries to justify his actions and his revolutionary mentalities, *Beti Aayee* (1996) exposed the genuine social concerns over the birth, life and death of a girl in our country and deliberately raise questions to the audience to move the barriers of women's freedom forever, *Samatal* (1999) concluded by the domestic helps group together to protest a rape of a six years old daughter of one of their colleague and demanded for their security at the place of their job.

The conclusions the theatrical productions on women's issues draw to communicate with the audience is crucial as they have different political approach towards the agenda. While the first kind of conclusions, as suggested, is radical in character it propagates a face to face confrontation of womanhood with the patriarchy or to that extent the society as a whole. The second set of conclusion is rather submissive and realist at the same time as they exhibit the actual helplessness of women before the age-old exploitation over them, the third kind of suggested conclusion is comparatively politically neutral and descriptive in nature, the fourth type of conclusion is individualistic and sometimes ambiguous as they resort to no definite position regarding the future of such conclusions, the fifth trend of conclusion as observed is reformist in attitude and seeks a thorough and qualitative change in the condition that may require mass awareness and participation irrespective of gender.

There is no doubt in the fact that there can be an debate of authority over the conclusions of a theatrical production between the playwrights and the directors, in

case they are not the same person, that whose outlook may become predominant in molding the conclusion on the desired track. While the playwrights claim the authority of originality, directors may take the liberty of improvisations that make the narrative communicable to contemporary realities. This has happened much in cases of adapted, translated, and edited scripts where the directors have imposed certain interpretations beyond the actual intention of the authors being otherwise motivated. One may recollect the fate of Henrik Ibsen's "A Doll's House", much acclaimed a production in West Bengal too, where Ibsen was mandated to develop an alternative ending for the German premiere. In the changed conclusion, the leading character is led to her children after having argued with her husband. Seeing them, she crumples, and the curtain is brought down. Ibsen later described this finale a tarnish to the original play and submitted it as a "barbaric outrage".

Span Of years	1. The arrogant protagonist or the victim takes her revenge and inspire	2. The protagonist or the victim woman dies to raise sympathy	3. Documentary form of drama concluded like 'and the saga continue'...	4. She frees herself from all bondages and walk alone	5. She convinces others to reform the system all together	Total
1977-1982	13	9	5	2	12	41
1983-1988	20	15	13	12	24	74
1989-1994	21	11	15	18	23	88
1995-2000	19	8	11	31	33	102
2001-2006	21	9	14	29	26	99
2007-2008	3	4	5	6	6	24
1977-2008					428	

Table :: 4 Variations of conclusions of the Group Theatre productions on women's issues.

The study shows an interesting development over the years in sensitizing the women's issues by Group Theater through their dramatic productions. There has been a gradual inclined shift towards both radical and individualistic conclusions of the production, while the reformist approach to conclusions are moderately

fluctuating as a trend over the period of study. On the contrast, the realist conclusions are decreasing in appearance. These, perhaps, marks the influence of certain political bias or could have been due to increasing participation of women in theatre who want to speak of their own and they affirm either of these two conclusions as best message to be communicated by their creative efforts. As a matter of fact, during half of the study period, i.e., last one and half decades to be specific between 1995 and 2007, growing numbers of women's theatre groups where the director, actors, managers are female other than the technical hands, has increased in number and they have regularly contributed to the mainstream of Group Theatre productions to a sizable extent.

Another prominent trend that comes to surface is the enhancement of unbiased descriptive conclusions whereby the audience is set free to react and are not channelized towards certain definite end. This type of conclusion often resort in raising social questions, sometimes bold enough to accuse the audience itself for their silence. This trend of conclusion has significantly increased as shown in the Table : 4. Although such tendencies in drawing conclusions marks no distinct polarity in regards to gender inequality, crime against women, or emancipation of the women as such and rather leads to some confused state of answer either vague or hasty, this may relate to the overall shortfall of the academic discourses on feminism in India which is yet to built any genuine alternative proposition as against patriarchy they criticize.

Theatre as a premise of intellectual activity has been advanced by the literary works and socio-political cross-currents, yet the way a playwright design a plot on women's issue or the way it is concluded vis-a-vis the way a director improvise the same is a crucial input. Most of the produced dramatic presentations surveyed and studied herein, detailed in **APPENDIX - 2**, are developed by male playwrights and directors who has a non-participatory observation of the entire issue, and thus resorts to such conclusions often molded by ego, bias, poor sightedness etc. What is then required is broader opportunities for women of heterogeneous origin and

assorted capacities to join theatre as activists to speak of their own, perform of their own, and conclude of their own.

A further distribution of the literary sources of the dramatic productions under review indicates the intention of the Group Theatre to acquire or develop views to dramatize and perform on women's issue.

Span Of years	1. Original Manuscripts, developed on demand (Unpublished)	2. Adaptation of published foreign literary sources	3. Published Play / Scripts developed on published stories of Indian authors / reports of news media	4. Group Specific Manuscripts, developed by a member within group	Total
1977-1982	7	18	9	7	41
1983-1988	17	23	24	10	74
1989-1994	26	20	29	13	88
1995-2000	16	28	37	21	102
2001-2006	11	26	47	15	99
2007-2008	9	4	6	5	24
1977-2008				428	

Table :: 5 Variations of sources of the Group Theatre productions on women's issues.

While unpublished manuscripts are lucid and easily editable to administer while bringing them from page to stage, by means of adaptation of published foreign scripts, the director has the moderately flexible possibilities to improvise and mould the conclusion to make it more relevant to contemporary realities therefore such scripts are chosen keeping the point in mind that 'what is to be shown and how is to be shown'. Any script that has been developed after a story from an author or a news from the news medium opens minimum opportunity for the playwright and the director to delve into as either the audience is aware of the incident or has gone through the story earlier and has developed an impression of his own regarding the content and neither the playwright nor the director would advent a much unfamiliar turn in the story, where as Group specific scripts are rigid in nature and close-ended.

This kind of scripts are by and large motivated towards a definite conclusion based on definite stance on social issues.

Table :: 5 exposes a assorted picture of sources of scripts based on women's issues that has been produced on stage by Group Theatres during the period of study. Since the inception of modern Bengali drama at some point of the colonial rule, adaptation of foreign scripts or their trans-creation was in fashion, and the legacy continued until recent years although the motive has changed from mere entertainment to socio-political commitments. Therefore adaptation of published foreign script of Sophocles, Henrik Ibsen, Albert Camus, Bertolt Brecht, Dario Fo, Federico Garcia Lorca, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Anton Chekov and many others are in vogue. Down the line, this tradition has also influenced the selection of scripts on women's issues to those groups who considered that the experiences of women are universal in modern times. Dramatic productions based on the literary creations of Rabindranath Tagore, Girish Karnad, Mahesh Elkunchwar, Vijay Tendulkar and alike or scripted over the short stories and news reports by local playwrights has grown during the period both in potentials and size. This ensures that the groups were looking forward to sensitize the women's issues through such a metaphor which is indigenious and could connect and communicate with the audience easily. However, the most fascinating was the fact that a band of eminent playwrights, although male in most cases, has contributed immensely towards building group specific or original scripts to highlight women's issues through theatre. This has paved the way to raise a strong independent outlook in modern Bengali theatre to visualize the gender questions, which was much required.

4.3. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AS ACTIVISTS IN THE GROUP THEATRES DURING LAST THREE DECADES.

There can be hardly any denial of the fact that the participation of women in Group Theatres in West Bengal has remarkably grown in quality and quantity during this period and the involvement of educated, open minded female actresses of different

age group, conscious of their rights and position, came to join the course of Group Theatre, initially from the families of male theatre enthusiasts or their neighborhood.

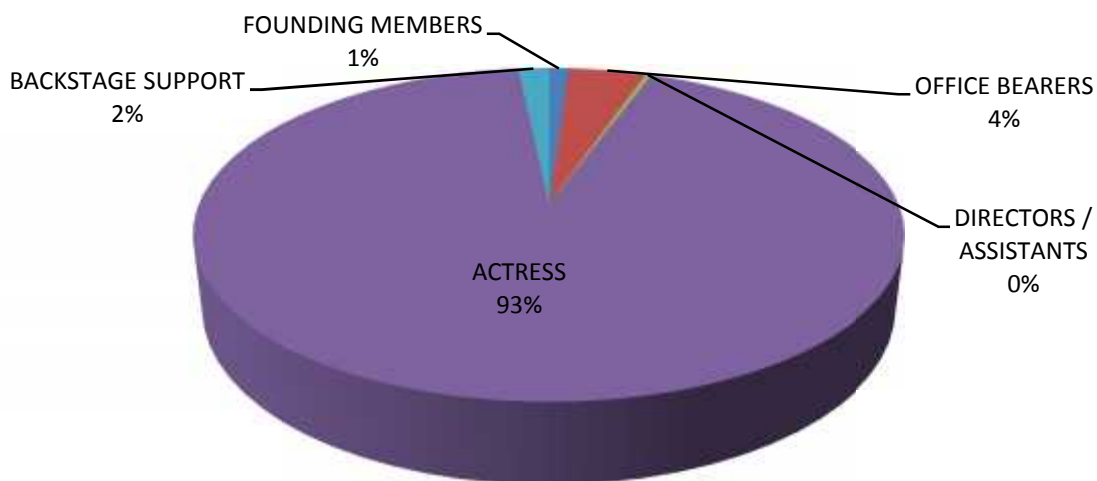
While willing to act upon stage they had to surpass three major interfaces, firstly, the social stigma that the show business is filthy and not suitable for the women of 'vadrlok' (elite) families, secondly, the rehearsal schedule of the Group Theatres were generally during the evening hours when the majority of the male members could manage after their usual office hours and was considered unsafe for the women to stay outside home after sunset, and thirdly, perhaps most importantly, the workload of the theatrical productions for the women besides their normal public and private work burdens. Yet they have shown the marvel of their spirit to have take part in numerous theatrical performances across the nation and abroad representing many Group Theaters during the period.

The present study conducted over **932** Group Theatres across 19 districts of the state reveals some interesting scenario regarding the participation of women in Group Theatres. Of the total population of **10542** female activists and performers associated to various Group Theatres in various capacities, the organizational distribution depicting their position in their respective Group Theatre is also crucial in regards to the decision making, such as selection of scripts, assuring basic facilities to female members in the group, management of day to day affairs within Group, creative support like managing the backstage businesses etc.

Founding Member of the Group	Office bearer in the Group	Director or Assistant Director of the Group	Associated only as Actress / Learner Actress	Associated only as Creative Support (Backstage)	Total
116	439	32	9780	175	10542

Table :: 6 *Position of women in the organizational structure of Group Theatres.*

The distribution reflects that the majority of women in Group Theatres are associated as actresses in regular basis or on hire. Only a small section of them become the part and mover of the organizational decision or selection of scripts to be produced. Thus they do not have the prerogatives to chose 'what is to be shown, how is to be shown' even if the theme of the production is based on women's issues.



DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE MEMBERS IN 932 GROUP THEATRES IN ORGANISATIONAL / CREATIVE POSITIONS

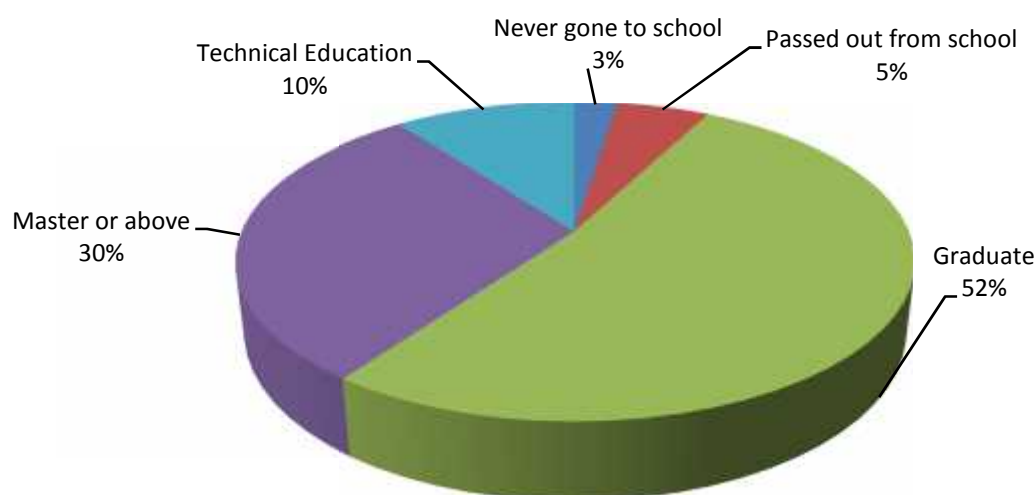
However, in those Group Theatres that are run by women exclusively, the reality is otherwise, yet they remain dependent on male playwrights to speak for them in most cases.

If educational qualification remains any standard yardstick of social consciousness amongst the women members of the Group Theatres following is the distribution of 10542 female performers of 932 Group Theatres throughout West Bengal. As it is often found that the Group Theatres cultivate an alternative methodology of imparting social perceptions through the dramatic productions, the understandings from a background of institutional education of an individual is incessantly challenged and restructured.

Never gone to school.	Passed out school.	Graduate	Master or above	Technical Education	Total
285	606	6031	2430	1190	10542

Table :: 7 *Educational qualification of female members in the Group Theatres.*

Female members of Group Theatres with higher academic qualification tends to be argumentative and wish to adhere to their personal or sub-group opinions in particular discussions on topics like selection of script on women's issues and drawing conclusion to them. On the other hand those who has not achieved higher academic qualifications mostly remain silent over such issues in discussions or in the



DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE MEMBERS IN 932 GROUP THEATRES AS PER ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

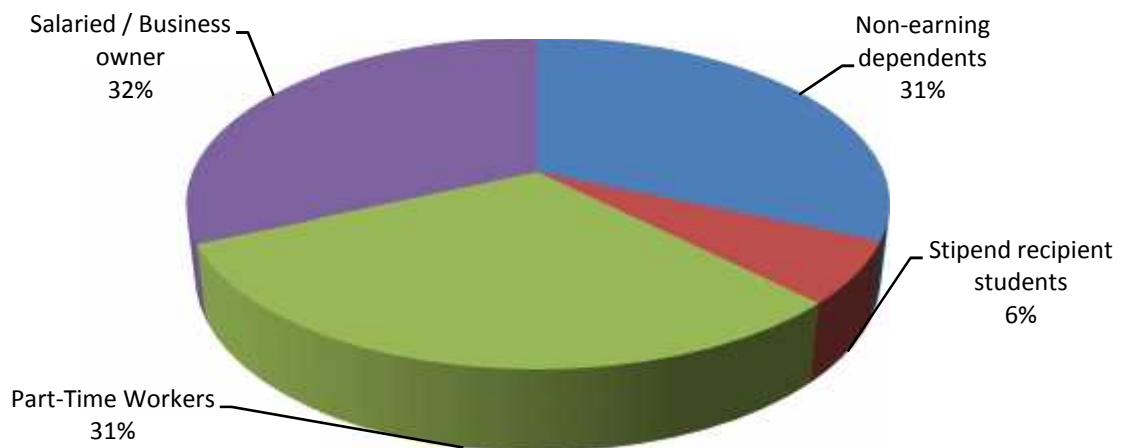
most cases their opinion hardly matters. However, it is hopeful to have found that more than half of the population of female activists in Group Theatres are at least graduates eligible enough to articulate their interest, bring any issue to surface and most importantly they are informed and can argue for their own.

In respect of the economic stability or earnings the female members of the Group Theatres in the state can be distributed in four major categories of non-earning dependents, earning (salaried/business owner), stipend recipient student and part-time earners. The last category is concentrated in big cities and developed urban areas where variety of services are available on term basis.

Non-earning dependents	Students receiving stipends	Part-Time workers	Salaried/Business owner	Total
3321	639	3230	3352	10542

Table :: 8 Educational qualification of female members in the Group Theatres.

Table :: 8 shows almost an equal share of economically independent women, partially independent and totally dependent women activists in Group Theatres with a small chunk of students earning from scholarships and stipends. A lady with stable earning feels free to speak of her own and often assumes her role in the arena



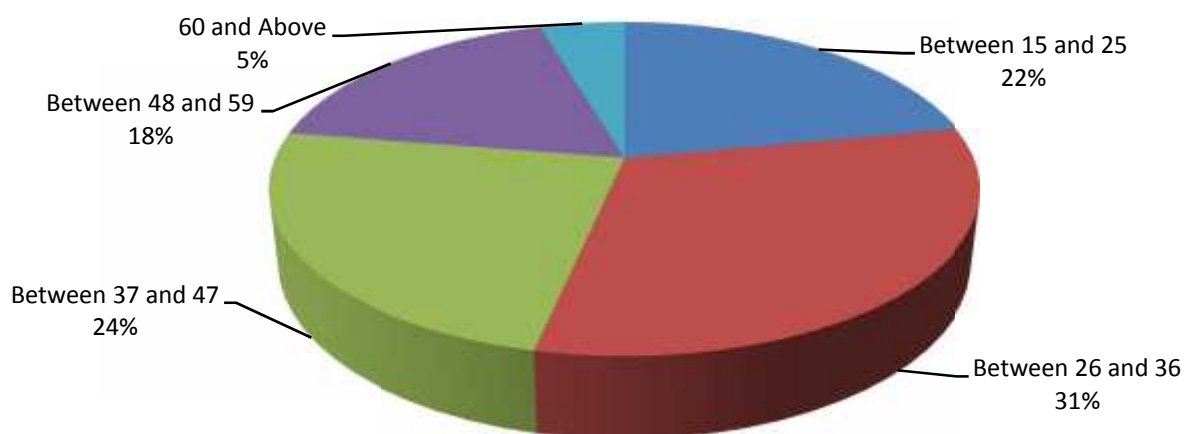
DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE MEMBERS IN 932 GROUP THEATRES IN INCOME GROUPS

of performing art to actualize and celebrate her 'self'. Theatre, then, becomes their part of identity that they cherish, or a step to future journey to the glamour world, if not an arena to raise her own voice through artistic activism in the realm of various social hindrances to her liberty. Therefore, she becomes vocal to bargain within the Group Theatre regarding what themes on women's issues would be genuine and what ultimate is to be projected amongst the audience. On the other hand, with few exceptions, an economically dependent women remains a passive worker in the Group Theatre as they find their appearance on stage through dramatic productions was beyond possibility, and considers her association with the Group was the best possible opportunity that unlimited her from her traditional family role. Therefore, she, herself, put a limit to her role while expressing views in the Group, whom she consider the emancipator of her women self, filled with great philanthropists and intellectuals male in various posts to give opinion on any issue, even on the women's issues. The better side of the picture is the majority of the female members in the Group Theatres are earning independents, whatever may be the earning, and are, therefore, subscribers of distinct values to vocalize.

In regards to age-group of the female members of Group Theatres following distribution has been developed based on the collected information -

Between 15 and 25	Between 26 and 36	Between 37 and 47	Between 48 and 59	60 and Above	Total
2319	3309	2540	1891	483	10542

Table :: 9 Age group of female members in the Group Theatres.



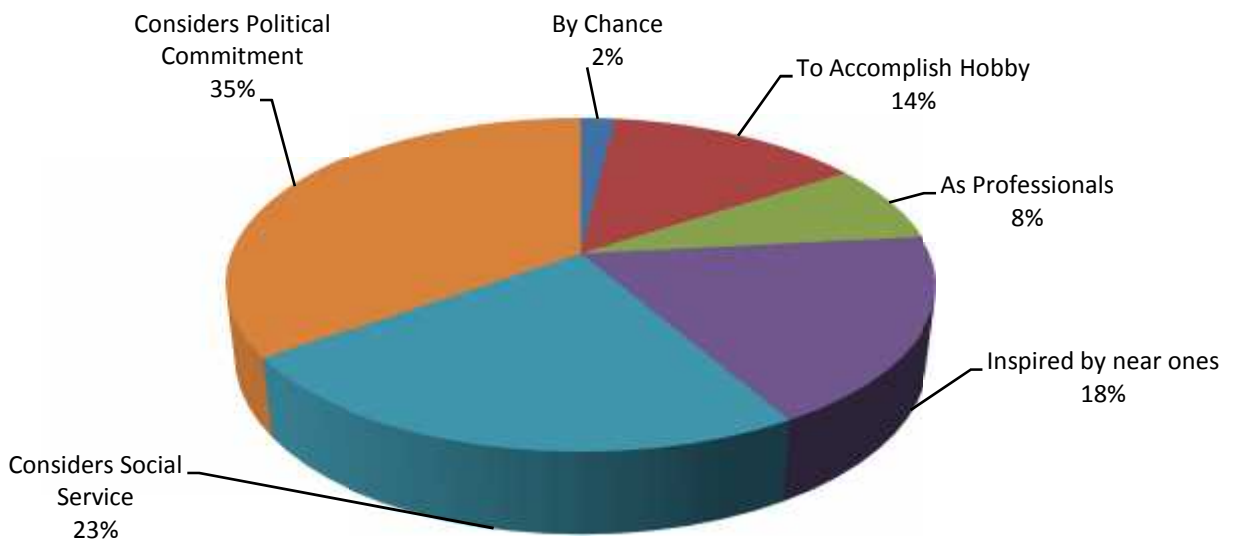
DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE MEMBERS IN 932 GROUP THEATRES IN AGE GROUPS

The age distribution of the 10542 female members in 932 Group Theatre shows the dominance of youthful women in theatrical activities. Certainly the young and unmarried girls and ladies, who has less family burdens, contribute a lot in the management of theatre business like costume designing and maintenance, properties preparation and preservation, publicity and official communications etc. To a great extent they manage the in house affairs of Group Theatres while performing as actresses as well. However, it has been noted that young boys and girls appear to a Group Theatres as floaters, as the hop between Groups if an attractive scope is offered. Although, amateurish, Group Theatre seeks commitment from their members in the name of progressive theatre, and history of Group Theatre has probed the fact that a split in the Group over an issue has been initiated by the young aspirants who remain argumentative. Therefore concentration of young male and female members in Group Theatre is both beneficiary and challenging to Group Theatres.

The study also focused on the backgrounds of the female members of Group Theatres and has found six major reasons behind their joining to theatrical activities.

By Chance	To accomplish Hobby	As Professional	Was Inspired by near ones	Considers Social Service	Considers Political Commitment	Total
195	1459	803	1939	2462	3684	10542

Table :: 10 Backgrounds and reasons of female members joining the Group Theatres.



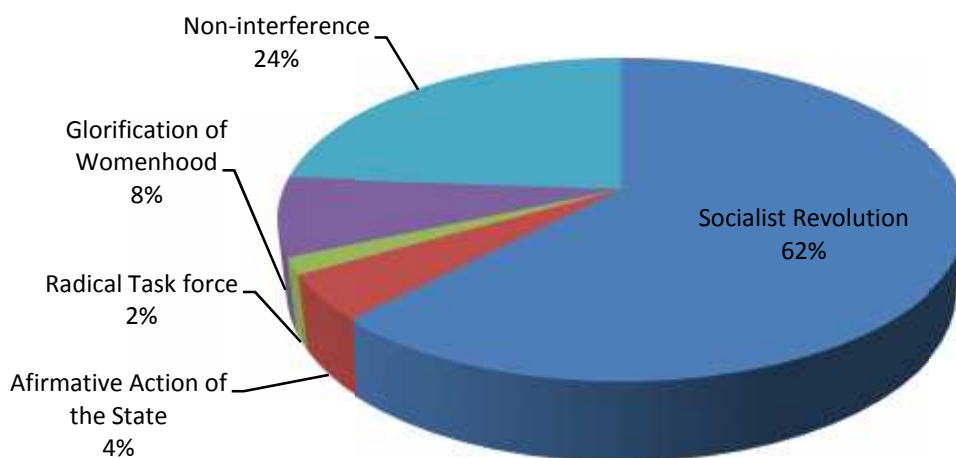
DISTRIBUTION OF BACKGROUNDS OF FEMALE MEMBERS JOINING GROUP THEATRES

Interesting to observe is the fact that majority of the women joining Group Theatre consider theatre activities either service to society or as commitment to certain political ideology, the later being the most popular ground. This reveals the majority of the women members of Group Theatre are socially and politically conscious and are in a position to express their take on the women's issues being dramatized. This attribute, nevertheless, is exclusive to this section of women. Others, who join the theatre on varied grounds may also hold strong socio-political consciousness too.

Such high being the level of socio-political consciousness, when the female members were asked to respond over five proposed alternatives to eradicate the gender discrimination, exploitation ensuing liberation of women as shown in Table :: 11 below, the response was much lopsided and revealed the bias towards Left political ideology.

Classless society established through Socialist Revolution would ensure end to all exploitations with one on the women.	5416
Political and Economic Empowerment of Women shall put a check on the injustice against women, which in turn requires affirmative action of the State	614
Special Women Task Force should be formed to ruthlessly retreat any inhuman treatment against women.	219
Glorification of women's role in family, society, religion, culture and history through agencies of socialization would change the picture.	1065
Women, themselves can change the situation provided all sorts of interference and restrictions over their choices are dismantled.	3228
Total	10542

Table :: 11 *Opinion of female members of the Group Theatres regarding alternatives to eradicate gender inequality and exploitation.*



RESPONSES OF WOMEN MEMBERS OF 1185 GROUP THEATRES ON ALTERNATIVES TO REMOVAL OF GENDER INEQUALITY

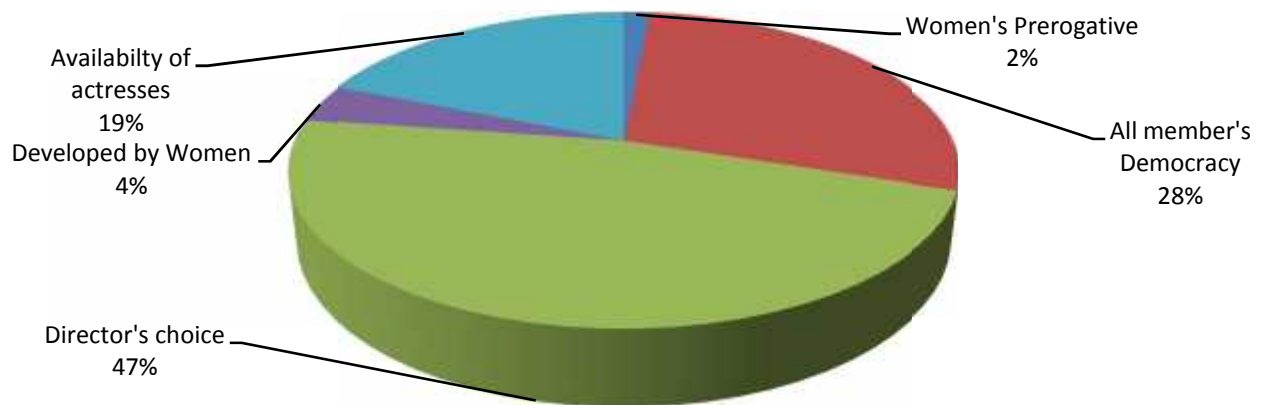
Such a large proportion agreeing to resort revolutionary reconstruction of the society through class struggle as the best way out for extermination of gender exploitation and inequality definitely marks the mainstream of the female activists in Group Theatres to be politically Left. Interestingly, almost the similar proportion of the female members of Group Theatre considers their joining to theatre activism as their social and political commitment as shown in Table :: 8. Thus, it could be safely concluded that those who consider Group Theatre as a platform of social or political activism for women is strongly motivated by Left political ideas and ideology.

Having said that it would be nothing hard to understand the underlying adjustment between the views of women members of the Group Theatres as a part with the whole of the organization that traditionally subscribes to Left political bias while

selecting scripts to be produced on women's issues. The women members, as a part, do not complain of 'male domination' in this respect and seeks such selection as opportunity to act upon. Following options in Table :: 12 shows the 'marginalization of women by consent' (for the sake of progressive cultural activism) in deciding the scripts for production on women's issues.

It is a prerogative of only the women members to decide what script may be staged on women's issues.	14
All members take part in discussion to select scripts for production and the same formality is maintained while considering scripts on women's issues.	265
The director's choice is the final in usual practice, however suggestions are welcomed from any member in case to case.	441
Women members are trained and encouraged to develop scripts on women's issues.	36
Availability of strong actresses stimulates the Group to make theatre on women's issues.	176
Total No. of Group Theatres	932

Table :: 12 *Process of selection of scripts on women's issues by the Group Theatres.*



SELECTION OF SCRIPTS ON WOMEN'S ISSUES BY GROUP THEATRES

4.4. VINDICATION OF RIGHTS OF WOMEN ACTIVISTS IN GROUP THEATRES

However lopsided may be the scenario in regards to political inclination, there are always other realities that can be hardly ignored. In a edifying dialogue with Anjum Katyal from Seagull Theatre Quarterly, actor, director, playwright Jayoti Bose illustrated the bigoted mind-set by which female performers are dealt with in Group

Theatres saying " Of course people have thought about women in Bengali theatre. Do you know when? When your group has a very powerful and competent actress and you know that a play with a strong female character will succeed on account of her performance. Competent actresses have been used no doubt, but that is the end of it" [Basu, Jayoti; *On playing safe*; Anjum Katyal (ed); Nine Lives - Special issue of Seagull Theater Quarterly; 29/30 June 2001].

Since the inception of the Group Theatre till it has been considered as a movement, women have been regarded in an unfair way. It seems absolutely paradoxical that a fundamentally committed theatre convention, which brought into view many dramatic pieces where the core argument gyrated around feminist issues and interests, failed to impart equal opportunities to its lady performers in terms of partaking and "...female characters in a play are mere 'types' as envisioned by the male playwright/author. Here the woman becomes formulated in a particular role, coloured by a man's perception. The same thing is repeated in the plots of plays, or even in the character of men in plays - all are mere permutations and combinations of familiar types" [Basu, Jayoti; *On playing safe*; Anjum Katyal (ed); Nine Lives - Special issue of Seagull Theater Quarterly; 29/30 June 2001.

During the initial stage of the Group Theatre movement the male artists of Group Theatres typically kept on induced by "a passion for theatre" and extremely trivial financial requirements. [Bandyopadhyay, Samik; *After Professionalism; The Drama Review*; Vol. 15 No.2; 1971] Generally the Group Theatres did not disburse any amount to the male performers except the travelling expenditures, whereas female artists were regularly 'hired' on specific sums per show as many of them were depended on theatre for victuals. However, many woman performers have broached complaints of being handled in a disgraceful way because of the naive self-forfeits by their male counterparts. They were hardly ever recommended for full membership of the groups with rights to hold offices and attend organizational meetings with which they acted for decades. [Ganguly, Usha; *Colloquium Two: Women in Group Theatre*; Anjum Katyal (ed); Translated by Sudeshna Banerjee; Bangla Group Theatre Special issue of Sagull Theatre Quarterly 27/28 Dec. 2000]

Therefore these female artists of Group Theatre had least little scope to play significant role in affairs of formulation of strategy and guiding principle and the ideological orientation of the Groups they were associated for long. To bypass such unfairness and inequity by male colleagues of the Group Theatre, a sizeable number of lady artists chose to serve the group free while supporting their earning through part time consignments like performing in office club theatre, recreational groups, radio and TV. [Bandyopadhyay, Samik; *Gananatya Theke Group Theatre*; Natyachinta Vol. 9 No.10; 1982]

Whilst passion for acting and longing for self- manifestation were commonly the prime intention for several of these female artistes to join organisations of Group Theatre which was characteristically presided over by patriarchal standards, for few others of them, theatre became a dais for acquiring a required livelihood, although time and again irregular. [Gupta, Khetra (ed); *Banglar Ranga Mancha (Suchanaparba)*; Sahitya Sangi; Kolkata; 2008] Behind the increased participation of female performers in Group Theatre during early 1980s and 1990s, ideological commitment played major role. Although they lacked proper training and experience, it was the ideological zeal that played havoc as a dynamic in the participation of women in Group Theatres in notable numbers. However, it is only during the early couple of years of twenty first century that only some woman practitioners have appeared impressively enough at the vanguard position of the Group Theatre movement.

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CHAPTER 5

Imperatives of New Liberal Economy as a Crucial Input in the Construction of Women's Issues through Theatre.

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has been connected with basic spheres of transformation in Economics, Market, Politics, Language, Culture, and Traditions, which have headed towards a marked makeover of the global order. At the echelon of political process, the deregulation and liberalization has directed to an obvious attenuation of the state and has also led to a common postulation that every state, all the where, is required to turn out to be democratic and assure good governance over their populace. In the field of economy, globalization has been linked with the approach towards escalating non-interventionism on the part of the state out and out deregulation. This has rippled in unbound trade and more delimited labour, commodities and fiscal markets. The fundamentals of the New Economic Policy which have generated accredits to the advancements of Indian economy comprises Privatization, Globalization, Modernization and enhancing efficiency and expansion rate. Globalization, in India, is by and large in use to denote 'amalgamating' the national economy with the world economy.

Globalization, beyond hesitation, has presented incredible opportunities. But what has been the bearing of globalization upon women? Scholars and academics remain divided over the issue, with a faction accentuating the advantageous facets of globalization and claiming that women in general have gained from developments in the global economy, while some other faction emphasize upon the negative impressions of globalization on the whole which rope in, if is not restricted to, a refutation of rights of women, even to an extent of basic human rights.

As the deep rooted impact of Globalization and the New Liberal Economy in the traditional social structure and ethos, the positions of women in India have been shifting and they are at present up-and-coming from the previous traditions into a pristine epoch of autonomy and rights. The evidence is visible ubiquitously; the assertions of women is ever more heard in Parliament, Courts and even in the streets. Regrettably, women in India are typically ignorant of their rights due to illiteracy and the domineering social rituals and institutions. Since generations India remained a civilization where the male is exceedingly venerated. Ladies, get incredibly diminutive status in society, here. The fall out of globalization has not been able to bring much the desired alteration in the standings of women in India, especially from the unorganized segment. Furthermore, they have been acutely impaired by unemployment, prolonged toiling hours, displacements, family split ups, child labour, etc. While a section of women have come to benefit from the intensification of foreign capital investment, the large chunk of common women could manage no place to earn wage except the informal sectors.

Globalization, therefore, remained a mixed blessings as far as regards to the situation of women in India. In one half, most of the women find themselves shredded off from the state sponsored welfare policies of social security, benefits of subsidy, shield of labour rights etc., while on the other half, there were expanding scopes and potentials of better educational facilities and job openings at the transnational level that would reached the privileged few. Many commentators worry further, that globalization, in the form of assimilation of a nation into global society, will intensify gender discrimination. It may cause detriment to women economically through discrepancy supportive of male workers, expropriation of women in informal labour, exploitation of women by out and out low-wage, and penury by loss of conventional basis of income. It has caused further damage to women politically through segregation from the national and local political processes and has caused extreme harm to them culturally through seizure of individuality and independence to a tremendously hegemonic global culture.

The adversative effect of globalization upon women's living, employment, health, etc has been brought to focus by several national and international study reports. Majority of these testimonies indicate the amplification of brutality against women; worsening of the health mechanism; proliferation in households headed by female as their men lost employments; attenuation in supply of resources to women; mounting total labour hours for women etc. Simultaneously, globalization has released wider communication channels and fetched new business corporations and international outfits into India. This imparts prospects not only for employed women, but also for those women who are appropriating themselves for a bigger portion of the personnel. New jobs offered higher pay for women, opportunities for promotion got enhanced, which, in turn, raised the self-confidence and brought about empowerment among women. This resulted in gender equality at the workplace, somewhat Indian women have been striving to achieve throughout their whole lives. Globalization has already uprooted the age-old outlooks towards women, encouraged and acknowledged them towards social leadership and has seeded a psyche by which they can express their own take on society, family, institutions and processes.

The contemporary improvement of technology proposes the potentials for women to correspond more uninterruptedly by means of networking both within and across countries. Computer aided information analysis system and user-friendly internet technology are being progressively more utilized by women at regular basis. The industrious competence of women in India has amplified "through access to capital, resources, credit, land, technology, information, technical assistance and training so as to raise their income". [Jaiswal, Ajit; *An Anthropological Vision on the Impact of Globalization on Indian Rural Women: A Critical Reality*; Arts and Social Science Journal; Vol. 5, Issue 2; July, 2014] This has guaranteed improved nutrition, better education and health care for them and has evolved their status within the household. The emancipation of women's capability is indispensable in the

contravention of the vicious cycle of poverty so that women can have their share in the benefits of socio-economic development and in the products of their own labour. While globalization brought forth a renewed identity for the new-age women in India, the image building of such potentially heightened woman as individual has undergone steady transformations in the realm of performing art since 1990s. As a matter of fact, the visible and celebrated change in the attributes of the performing art has altogether led to a revised methodology in envisioning women's issues on stage. However, modifying drifts in performing arts seldom exhibit themselves with vivid brusqueness. Usually they move stealthily and silently, distracting the stream of enduring traditions and rituals clandestinely but decisively. As the inexorable deluge of globalization stretched across the world in the last two decades of the Left Front rule in West Bengal, theatre as the major domain of performing arts here, too were swept, hurled from top to toe and thrown down, and devoid of notice by many, a quantity of the illustrious tributaries of performing traditions and systems of theatre had altered itinerary or, at times, been curbed vehemently. With hindsight on a few of these transformations, specifically in the sphere of Group Theatre's attempt to build the image of the new-age woman and issues related to their survival and aspirations, it may be worthwhile to scrutinize the creative enterprise of some acclaimed new-age women directors whose prominent aesthetic productions provide clues to understand some of the several ways in which globalization has influenced the Group Theatre activism on women's issues.

A minute assessment of the worldwide amusement industry, its background and stretches, would divulge finer specifics concerning the transformations steered by globalization. Steadfastly deep-rooted and unshakable in the notion of 'ever-increasing wealth of bits and pieces' by the prospects of international markets, globalization is forthright as regards to its fascination with bills and balances, turnovers and net takings. It would, therefore, appear as no flabbergast that even in the sphere of performing arts, the field that holds a testimony of generating alluring sale and money-spinning profit precincts, would be undoubtedly and effectively globalised. Thus, the reach variety of Group Theatre productions came into the

notice of multi-national corporations. Abandoned sponsorship and financial supports were extended to popular Groups who hold large scale sale of their productions across the nation and abroad. Telecom giant Hutchinson (Vodafone) invested millions in organizing Odeon Theatre Festival since 1995, ITC, the largest tobacco business house started sponsoring Rangyatra Theatre Festival prior to Hutch since 1992, Nandikar's own National Theatre Festival which started in 1994 were being backed by big business houses. Small scale sponsorships in multiple numbers throughout the state were being poured from multinational producers of liquor, soft drinks, cement, agro-chemicals, pharmaceuticals etc. Plenty of money were being offered to productions that would cast film and television actors performing live on stage. The craze for Bengali theatre was artificially pumped to a great extent. Of course, this was gradually replacing the hold of the ruling coalition in the state government over these Group Theatres who previously remained dependent on the government grants and accommodation in subsidized theatre halls to perform. There emerged a new set of young promising theatre intellectuals as actor, director, playwrights who started openly criticizing and questioning the Left Front government and the parties in the ruling coalition through their dramatic creations and in news media as well.

Globalization bring about its own series of contradictions. While in one hand, it searches for variety and miscellany to locate innovative constructs that may be made accessible for new and ever expanding markets, at the same time, it seeks a compromise between those assorted offerings with the designations, packaging and labels endorsed by global markets even to the cost of dropping their inimitable and distinctive identities and features. The thematic contents of Group Theatre productions, under the compulsion of choice of the sponsoring houses, were shifting from sending political messages to the audience towards depicting the value-crisis in middle class being performed in settings of 'drawing room drama'. Group Theatre movement gradually sacrificed its connections with the toiling mass and their struggle or politics at the center of the stage and became an industry of entertainment of attending middle class. The motives of propaganda and agitation

were pushed back to create larger space for the luxury of amusement. The saturated IPTA movement also lost its relevance amidst the glamorized theatre business that was expanding in the forms of repertories, company theatres, syndicates of theatre groups as brands (like the chain affairs of theatre under the branding of *Bratyajan* centering Bratya Basu, the noted actor, director, playwright of cinema, television and theatre world).

The imaginative and ingenious intellect is characterized by its faculty and talent to be matchless and idiosyncratic. Originality, consequently, appear from the unpretentious spontaneous aptitude of an artiste to be distinctive. In the contemporary globalised world, originality is enticed only till it can be used as unique selling point or USP. Thereafter, it is anticipated to gently correspond to the cut-out of promotion that are at present in vogue. Theatrical production on women's issues is no exception to this. With the advent of a perennial globalization and its tentacles in the Group Theatre culture in West Bengal, a potential makeover has been evident in the making of theatres on women' issues. Several women director, dramatist came to surface featuring the required USP while reflecting women's issues through their works. They were no Catholics to conform their outlook with the patriarchal attitude and set up of Group Theatres, rather they challenged it stoutly.

5.2. PERSPECTIVES OF WOMEN'S THEATRE IN WEST BENGAL DURING THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

Amongst the stimulating ambience of the mid to late-1990s, socially relevant theatres based on women's issues embark on to open the way forward. Several tabooed and proscribed issues discovered manifestation and articulation through theatre. By the mid-1990's, women's question loomed large in Bengal's theatre scene in a diversified language and presentation. In the form of the experimental theatre, the agenda of the women's movement shaped the content of plays by prominent Group Theatres in West Bengal. It sought a definition and found several characteristics, as Anita Singh

puts it in her essay *Performing Resistance, Re-dressing the Canon: The Emergence of Indian Feminist Emergence of Indian Feminist Theatre* -

- "It was as much a political enterprise as a theatrical one. It was progressive in spirit and it questioned canons and conventions. It questioned Phallogocentrism and Phallogocentrism. It was an Avant Garde movement. It deconstructed patriarchal metaphysics. Like the postmodern with which it was closely associated some might say it was but one branch on the postmodern tree.
- Production, script and dramaturgy in which art was inseparable from the condition of women as women; performances (written and acted) that deconstructed sexual differences and thus undermined patriarchal power.
- Scripting and production that showcased transformation as a structural and ideological replacement for recognition and conception of women characters in the subject position.
- A womanist play had dissident potential that would 'open up the negotiation of meaning to contradictions, circularity, multiple viewpoints.' [Keyssar, Helene; *'Introduction' in Feminist Theatre and Theory: Contemporary Critical Essays*; Helene Keyssar (ed); Macmillan; London; 1996).
- It challenged the notion of representation/focused on the politics of representation and exposed how meanings are socially produced and historically conditioned." [Singh, Anita; *Performing Resistance, Re-dressing the Canon: The Emergence of Indian Feminist Emergence of Indian Feminist Theatre*; IIS University Journal of Arts; Vol.3(1); Jaipur; 2014]

There has been consistent efforts on the part of leading women directors, actors, playwrights to form productions and scripts that was recognized by realization of women as women, plays that mediated in the imaginary space as actual persons using factual experiences, this renovated the theatre stage into a liminal space for learning. The awareness acquired became the building blocks for action in real socio-political life to organize and investigate the elements of struggle against domination, and rehearses more egalitarian relations.

For women scriptwriters, developing of scripts for theatre has been, in many ways, to remonstrate against the institution of power that has been highly derogatory to women's claims so far and also against all conformist and conservative thinking. In this effort, they have also spot the fact that since long back classical myths, legends, parables, allegories incessantly resurface in discrete and diverse forms determining the discourse and dissertation of literature in a extremely idiosyncratic way to be recognized and exploited. To countenance myth as a woman playwright is to repeat and review one's own conquer and colonization through the substances his/her culture respects as powerful and primary. But to challenge and confront the myth is to act as protagonist. Our theatre practices, since earliest spells resolute on a single protagonist. In the realm of Group Theatre productions from 1990s onward, plays written by women challenge the traditional Indian artistry in which a single central character stick to a linear scheme by converging on an ensemble, thus staging the feminist conviction that the cluster is more vital than the discrete individual. Whereas the Indian classical dramatic constructions relied on concealed authors, the offshoots of feminist theatre in Bengal often fetches in women's narratives in an autobiographical fashion.

While more women artists started operating as directors in Group Theatres during these period compared to published playwrights, the record is still fairly limited. And though these women directors had a unique take and a exclusive affiliation to the term "feminism," there is certain common traits of their political and aesthetic choices. Along a few noteworthy exceptions, these women purposely refuse to be

labeled as feminists. Captivatingly, women who regard their most important role is political or academic rather than aesthetic, feel no hesitation to be designated as feminists, yet these women directors of Group Theatre producing new-age Bengali theatres on women's issues is criticized for "characters [that] don't come together . . . narrative [that] does not converge . . . no closure" [Subramanyam, Laxmi; *Muffled Voices: Women in Modern Indian Theatre*; Lakshmi Subramanyam (ed); Shakti Books; New Delhi; 2002]

There are, however, a many female directors who stubbornly contradict to agree that any rank of conscious gendered elucidation is exhibited in their creative ventures. Usha Ganguli, for example, opines that "in directing there is no question of male or female" [*Colloquium Two : Women in Group Theatre* in Seagull Theatre Quarterly; 27-28 December; 2000]. By and large, perhaps the women who holds definite claims that their femininity does not impinge on their work, are also anxious about being hard-pressed to the precincts by the tag of 'woman' director. As Usha emphasizes, "Male directors were never differentiated by gender, they were just directors" [Katyay, Anjum; *A Coming Together ; An Affirmation ; A Sharing - Kulavai : A Report*; Seagull Theatre Quarterly; 9 April, 1996]. Sohag Sen, however, has a somewhat separate standpoint, considering that in the task of directing, she gesticulates off the boundaries of gender to cope up the work with both men and women. She contend that "when you direct, you have to really enter into the male psyche while working with a male actor. And you can only really enter into it by understanding his maleness" [Chowdhry, Neelam Mansingh; *Unpeeling the Layers within Yourself : A Dialogue with Sohag Sen*; Seagull Theatre Quarterly; 17 March, 1998].

For these women directors, sexual categories becomes elastic when it becomes a constraint on their faculty to accomplish what they wish to achieve. More willingly, then, viewing this as complete rebuff of their distinctiveness as female directors, one can see this expression as audacious undertakings of women who repudiate to allow gender typecast or textual hegemony to confine their role they assume and

performance they seek to expose. These women directors have earned accomplishments in a largely male occupied enterprise through cautious, meticulous and deliberate resolutions about when to pledge to prevailing cultural discernments of gender model and when to challenge them. They launch spaces of teamwork where other men and women can add a bit to the final performative content, and they highlight irregular sequence of events in the content that echo their own encounters of “disjointed space in which they have to negotiate their roles on multiple levels” [Jain, Kirti; *Different Concerns, Striking Similarities*; Theatre India; 3 May 2001].

The dramaturge and director endow with the composition and the broad-spectrum prospects for the character an actress performs, yet, to a great extent, the actress of her own resolves the details and essentials of the embodiment of that role. Conceivably, then, the task of the woman as actress is almost equivalent with her experiences from her daily life. In both spaces she is inhibited by ascendant compositional forms, but she is competent to locate medium in creation of her personal preferences about the particulars. As a matter of fact, a lot of actresses perceive added creative possibilities in performing than in developing scripts as authors or directing. As Indrani Maitra, an actress from Rangrup, a leading Group Theatre under the direction of Seema Mukhopadhyay, remarks, “The director’s creativity ends when the production of the play is complete. But an actress rediscovers her identity anew every day. She can act in a new guise every day. Which is why I have never felt that I wanted to be a director” [*Colloquium Two : Women in Group Theatre*” in Seagull Theatre Quarterly; 27-28 December; 2000]. Thus, for an actress acting in a role of a woman piled with issues that a common woman, anywhere in this country experiences, each day is an opportunity to her to alternate preferences and re-present the characters afresh to newer population of audience. Another actress, Suneepa Dutta, from Rangakarmee that performs under the direction of Usha Ganguly, underlines that the actress only has the scope and advantage of interrelate directly with her addressees and viewers, which the director and playwright is deprived of, by means of which an actress can mould the audience

to retort emotionally. [*In Her Own Words: Actresses Speak*"; Seagull Theatre Quarterly; 9 April, 1996]

In fact, since the early years of 1990s, there was a steady flow of actresses in Group Theatres throughout the state who were graduating in higher studies or seeking formal education in dramatics in universities, in search of their individual identity and liberty to speak free about their love and languish through theatre. This self-conscious generation of women activists retained their professional approach while getting associated with this Group Theatres. Although, they were not dependent on such earnings, they considered their association with the theatre as spending quality time. They were not much ideologically trained to expose themselves as feminist, nor they were willing to befit to any party-politics as such. Majority of these youngsters took acting as a career and least social commitment, yet their joining can't be limited a cultural extracurricular activity towards perfecting the important mechanism for developing communication, self-reliant thinking and qualities like accountability and self-assurance.

Usha Ganguli is one of leading figures of Group Theatre movement who has sincerely taken up and celebrated the spirit of feminine alternatives to life and art through her direction and adaption, although she discards the stamp of 'feminist' that could possibly turn up with her selection of female-centric themes and methods of storytelling. She strongly have faith in "the liberation of women and their freedom, and . . . trying . . . [her] best as a person, as a teacher and as a theatre worker to work towards that," but she emphatically rebuffs any recognition with feminism [Katyal, Anjum; *Rudali: From Fiction to Performance*; Seagull Books; Calcutta; 1997]. Usha renounces feminism because to certain degree she does "not want to deny the role of men. I believe that it is by working with both the masculine and the feminine that we will, at a point, reach harmony" [*Colloquium Two : Women in Group Theatre*" in Seagull Theatre Quarterly; 27-28 December; 2000]. For her, any over-conscious affiliation to feminism may risks in isolate or estrange men.

"The fact that this female protagonist figures out how to support herself in a world in which the odds are stacked against her speaks to Ganguli's respect for independent, wily, strong women. While she may not be a feminist, her commitment to telling women's stories demonstrates that a rejection of feminism does not result in a rejection of women's issues. Rather, it allows her to construct her own relationship to gender and the discourses surrounding gender in a modern Indian context." [Lieder, K. Frances; *Not-Feminism: A Discourse on the Politics of a Term in Modern Indian Theatre*; Asian Theatre Journal; Volume 32, Number 2, Fall 2005]

5.3. ENCOUNTERS WITH SOME WOMAN DIRECTORS OF GROUP THEATRE AND THEIR CREATIVE JOURNEY.

A patriarchal sphere of influence few years back, Group Theatre is receptive in contemporary era. Till some years ago, women were just actors in the group theatres with some exceptional few to take up organizational truncheon. But things have changed since then as women are increasingly taking the centre stage. At least two generations of enthusiastic women directors has appeared in West Bengal during the Left Front Rule to aesthetically handle political themes with flamboyance and demystifying classics with confidence. Their approaches and spectacular contributions marks the beginning of a new age in Bengali theatre by the women, of the women and for the women. This is an bright and optimistic appraisal of the condition of the Group Theatre scene in West Bengal, to which directors like Usha Ganguli, Jayati Bose, Seema Mukhopadhyay, Sohag Sen, Ishita Mukhopadhyay, Abanti Chakraborty, Trina Nileena Banerjee, Arpita Ghosh, Adrija Dasgupta, Shuktara Lal and many others, has been making remarkable record for more than the last quarter of a century.

5.3.1. USHA GANGULI

Usha Ganguli is an eminent figure in theatre clique in India. She has been central persona the Group Theatre named Rangakarmee, formed in 1976, which generally

performs in Hindi. Usha was born in Jodhpur and moved to Kolkata in the 1950s. A lover of dance as trained in Bharat Natyam, Usha joined the Sangit Kalamandir Theatre Group while pursuing her profession as a teacher of Hindi Language and Literature at Bhawanipore Education Society College. Dissatisfied with the amateurish and slapdash working of the group, she ultimately decided to found Rangakarmee. As a total performer to dance, acts and direct, she started directing in the 1980s and soon her vigorous grandeur and regimented ensemble work with young, sizeable casts spearheads Hindi theatre in Kolkata, enticing Hindi-speaking and Hindi-knowing audiences in Bengal.

Rangakarmee's landmark productions under her direction include *Mahabhoj* in 1984 based on Mannu Bhandari novel, Ratnakar Matkari's *Lokkatha* in 1987, *Holi* by playwright Mahesh Elkunchwar in 1989, *Rudali*, her own sensationalize version of a story by Mahashweta Devi in 1992, *Himmat Mai*, an adaptation of Brecht's "Mother Courage" in 1998 and especially *Court Marital* written by playwright Swadesh Deepak in 1991. *Beti Aayee* written by Jyoti Mahapeshkar in 1996. She has written a play *Kashinama* (2003), based on a story from the Kashinath Singh's classic work "Kashi Ka Assi" and an original play *Khoj* in 1994. Her solo performance in her own original play *Antatyatra* in 2002 was very well received, and has elicited wide debate.

The themes Usha often venture to highlight is about social unfairness and mistreatments with the defenceless. Within these broader spectrum, gender inequality finds theatrical expressions through her works for which she has been honoured with innumerable awards including the Safdar Hashmi Puraskar from Uttar Pradesh Sangeet Natak Academy in 1999 and the national Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1998. Usha Ganguli is profoundly apprehensive about the manipulation and abuse of women and many of the dramas she has directed, produced and performed stands to this commitment.

Not negligible among the accomplishments of Usha Ganguli is her faculty to translates across the Indian languages and showcase those productions in every corner of the country. This is a momentous development in the country today, an acknowledgment and commemoration of the multilingual temperament of Indian society. Aparna Dharwadkar strappingly asserts her observations in this regard "Multilingualism and circulation in their post-independence forms have had a pioneering effect on dramatic authorship, theatre theory, and the textual life of drama. Playwrights who conceive of themselves as literary authors write with the anticipation that the original text of a play will soon enter the multilingual economy of translation, performance, and publication. [...] All these playwrights construct authorship and authority as activities that must extend across languages to sustain a national theatre movement in a multilingual society. [...] Thus, for both authors and audiences, the total effect of active multilingualism and circulation is to create at least four distinct levels for the dissemination and reception of contemporary Indian plays – the local, the regional, the national, and the international" [Dharwadkar, Aparna; *Women, Authorship, and Contemporary Indian Theatre*; Nukkar Vol. 1, no. 35-36; 2007].

5.3.2. JAYATI BOSE

Jayati Bose is a reputed drama actor and has remained active on stage from the mid 1970s. As director, Jayati Bose directed a number of plays such as *Protibimbo* in 1985, *Baki Itihas* in 1987, *Robot Kupokat* in 1996, *Jhakkas* in 1991, *Bhagabati Gai* in 1989, *Amio Superman* in 1995 and, of course, *Care Kori Naa* in 1993, which is undoubtedly her most successful work. Her abiding contribution has to be the introduction of Grips' theatre in Bengali. Her group, Sutrapat, always stayed on very freely ordered. May be there is hierarchy in the group, but certainly there was no patriarchy.

As Jayati was admitted to school at Shantiniketan at the age of 10, she had great opportunities to come across several forms of performing art theatre being the most of it. In 1974 she for the first time encountered the Group Theatres in Kolkata. She

felt the activities within and around theatre, although a sincere affair, was also ensuing abundant delight. She also retrieved into the large, broad external world (normally the domain of men) by means of theatre. Though she never ideologically pledge to communism or any such Left political ideals, Jayati become skilled at the art of aphorism through theatre. In Theatre Jayati enjoyed the scope of discovering and rejoice her quite unique individuality and sagacity of self-hood. She accents the reality behind her expulsion from Theatre Workshop under the direction of veteran theatre director Ashok Mukhopadhyay and how at that point she planned to frame Sutrapat, her own group as at this one peak of moment her life and theatre seemed to to her to have merge as one, and she had to take up a directorial role both in her theatre and her personal life.

As director, Jayati emphasizes that an actor must pay attention to nous of timing to produce momentous progression in the act, as she considers theatre as a cooperative rhythmic enterprise of interactions between the director, the actor and the people working in backstage. She combines theatre and life to expose that both has to be looked at in their respective totality. Thus when the theatre speaks about a woman's misery and pain or joy and success it should reflect as an amalgamation of many social-cultural-economic-political-religious and so like elements. A director delving in any content that speaks of women should not be therefore trapped within the limits of feminist framework, rather should strive to be holistic in approach. Any limited directorial vision is bound to wrongly portray on stage a content which is holds enormous possibilities.

With hindsight at the 70's, Jayati Bose talks about the weight given to content of a theatrical production which was an indicator of Leftist ideological impressions on the contemporary theatre and of course, the absolute weight of the director in the making of the theatre. This had created a sense of dissatisfaction with the traditions of Group Theatre movement as an artist. Only during that period she encountered Grips Theatre at a workshop in Pune; it was the pioneering theatre movement worldwide to socio-critically contend with the lives and living circumstances of

broods and tender age people and to look at the paradox of modern life through their eyes and incorporate this in unique comical and musical plays. She immediately decided to take up the methodology and to apply when she read the script of *Care Kori Na (1993)*. It was altogether a path breaking initiative in Bengali theatre to look at the complex city life of Calcutta through the eyes of a young girl. The actors were, however, adult enough to execute the task of acting like a tendering innocent boys and girls. The play's spectacular success can be attributed to the fact that it captured the spirit of the times.

Though Jayati admits that certain feminine perception and consciousness of personal life might be reflected in the works of a woman director, she contemplates it rather restrictive, being branded as a woman director. She does not think it essential for a woman director to continuously engage in categorically women's questions, yet she bewails the fact that in Bengali theatre she has rarely perceived a serious exercise and performance of a obvious female angle at work.

5.3.3. SOHAG SEN

Sohag Sen's involvement with theater and associated forms spans a length of approximately four decades. In actual fact, she is the second senior woman director after Tripti Mitra in the history of Group Theatre in West Bengal. As a thespian, she underway her vocation following the supervision of the legendary mentor, Utpal Dutta, in the year 1969. Since then she has sustained to mesmerize the audience with vast range of characters, many of whom she played in dramas of her own direction. She has to her directorial acclaim plays by dramaturges as diverse as Mahesh Elkunchwar, Nirmal Verma, Satish Alekar and Botho Strauss. She started her career as a director in 1978 and had formed her own Group Theatre called Ensemble in 1983. Ensemble has produced several highly praised and applauded plays to its credit, including *Party* in 1979 , *Uttarpurush* in 1983 and *Mahaniroan* in 1986. Ensemble also maintains the unparalleled reputé of launching prominent

playwrights from Indian over and above European theatre to the theatre stages in West Bengali for the first time.

Sohag has always emphatic on the method of theatre workshop as primary to the orderliness of acting hunt in the group, and therefore she prepared an elaborate design of workshop from the purpose of assisting an actor's input to the drama. The course includes comprehensive conversation on the text, subtext, characters and stimulus, thus making the productions a cooperative endeavor, based on the resolution between the director and the actor, which attested the workshop as crucial in imparting fundamental training to the actors as well. The method evolved in the course of time to have produced multiple 'Workshop Productions' under her direction like *Asahay* in 1989, *Natakiya* in 1992, *Sirir Niche* in 1995 and *Rog* in 1999 – again a pioneering step in the history of Group Theatre in West Bengal.

Her offerings to theatre has been acknowledged and acclaimed by many honour, rewards and accolades, including the Paschim Banga Natya Akademi Award for Theatrical Excellence and the Lebedov Award. Sohag Sen is a visiting faculty at the Rabindra Bharati University and the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute and she is also the Head of the Department of the Direction Course in Kolkata Film and Television Institute.

5.3.4. SEEMA MUKHOPADHYAY

Another versatile director of Group Theatre, Sima Mukhopadhyay completed her Master's degree in Drama (Acting) from Rabindra Bharati University, Jorasanko, to have earned Gold medal from the university and remained one of the founding member of Rang-Roop, where she directs dramatic productions since 1993. Earlier, she remained associated and has acted with many leading Theatre Groups of Kolkata, like Sanglaap Kolkata, Chetana, Gandhar, Anya Theatre, Pancham Vaidic, Pashchim Banga Natya Academy and Rang-Roop.

Sima holds an illustrious career as dramaturge to have composed twelve full length dramas, namely *Andhakarer Rang* in 1985, based on a short story by Subodh Ghosh, *Bikalpa* in 1989, *Bhanga Boned* in 1992, *Je Jan Aachhey Majhkhane* in 1995, *Panu Shanti Cheyechhilo* in 1998 based on a short story by Rama Nath Roy, *Aaborto* in 1999, *Shunyapat* in 2000, *He Mor Debota* in 2004 based on the short story of Debarshee Saroghi, *Mukhosh Nritya* in 2006 based on a short story by Bhagirath Misra, etc. She also has written number of one-act plays for children like *Sukhi Rajputtur* 2001 after a short story by Oscar Wilde, *Bholanather Darbar* in 2001, *Bhasmasur* in 2001, *Emontao Hoy* in 2002, *Kuber-er Bhojsabha* in 2002, *Budhdhir Kawl* in 2002 etc. Besides she writes for All India Radio and Doordarshan regularly.

Smt Sima Mukhopadhyay has directed several full length dramas while working with Rang-Roop which includes *Boli* in 1994 a play written by Tripti Mitra, *Je Jan Aachhey Majhkhane* in 1995, *Aalor Phulky* in 1997 (in joint direction with Krishna Kishore Mukherjee), *Aaborto* in 1999, *Shunyapat* in 2001, *Sesh Raksha* in 2005, a noted play by Rabindranath Tagore, *He Mor Debota* in 2006, *Mukhosh Nritya* in 2006, *Byaram Biram* in 2007. Sima has truly cultivated the spirit of women in local sense of the term, and did not subscribe much beyond ethnic flavour Bengal at the core of her creations. She also has directed few one-act dramas, namely *Sukhi Rajputtur* in 2001, *Bholanather Darbar* in 2001, *Bhasmasur* in 2001, *Emontao Hoy*, *Kuber-er Bhojsabha*, and *Budhdhir Kawl* all in 2002.

As recognitions to her expanded creative journey Sima Mukhopadhyay has received Ritwik Ghatak Smriti Puraskar as the best actress for her performance in *Clown* in 1985. She was awarded as the best actress by Pashchim Banga Natya Academy, for her performance in *Bikalpa* and *Balidan* in 1992. She also own the prestigious Dishari Puraskar given by the Journalist Association of Bengal for *Panu Santi Cheyechhilo* in 2000 as the best playwright. Smt. Sima Mukhopadhyay received Kalakar Award as the best director, in 2000-2001 for *Aaborto*.

5.3.5. ISHITA MUKHOPADHYAY

Vigorously involved in Group Theatre activities for more than three decades, Ishita Mukhopadhyay has paved her way as one of the leading theatre directors of her times. Her journey in theatre started since she was an undergraduate student at Jadavpur University. She was at once pulled towards theatre and directed to produce her first play when she was a college-going young lady. As a matured director, she prepares her theatre as a woman to endure upon her creation a responsiveness and susceptibility that comes from her experience of life as a woman. She holds very well-rounded observations about Group Theatre, the sustainable economy of theatre and the dare to reflect political views in theatre, however she also reacts as she observes that it is not always feasible to be overt or direct and anterior with political agenda, if women's issues are considered as one, for a host of reasons. During three decades of her activism in Group Theatre, Ishita has directed a horde of plays of which *Kamalkamini* in 1978, *Ghar* in 1984, *Jaan-E-Kolkatta* in 1999, *Khela Bhangar Khela* in 2000, *Kallu Mama* in 2004, *Ora Tinjon* in 2005 and *Agnijatak* in 2007 are worthy of special mention.

Her directorial debut was an acclimatization of *The Room* by Jean Paul Sartre. She always preferred to be a playwright and director of drama and never a thespian. Her group Ushnik was founded in 1984 and performed the Sartre adaptation designated as *Ghar* in the same year. She welcomes the plan of workshop-based theatres provided the script demands so. Ishita finds herself as progressively more attracted to the core issue of the inherent philosophy of every theatre. She is deliberate as she conveys a conspicuous feminine point of view in her creations while she endeavours to rejoice her womanhood through her theatre. She is vibrant to opine about how substance, before appearance, is the central imperative to her and also about her preferences to craft in a manner where language becomes the instrument of understanding the mental attitude of the characters.

Ishita observes that there is growing tendency in Group Theatre activism now a days to produce and promote star thespians motivated and obsessed by the tenets of market economy and she finds nothing incorrect in theatre being considered as an occupation to make money. However, she strongly criticizes any attempt on the part of the theatre to allure popular taste by being dishonest in general or distorting any of the elements of theatre. Ishita blazes heavily on the happenings and observable facts of government grants being tainted and spoiled in certain activities of Group Theatre.

5.3.6. ABANTI CHAKRABORTY

Of the busiest female directors of Group Theatre Abanti Chakraborty has a special genre to produce classics on stage with their contemporary reflections. She was initiated into theatre in her early teens and since then if Shakespeare was an initial favourite, Sophocles became an obsession later. Abanti never thought of considering theatre as a career until she met noted Marathi director and a faculty member in Hyderabad Central University, Bhaskar Shivalkar, who familiarize her with the aesthetics of stage and drama. She was so overwhelmingly encouraged and gravitated towards theatre that within two years she was like a natural choice as the female lead in Anant Kulkarni's *Aarop*. Returning to Kolkata, she acted in productions like Arghya's *Simar*. But she always intended to cherish her instinct for direction. So, she made her debut in directorial with a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2003 where the performers were the hearing-impaired children from a special school of Hyderabad. *Tatri*, her second directorial drama was the produced in the following year.

At present she is directing classic European and American dramas with a Group Theatre named Aarshi. Her construals of Euripides's *Medea* in 2005, Ibsen's *Doll's House* in 2006 and O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* in 2007 have been highly appreciated. She is now designing to present Iliad by Homer on stage in eight hours in the line of Peter Brook's Mahabharata.

5.3.7. TRINA NILEENA BANERJEE

Trina Nileena Banerjee's, parents Salil and Arundhati Bandyopadhyay were busy actors on stage and was introduced to the stage of modern Bengali theatre at an age of twelve when her father told her to replace an actor in a production named *Khelaghar* produced by the Group Theatre called Theatron. While studying in Loreto College she made her first appearance as a director with Anton Chekov's play *Death of A Clerck*. In 2003, still as a student of Jadavpur University, she directed Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* under the banner of a group formed by the students of the university named Theatrician. It was quite well-received. Afterward Trina went to Oxford for two years to pursue her further studies. As she returned home, she was eager to direct preferred scenes from two of Tennessee Williams plays, *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 2006. Having a sound grip in the English language and literature, Trina was enthusiastic to connect forth an extensive audience. Thus she designed and directed *Mitrapuran*, a Vijay Tendulkar play translated by her father for Theatron in 2006. Her maiden appearance in the film Nisshabd directed by Jahar Kanungo contained her with best Actor's Award (Female) in the 7th Osian Film Festival. Yet she has found her best self in theatre to produce Rabindranath Tagore's ever significant *Raktakarabi* in 2007.

5.3.8. ARPITA GHOSH

In her college days, Arpita Ghosh, as a student of Scottish Church in the mid-1980s was enthralled by the theatrical dexterity of Smt. Saoli Mitra in the renowned *Nathabati Anathabat*, a Pancham Vaidic production. Arpita appropriated theatre earnestly in 1998 while joining a Group Theatre named Fourth Wall. In 2000 she got the major break to join Charyashram, a yearlong theatre training course administered by Pancham Vaidic. Within few years next, she was performing, scripting and directing Pancham Vaidic productions with Saoli Mitra as her mentor.

In 2003, Arpita's directorial debut was with two dramatic productions—a dramatised version of Sukumar Ray's absurd story *Ha-Ja-Ba-Ra-La* and the one-act *Antargata Agun*. In the next year, she performed in the lead female role of *Rajnoitik Hatya*, a paraphrase of Jean Paul Sartre's *Crime Passionnel* under the direction of Saoli Mitra. The guide and the scholar performed jointly in *Chandali* a production based on Rabindranath Tagore's literature in 2005. Yet it was *Poshu Khamar* in 2006, an adaptation of George Orwell's famous anti-totalitarian novel named *Animal Farm*, that proved Arpita as a leading director of recent trends of Bengali theatre. The production gathered quite a controversy in the background of the Left Front government's policy for procurement of agricultural lands for industry in Singur and Nandigram. In 2007 she has translated and dramatised Ronald Segal's much discussed to direct *Tokolosh*.

5.3.9. ADRIJA DASGUPTA

Adrija Dasgupta found the space to develop her dramatic potential at the Indian People's Theatre Association, Kolkata Branch since 1986. She made her appearance on stage in a role of the wife of scientist Otto Hann in a production called *Biswasghatak* that year. Thus started, her journey in the arena of theatre flourished further as she enrolled in the Drama department of Rabindra Bharati University in 1992. She got her major break through Bibhas Chakraborty's *Madhab Malanchi Kainya* in 1988. Besides the regular academic course work, she participated in number of suburban theatre productions before seeking admission in National School of Drama in 1995. After graduating from NSD she developed keen interest in direction and started working with several Group Theatres in and around Kolkata.

Thus Adrija got associated with groups like Sudrak and Ebang Ekalabya. She has conducted many theatre workshops for youngsters. She formed her own group Uhini in 2003 and produced her first directorial initiative in *Bijalibalar Mukti - Ekti Manabik Khonj*, based on Moti Nandy's novel, staged in 2004. In the following years Adrija directed *Dure Baje* in 2005 and *Tumi Daak Diyechho Kon Sakale* in 2007.

Tumi Daak Diyechho Kon Sakale was based on the real life of Smt. Keya Chakraborty and her fascinating journey in theatre who remained one of the foremost actresses of Group Theatre in the 1960s and 70s. In most of her productions Adrija has unleashed her feminist streak in strongest capacity.

5.3.10. SHUKTARA LAL

Theatre happened for Shuktara Lal through her father, drama critic Ananda Lal. While studying in Jadavpur University, she performed in all the theatrical productions her father used to produce. She also acted in the Theatrician group in the production of Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana* in 2003. Seeing her friend Trina Nileena Banerjee fitting into the director's role, she also gave a honest thought to direction. Meticulous study materials of world drama was readily available at her father's courtesy. After going through most of the available literatures she felt it suitable to direct Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* in 2004. She realized that there is scanty good scripts in Hindi literature to be produced on stage. Therefore, for her subsequent production with Theatrician in 2005, Shuktara opted Asif Currimbhoy's *Goa*. Within months after premiering *Goa*, she went to New York to engage in her Masters in Performance Studies. As she returned in 2007, she started working with Sanved, a social N.G.O, to act in theatre as a mechanism for psychotherapy and empowerment of battered and harmed women. She has also pursued research on the politics of Manipur while on the production front, Shuktara has staged a bi-lingual production of Tagore's *Arupratan*. She dreams to bridge the blinkered segregations parting the audience of Bengali, English and Hindi theatre in West Bengal.

This is, in no sense, a complete or comprehensive discourse about the women theatre makers in West Bengal, neither I claim that the study reflects the proper width as it does not mention even a few of the women directors, playwrights or actors in districts beyond the mega-city district. Yet I feel this should be done as a theme of an independent study to enquire into the field of creative endeavor of the women directors of Group Theatre in West Bengal. My study, although has a different focal

area, has highlighted the contributions of women theatre makers to note at least two facts, first being the recent growing trend of more and more independent, liberal, educated, articulated generation of women activists to have taken their deserved position within the frameworks of Group Theatre movement in West Bengal gradually substituting typically orthodox hierarchy of male inside the groups and are speaking up fluently what they wish to express in course of their creations; secondly, although their contributions have, in cumulative aspect, brought under the spotlights of proscenium the experience of womanhood as they bear by building theatres on women's issue, they do not agree much to confine their identity as feminist theatre activists and designate such a card rather out and out limiting.

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CHAPTER 6

Her Stories – Otherwise Told : Scope of Alternative Viewpoints on Women’s Issues in the Contemporary Bengali Theatre.

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Group Theatre's effort towards building dramatic production around women's issues has, therefore, remained an area of ambiguity in West Bengal. While there was a genuine underlying demand within the Group Theatre movement to replace the patriarchal ethos and modes of operation inside organizations and drawing conclusions to theatrical production as both these aspects of Group Theatre movement was found to be highly influenced by the Leftist political bias during the early phase of Left Front rule in the state, surprisingly enough, when the influence of globalised market economy, in the latter half of the Left Front rule, quite swiftly washed out the Leftist political prejudice in the Group Theatre culture, and more women with great spirit came to join the camps of theatre, formed their own associations to build theatre of their own, they simply rejected any conformity to feminism to such an extent that they denounced any identity in the limits of 'women director'.

In my opinion, they were caught into the same proverbial trap that 'theatre is a director's game altogether' which, definitely, maintains a hierarchy within the organization of theatre, the route to patriarchy, again. These powerful directors with brilliant creative enterprise were behaving like 'masculine' females within the group while building theatre. The power equations in the way they talk, the way they conceive an idea, the way they improvise, the suggestions they create through dramatic performances and conclusions they use to draw was quite similar to the one most feminist would complain to be detrimental in the previous milieu where the role of women were being marginalized.

Parimal Ghosh, however, pointed out that such a 'crisis' is basically fall into an area of concern he brands 'vadrlok culture and politics' and the commons remained at distance to observe. Gradual decay in the middle-class audience from the Group Theatre ventures, took the so called movement to a stage of vulnerability altogether. [Ghosh, Parimal; "*Where Have All the 'Bhadraloks' Gone?*" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 17 January 2004] Then, an obvious question appear, here, has Group Theatre productions during the Left Front rule in West Bengal failed to produce any serious social impact under the powerful influence of cross currents of Left ideology and imperatives of globalised market economy ? Before resorting to any serious conclusion, I would refer to an alternative theatre perspective that is striving to resolve women's issues through theatre activism following Augusto Boal's much discussed methodology of '*Theatre of the Oppressed*'. This has been identified as an apparatus of psycho-treatment of the weaker section of the population by making their issue public and expanding the scope for audience to interact rather than remaining static at their seats breaking the traditional barriers between the actor and viewers.

In *Forum Theatre* as the core of *Theatre of the Oppressed* designed, advocated and championed by Brazilian theorist & theatre practitioner Augusto Boal, performance is never limited to the proscenium. In this methodology of building theatre members of the team, by themselves, choose, build, and describe a social predicament from the experience of their everyday life. Combined with an aesthetic decoration the production is then taken before an audience who are to find a way out to the problem shown. Inactive spectators then become occupied 'spect-actors'. Spect-actors are then taken to the acting arena to enact and show the solutions they offer after debating with skilled activists on the practicability and achievability of the way out the spect-actors have suggested. Thus several individuals freely and in public slot in to tackle a social problem that has hitherto remained without facing a protest and breaks the profound silence to empower the victims to deny what they have long accepted as if a ill fate. This endeavor slowly but surely insinuate promises for emancipation from that subjugation in real life.

6.2. WOMEN-CENTRIC APPROACH OF THEATRE AND THE THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* techniques fundamentally concentrate on 'oppression'. *The Theatre of the Oppressed*, therefore, intend to draw attention to the varieties of harsh conflicts within society and produce them in dramatic form by which these issues could be argued and examined. The interactive nature of these modus operandi give emphasis to the conversation and exchange of views between the actor and the observers. The involvement of spectators generates the opportunity and leeway of defiance and challenge and the social capacity of victims of oppression to crack the conflicts increases within society.

As Berenice Fisher observed the application of *Theatre of the Oppressed* as a pedagogy in social work by the French and Dutch feminists, she noted that by 1980s *Theatre of the Oppressed* became a welcoming phenomenon in France in the context of family planning movement. Alongside the conventional educational programmes, social help groups used the Forum Theatre technique focusing the subjects like abortion and gynaecological care to empower the women to determine her right to reproduction and struggle against prevailing form of oppression they suffered due to lack of options when they get pregnant. The pedagogy of *Theatre of the Oppressed* also broaden the feminist consciousness in regards to family planning amongst the target population by enhancing their capacity to interact with greater number of women who remain victims of reproductive injustice. [Fisher, B; "*Feminist acts: Women, Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed* " in *Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy, Activism*; J. Cohen-Cruz (ed.); Routledge; New York; 1994]

Ans Pelzer, a sociologist and social activist from Amsterdam in Netherlands also found *The Theatre of the Oppressed* an effective technique of transforming life of those women who remain victim of assaults within their families. At a point of performance both the audience and the performers went beyond their pains to get stronger together and thought out different modes of survival. According to Pelzer,

"If you [the actors] had been through all this and could talk about it and make a play about it, then it must be possible to survive" [Fisher, B; *Feminist acts: Women, Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed* " in *Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy, Activism*; J. Cohen-Cruz (ed.); Routledge; New York; 1994]. In Netherlands the feminist activists has appropriated *Theatre of the Oppressed* for the similar two purposes alike France; firstly to bring transformation in the life of the women suppressed by social and family maladies by transforming there persona towards activism, and secondly to reach out to further number of women through the activists. As Pelzer observes, *The Theatre of the Oppressed* bestowed an aesthetic opening for women to expose their oppressions. Through this course of action, they develop a stronger will to encounter the oppression they confront and develop the genuine desperation, collectively, to seek way out to their oppressions.

The two distinct schemes of the *Theatre of the Oppressed* has been utilised in two different aspects of addressing the issues of coercion against women by the feminists, so far. While the Forum Theatre technique emphasised on expressing one's experience through dialogue and action that instigate the spect-actors to sensitize the issue and express their opinion to resolve the issue and debate on their suggestion to finalize the conclusion to which they also become a party to social activism in the line they finalised, the Image Theatre scheme is offered where the victims cannot express their subjugation in words, here the body of the performer creates the image of the domination that initiates the interaction and intervention of the audience to make a move towards creating collective solutions. Thus, *Theatre of the Oppressed* in such experiences becomes a consciousness-raising feminist activity. "His (Boal) *theatre of the oppressed* techniques promised to broaden the language of consciousness-raising to include non-verbal and not easily verbalized responses to oppression. His focus on acting seemed to bridge the gap between theory and action. His emphasis on working together to find a way to respond to oppression seemed to support cooperation in an educational setting" [Fisher, B; *Feminist acts: Women, Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed* " in *Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy, Activism*; J. Cohen-Cruz (ed.); Routledge; New York; 1994]

Cultural, political and economic issues other than the social oppression the women faces is also being addressed through the activism in line of the *Theatre of the Oppressed* which, in turn, seems to be a rich instrument of feminist response and activism through shared experiences, investigations, creative expression and collective solutions. As the *Theatre of the Oppressed* involves manifestation, conversation and decision-making via theatrical prospect, this amounts to the core and substance of the *Theatre of the Oppressed* in terms of designing strategies through 'performance'. The drama, itself does not struggle opposed to domination, it necessitates the intercession of the spectators who become stimulated as characters in a fight against repression. The dogmatic and authoritarian customs that add up to women's oppression are interrupted by the 'performing' act of the spect-actor, through defend against and tussling against the oppression publicized over the acting space or arena. The intrusion of the spect-actor by using her own body and performing tactics reconstitute the oppressive scenario in the script being presented on the stage to conclusive of resistance and retaliation, thus building a course of a radical inner dynamics constituted within performance. [Boal, Augusto; *Legislative theatre : Using performance to make politics*; Routledge; London & New York; 1998]

The interaction between the peer group of performers and the spectators broadens the scope of performance in either side of the acting arena, breaking the conceived wall between the performers and viewers the spectators come to the central stage to demonstrate the way the propose to encounter, fight back or challenge oppression. In this respect, the performance itself then become a metaphor in re-constructing the gender roles. The theatrical form by which the oppressed women learn to challenge or retaliate oppression, then signify the entire course as 'Performance as Resistance' that denounce at once any stereotype understanding of gender.

The *Theatre of the Oppressed* therefore, has the finest attributes to be a feminist project as it proves that the 'gender' is an artificial construct and can be consciously denied once radical stimulations are added to instigate the spirit of opposing the gendered roles sooner it becomes oppressive to an individual. Theatre of the Oppressed has

contributed in both the ways in aesthetics and activism, as a methodology of building theatre and pedagogy of feminist activism as and where required.

6.3. JANASANSKRITI CENTRE OF THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

Ever since 1991, Jana Sanskriti has moved itself extreme from conformist and typical Group Theatre activity to widen the exercise of Forum Theatre to distant and secluded rural areas of the Sunderban region in southernmost West Bengal. The journey of Jana Sanskriti started from a petite village named Badu in North 24 Parganas in 1985. Today it has at least 30 protectorate theatre units in West Bengal, mostly in the districts of South and North 24 Parganas and Purulia, 2 each in Tripura and Jharkhand, 1 each in New Delhi and Orissa. The units are active in lower income group populations and tribal localities. Units have also been created in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. These units get in touch with at least 2,00,000 spectators every year by means of their performances. Augusto Boal recognized, "Jana Sanskriti is the largest and the longest lasting forum theatre operation in the world". [Ganguly, Sanjoy; *Youth and Theatre of the Oppressed*; Palgrave Macmillan publication; New Delhi; 2010] Amongst these units in West Bengal, 9 are solely women participant theatre groups, perhaps there is no single example of theatrical activity at such a grassroots level that existed prior to Jana Sanskriti in India. "Anyone who wants to understand the usefulness of Boal's work and its possibilities, especially when removed from Boal's own projects and from its implementation in a first world context, needs to pay attention to Sanjoy Ganguly and Jana Sanskriti" [Ganguly, Sanjoy; *Jana Sanskriti: Forum Theatre and Democracy in India*; Routledge; New Delhi; 2010]

Since 1991 Jana Sanskriti had the opportunity to work with Augusto Boal, himself, on several openings. Jana Sanskriti was invited to participate in two major International Carnival of Theatre of the Oppressed respectively in Paris (1998) and in Rio de Janeiro (2002). Over three decades and more Jana Sanskriti has dealt with issues of social concern, more specifically, the issues which are troublesome and

detrimental to women and sometimes dangerous for their life, like domestic violence, premature marriage, flesh trade and women trafficking, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment at the workplace, maternal and physical health of woman, primary education, Anti-illegal liquor business, etc. by means of theatre. Since 2004 Jana Sanskriti has also been regularly organizing its festival Forum Theatres named Muktheadhara once in two years.

6.4. PERFORMANCES AND STRATEGIES OF THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED AT JANA SANSKRITI

"Everyone is aware of such banal facts. But the fact that they are banal does not mean they do not exist. What we have to do with banal facts is to discover – or try to discover – which specific and perhaps original problem is connected with them" [Foucault, Michael; *"The Subject and Power."* in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*; Dreyfus, H. and Rabinow, P. (ed.); The University of Chicago Press; Chicago; 1982]

"Seven Performances and forty six interventions took place while performing a theme on anti-liquor campaign in the initial week of launching the theme at Harinkhola, Bhairabinagar, Bajberia. That indicates the success rate and the power of Theatre of the Oppressed. Since our performances are based on themes that women very often encounter in their regular life, they do react and participate to suggest the way out. We chose to prepare plays on problems that are very much there at the domestic level where women face oppression from near relatives like husband or in-laws or sometimes from the near circles like neighbour or family friends. Women used to keep mum and could not find any escape from such breath-blocking experiences. Sooner they come to interact with our volunteers, they develop a sense of belongingness with us to share their experience. And that is the turning point" said Sanjay Ganguly, the mastermind and the headman of Janasanskriti Centre for Theatre of the Oppressed. [*Interview with Sanjay Ganguly, Director, Janasanskriti Centre for Theatre of the Oppressed*, by me; 12-March-2006; Sisir Mancha, Kolkata]

6.4.1. PERFORMING 'VIOLENCE'

Inside the feminist approach 'domestic violence' is the most cruel measures by way of which the patriarchal domination and subjugation of woman within the family is confirmed. Thrashing the wife is common type of domestic violence which is wide-spread in the society. An investigation of All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health (IIHPH) reports in 2006 that the integer of domestic violence cases have been increasing almost 20% during the last five years. In almost all these cases majority of the victim women remain silent. Many of them repent that they are helpless to bear the mental and physical torture. As the fallout of such silent tolerance, large number of women face severe psychological disorders. [*Indian Journal Hygiene and Public Health*; Vol. 2 Issue 2; December, 2006; p. 127]

As per the statistics of National Crime Record Bureau, West Bengal stood in the 2nd position in the country on the basis of recorded case of domestic violence in 2006. For obvious reasons, this is only the tip of the iceberg. In respect of women's death due to dowry demands, West Bengal remained in the 4th position in the country. From 2001 to 2006 the rate of domestic violence has increased upto 80%. In 2001 the registered cases of domestic violence in West Bengal were 3859 which grew upto 6936 in 2006. There has been horrifying increase in the dowry death rate upto 68% by 2006. Whereas in 2001 there were 265 dowry death cases to have recorded, as of 2006 he number almost doubled to reach 446 recorded cases. During 2005, according to NCRB Report, 19 women were murder by their husbands and in-laws and 160 events of domestic violence were recorded at various police stations in the state. According to National Crime Record Bureau, one in two women is the victim of some kinds of domestic violence. [*Report of the National Crime Record Bureau, 2006*; Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India available at ncrb.gov.in/StatPublications/ADSI/ADSI2006/ADSI2006-full-report].

In West Bengal, death for dowry, beating the wife (either in motive or in intoxicated condition), burning the bride, suicide by reason of frustration, regular mental torture and physical malice by husbands or/and in-laws, forced abortion or female

foeticide, female infanticide etc. are the very common types of domestic violence enormously spreading in the society.

Performance : “Vango Noishabdo” [Break the Silence]

Launched:: 28.11.2003, Duration :: 35 minutes, Location :: Domestic Lawn

Theme: Domestic Violence

Characters: Minati (Wife), Kamal (Husband), Chhaya (Mother-in-Law), Pintu (Son), and Ranu (Daughter)

Ranu returns home from the school gleefully as she was praised by her Head Master for securing the top rank in the sent up test for Madhyamik (school final) examination to find her mother, Minati, in the kitchen with a purple eye and bleeding forehead. She comes to know that her grandmother, Chhaya, threw the metal dish in which she has been served the meal, to Minati's forehead as Chhaya found a piece of long black hair in her food. As Ranu was trying to talk to Chhaya on the incident, she rather ordered her to clean the floor where foods were still scattered, instead of going to school. Only then Pintu, the elder brother of Ranu enters home hungry and demands food shouting as he was drunken. Chhaya welcomes her with soft words and tells that all the foods are now gone wasted by his mother and she also offers some puffed rice and coconut to him. He keeps on shouting while Ranu and Malati start cleaning the floor. Here the actors freeze and with a song a narrator appears before the audience to indicate the discrimination on the basis of gender, the worse impacts of country liquor on youth being rampantly sold at villages and emphatically the torture the village woman Minati faced. As the song was over, entered Kamal, the headman of the family. Ranu runs to her father to describe her success in the school, but he is indifferent rather upset due to the huge loss in the selling of crops he grows to a local agent. He was anxious how he will be able to repay his debts to the money-lenders. His mother, Chhaya comes to him with a glassful of water to offer and weeps on the misfortune and holds Minati responsible for all these as she indicates her as unlucky and advises Kamal to push her out of home and re-marry. Kamal accepts the proposal although his children were grown up. He then asks for food as he was hungry after a day full of harassment. His mother tells him the same fabricated story that the foods gone wasted. Being angry, Kamal runs to his wife to beat her like a creature. Chhaya joins him. Ranu wants to save her mother, but Pintu locks her in a room as he remembers Minati refused to pay any money to him for his leisure. The actors again freeze and the

narrator appears to ask the audience in his song what would they do in such a situation after pointing the causes of indebtedness of rural farmers, superstitions of lucky and unlucky, problems of polygamy etc.

Strategies Against Violence

On the first performance, the viewers felt quite uneasy and upset, at times some of them were trying not to follow what was being shown to them. They did not welcome the theme or the play as such as the play was like a mirror shown to them and was making a common event of their life into an issue to criticise and perform. Moreover, they were watching the show with their real in-laws, who were being convicted in the play. After four/five shows of the performance 'interventions' started appearing. Out of four interventions three wanted to replace Minati's position in three different solutions. And one intervention replaced Ranu's position to offer a solution.

Solution A. As Kamal entered the kitchen angrily to scold and beat his wife, he discovers that she was serving freshly cooked rice and curries to offer him for lunch with already injured eyes and forehead. He was all stunned. Ranu reveals the truth to him. This miraculous conclusion, however, exposes the compromising attitude of the viewer.

Solution B. As her man pounced upon her with cruelty and Minati was helpless to resist, suddenly there entered the women of neighbouring household to rescue her and the truth was brought before everyone by weak and starving Minati. The neighbours promise to stand besides her as and when required and warned Kamal and his mother not to cross the limits.

Solution C. As Kamal, provoked by his mother, rushes in anger to scold and beat Minati, she came out of the kitchen angrily shouting at her husband why he was listening to whatever nonsense were being fed by his mother. As Kamal, being fierce to these attitude of Minati tried to pull her hair to beat her, she took the ladle and

threatened to hit her husband. However, others in the audience seemed not to have an agreement that this was the perfect solution that they were looking for.

Solution D. As Ranu found the situation was gradually getting hostile towards her mother, she ran to her Head Master and sought help. The Head Master then enters in the scene with police personnel who stopped Kamal attacking his wife and warns him citing the various laws against domestic violence and constitutional protections for women vulnerable before domestic violence.

In all the interventions, except **Solution A.**, the spect-actors intended to change the dialogue and actions performed or inserted characters from outside in the original play to alleviate Minati's situation from helplessness to community relieve or radical resistance. But in all the interventions except **Solution D.**, Chhaya the mother in law, was accused to be the oppressor. However, the majority of viewers voted for **Solution D.** as the best conclusion to emphasize that imparting proper education and social coherence would lead women to empower themselves to resist the oppression on them and face the challenge of gender discrimination.

Since then, the performers of Jana Sanskriti present before the audience all the four solutions offered through interventions and seeks vote o spread encouragement among the silent victims. Sometime it is **Solution D.** that voted most, but interestingly, when the show is performed in a remote village far from the nearest police station and office of civic authorities, it is the **Solution B.** that has been chosen most by the spect-actors.

6.4.2 PERFORMING 'HARASSMENT'

Sexual harassmt is any unwelcome demeanour or remarks which bourns derogatory and negative impact on the mind of the victim and therefore is a serious violation of victim's basic human right. Sexual harassmt can be an act of (a) unwanted remarks, jokes or innuendo; or (b) verbal abuse, intimidation or threats; or

(c) showing offensive picture, messages, cartoon, movie or anything of that sort; or
(d) forceful physical contact, exhibition of private parts of the body, bullying for clothing etc; or (e) all of these at a time.

Sexual harassment may take place both at workplace and domestic sphere. In the rural background this is quite common an experience of the women both at their home and workplaces, government or private, whatever may be the nature. Widows, separated, married but single (due to husband's occupation at distant place) women are the soft targets alongside young school or college going girls. But the victims remain silent and compromise either in the fear of being isolated and exterminated from their position, or they themselves helpless to be believed by others as the assaulting person is more powerful in family or office. Therefore only a negligible amount of information comes to surface. In most cases, such victims are further exploited through forced abortion and to their death sometimes.

Statistics of sexual harassment in workplace in urban areas are readily available through the publications of National Crime Record Bureau and National Commission for Women and other non-government agencies, but it is still quite a job to track such complaints at rural set ups. However, it has been felt to a great extent that sexual harassment of the women outside home like in Panchayat offices, rationing agencies, hospitals, schools, market places and even in the running vehicles happen almost at breathing frequency. At home, women of varied age group becomes the dupe of sexual abuse and harassment by their in-laws and neighbours. Yet they can't share the experience as they fail to articulate their experience to someone outside.

Jana Sanskriti's performance on sexual harassment of women inside and outside her home focuses several such aspects to break the wall of silence and to empower the victims to speak up as soon they face such strangling experience. The performance is an alarm to all women to show how sexual harassment is deployed in the

construction of the working place as a masculine space, which is sheer injustice to the women folk.

Performance: "Ghure Dnarao" [Stand Face to Face]

Launched on :: 05.02.2002, Duration :: 30 minutes, Location :: Public Office premise, Market, Hospital square etc

Theme: Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Public Sphere

Characters: Archana (Widow), Anukul (Panchayat Headman), Maqbul (Party Leader), Paritosh (Archana's brother-in-law), Ashima (Archana's Daughter), Kushumi (Ashima's friend)

Archana is facing a real hardship to run her family and education of her only daughter Ashima after the death of her husband. All their savings could not save his life out of the deadly disease. Sometimes she and her girl remain empty stomach. Paritosh comes to pressurize her to leave the home to capture his brothers nominal belonging. Helpless Archana solicits piety from him but Paritosh starts sexually harass her. The narrator enters singing and indicating the motive of property as one of the ground of hostility against women and explaining the pains of an widow whose husband failed to provide sound financial backup for her. Ashima could understand her mother's jeopardy, but at her thirteen, she is too young to do anything. But she use to tell everything to her best friend Kushumi. Ashima comes to know from a local politician Maqbul, that she can have the peon's job in the Panchayat office where her husband use to work till death. She goes to Maqbul to state all her misery and ask for the help she require to get the job. Maqbul, instead of helping her tried to allure her for his own physical interest. To convince her he gave Archana a mobile phone to keep in touch with him and promised to take up her case to higher authority in exchange he wanted her to comfort him whenever he would call her through the mobile phone. The narrator reappears singing and explaining that the government has several welfare projects for the helpless poor yet the politicians due to their dirty desires exploit people. He also asks the viewer not to remain dependent on the political leaders and grow consciousness about various projects of the government designed to help her as these are their rights. When Anukul, the headman of the Panchayat, received an order to appoint the widow of the demised peon, she sent man to bring Archana to her office. As she went to meet her the old headman made several lose

comments about the 'service' she has to give to him. He even went to show his thighs to her lying to have grown some itching there. Archana was helpless to swallow all these and ultimately she broke before her daughter saying there must be some problem with herself only that so many men gets 'provoked' by her appearance. She said she would have died by committing suicide if Ashima was not there to be taken care of. Here the actors freeze and the narrator comes to the main circle singing the painful experience of the lady and seeking suggestion from the spectators to resolve the crisis.

Strategies Against Harassment

There had been nineteen interventions by which the spect-actors got involved in the play to make way out for Archana from the trouble she was facing. The strategies that spect-actors in Thakurtala, Taldharia, Mudiahat, Madankrishnapur and adjacent villages shaped could be characterized in three major types. Firstly, the victim women strive to muddle through the repression by resorting to government authorities and legal rights like going to the court or to the police'. Secondly, Communication was one more approach. The victim would expose the reality in public shouting loud that would isolate the miscreants who, by the way has public image or should play tactfully with them by hitting their weak points. Thirdly, Besides these two line of resistance, the last one was the tussle of spect-actors asserting to accomplish camaraderie among women so as to acquire control over the situation. The spect-actors, by means of interventions, wanted to bring certain crucial changes in the original play like -

Solution 1. Archana would learn the usage of the mobile phone that Maqbul gave her for his own interest and should record whatever conversations the ill motive persons exchange with her and should shoot her harassment in the phone through its camera and take them to the legal authority to launch complain against them.

Solution 2. Archana may tell each of these oppressors the same lie that her husband died of some infectious disease leaving the infecting germs in her body too. Any

person who would come to an extreme proximity would be further infected. The miscreants would then leave her being terrified.

Solution 3. Archana's daughter Ashima and Kushumi should bring the matter to the notice of other village women whose girls are their classmates. Then the women shall stand united behind her to rescue her from such clutches of harassment. They would also intimate the news media that would expose the criminals.

Solution 4. Archana herself should meet the wives of the Panchayat Headman, Political Leader and her brother-in-law, who in turn would check their husbands from such notorious acts.

Solution 5. Archana should start shouting and conversation in louder voice as soon any indecent proposal comes to her way to draw attention of the people around that would pressurize and restrain the culprits from doing any harm to her.

The performers of Janasanskriti debated for long on the practicality and safe sides of the solutions before finalising or accepting any of these solutions and found none of the solutions offered are feasible from Archana's perspective. There are risks like she may lose her job, revenge may come to her way in other aspects, she may be isolated and sent to exile being infectious etc. Thus any decisive conclusion is yet to be achieved in Archana's case and the dramatic production moves on to newer audience to get genuine feedbacks. However, the team also assess their own lacks, if they were failing short of describing the situation properly to the audience in regular review meetings within the group.

6.4.3 PERFORMING 'REPRODUCTION'

In classical feminist understanding, the issue of reproduction has been observed as a problematique, where the desire for male offspring has been seen as 'reproduction of patriarchy', whereas within the orthodox family system, the desire for male offspring is seen as the 'continuity of lineage'. Thus girls are married at an early age to avail

maximum number of chances to give birth to the son. And they are bound to breed until they reproduce a boy or boys in sufficient numbers. It is believed that sons would provide security and earn breads for the family when parents grow old and their wives would provide service in domestic affairs and reproduce the next generation of patriarchy. Women live in the extended household where the senior male member owes the authority over all other members, accompanied by the senior women, next. [Kandiyoti, D.; "*Bargaining Patriarchy*" in *Gender & Society*. Vol.2, No. 3; 1988]

In a country like ours, it is generally taken that poverty and illiteracy is the most important reason behind the high rate of abortion, female foeticide, child mortality etc. but a recent publication of the UNICEF states " While the child sex ratio within the general population dropped from 940 in 1991 to 919 in 2001, the Scheduled Tribes showed a lesser shift from 985 to 973. The least decline in the sex-ratio was among the Scheduled Caste community - from 946 to 938. The data highlights the adverse linkages between prosperity and girl-child preference and dispels the myth that the poor are opting for female foeticide or sex selective abortions. It emerged from the presentations that literacy and economic well-being did not necessarily ensure a positive child sex ratio. Income levels and access to technology also influenced sex selection and female foeticide ". [Adorna, Cecilio; "*Zero Tolerance for Gender Discrimination and Violence Against Girls*"; Published lecture of Resident Representative of UNICEF India Country Office in National Media Workshop on Sex Selection and Female Foeticide; June, 2007]

In rural part of West Bengal sex-selective abortions is not much in fashion alike the urban areas. However one major area of concern in the rural and semi-urban West Bengal is trafficking of young women and girls of adolescent age. It has been evident through several investigations that the carried or abducted women are sold to remote villages of Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujrat where they are kept as 'breeding bride' to reproduce sons as sex ratio in certain areas of these states are so vulnerable that a

match for a man from his own community has become almost impossible due to massive female foeticide.

Therefore reproduction remains a disputed issue to subjugate women's rights and self-determination in respect of family planning and the vital question of susceptibility and defencelessness of an over-reproducing female body due to lack of nutrition is emphatically ignored as the senior man or woman in the extended family may otherwise plan for a re-marriage of their son, to earn big dowry, on the basis of the complain that his first wife has failed to give birth to a son to continue the lineage.

Performance : "Sonar Pakhi" (The Golden Bird)

Launched on :: 01.06.2001, Duration 27 minutes, Location :: Domestic Sphere

Theme: Male Offspring

Characters: Mira (Pregnant Wife), Madhu (Mira's Husband), Sarama (Mira's Mother-in-Law), Aduri (Mira's Daughter) and Shefali (Nurse)

Pregnant Mira returns from the village hospital to her marital home after a check up and was welcomed with rituals by her mother-in law who wishes to have a grandson to save the dynasty. As she eagerly asks her son Madhu whether the doctor has given any indication about a boy to arrive in the family or not, Madhu replied it was illegal to determine the sex of the expected child before birth. Sarama was upset and demanded hat she wants a boy this time and nothing else. Little Aduri comes to her grandmother and says what fun it would be to have a sister of her own around younger than her. She would love to share her dresses, books and toys with her and guide her as well. Her father would not require to spend much after her. But the annoyed old women replied Aduri has leave the home and go to her in-laws place after marriage, who shall take care of the family then. Moreover she would drag much dowry with her which would weaken the family's economy, still having another girl in the family would not be acceptable. The actor freeze and the narrator enters. Through his songs the narrator indicate that the determination of sex of the fetus was illegal and punishable offense and also asks everyone to stop alienation of the girl child from the family since their childhood which makes them feel inferior within their paternal house.

Shefali, the nurse in the village hospital had seen all the test reports of Mira's pregnancy when she went for a check up. Sarama goes to her and gives her many costly gifts and sweets showing her fake joy over the good health of the expecting baby of Mira and eventually pushes Shefali to tell her whether the baby was a boy or a girl. Enticed by the costly gifts Shefali reveals to Sarama that the child the family was expecting is a girl again ! Sarama returned home with a broken heart. As she entered the premise, Aduri brings her the 'good news' that their cow has given birth to a calf and it was a female cow. Madhu was so happy on the arrival of a female cow, as he considered it as an asset. But then his mother demanded an immediate termination of Mira's pregnancy as she do not want any more girl in the family. The actors freeze, and the narrator enters singing and indicating the selfish contradictions of welcoming a female cow as asset and rejecting a female baby as burden. He also indicated the unethical and illegal acts of the greedy nurse to have leaked the information to a conservative women like Sarama and seeks the intervoention from the spectators.

Strategies Against Gender Discrimination

There was only one intervention while performing at Basanti. The spect actors replaced the silent women Mira to become vocal and confident of her decision to give birth to the girl child. She convinces her mother-in-law that girls are no more a burden of the family. Provided they are given proper education and other cares, the girls may even bring pride and wealth to the family. Moreover, Mira says, the government was giving regular assistance and funds to rear up the girl child and finally she asks her mother-in-law if each of us prefer boy over girls, whom the boys would marry to carry forward the lineage ?

The solution, as suggested by the spect-actors was comprehensive and free from harsh confrontations within the family and was found appropriate to Mira's condition to voted as popular selection. Thus Janasanskriti was able to move an unanimous resolution on the issue of suppression of women through reproduction bias and was also able to campaign the needful family planning through useful contraception by men and women.

Performance : "Sampurna"

Launched on :: 03.06.2002, Duration :: 31 minutes, Location :: Domestic Sphere

Theme: Infertility

Characters: Ramala (Housewife), Mukul (Ramala's Husband), Arati (Mukul's Mother), Supriyo (Doctor), Nandini (Doctor's wife), Chinmayananda (Religious Guru), Police Inspector

The play began with Chinmayananda's visit to his disciple Mukul's house when he refuses to take food and other offerings from Mukul's wife Ramala as she was infertile. Mukul's mother Arati wept bitterly over the unfortunate situation and pray to guru to save the lineage. The guru suggests that Ramala should stay with her for five nights and six days as he would perform a ritual to remove her infertility and asked for some funds required to complete the rituals. Mukul and her mother Arati agrees and helpless Ramala, never knowing her worst luck consented to participate in the ritual in want of an offspring. Mukul, the driver of a private car of Dr. Supriyo asks some loan from his employer to meet the expenditure. Knowing the reason the doctor asks Mukul to bring his wife to his chamber for check-up and tests and to avoid the trap of such money making gurus. Mukul agreed to bring Ramala to the doctor but also insisted that satisfying the guru would console his mother. The narrator enters into the actors arena as all other character freeze. He sings the song to indicate the trap of superstitions has two sharp ends here, one is the loss of money the other is the loss of dignity of the woman. He also indicates that the treatment of infertility is an affair of medical science not a deal for religious rituals.

Ramala was found to be all okay to conceive a baby through all sorts of medical tests Dr. Supriyo conducted. It was evident that infertility was not there in Ramala, it might be in Mukul. The doctor asked Mukul to go through some tests. But his male ego stood erect and her mother Arati denounced the medical report and forced Ramala to go to Chinmayananda. Ramala had the extremely fearful experience when the old guru started molesting her to take her to bed. Ramala, somehow managed to escape and ran to Nandini, Dr. Supriya's wife and broke in tears. Mukul and Arati said they won't accept her again in their family. Nandini was strong to face the challenge and promised Ramala to return her place in the family while sending the guru behind the bars. The narrator enters again and in his song he asks the

audience whether Nandini was doing the right thing or not and if someone from the audience has any alternative suggestion to handle the complexity of the situation.

Strategies Against Reproduction Discourses

Two major interventions were welcomed after debate and discussions between the actors and the spect-actors when they performed the play at Minakhan, Bagdah, Amdanga, Deganga and other adjacent villages. The first strategy that they formed for the most part made use of 'modern' measures. Through counselling of the family members of the victim to make them understand the causes of infertility is gender-neutral, it is rather dogmatic to hold only the women responsible is inhumane. Moreover, infertility can be solved to a great degree with the help of modern science. Thus building awareness about the science of reproduction became the core of the first strategy. As far as the second strategy is concerned, the spect-actor tried to find a solution in adopting a child.

Solution I. Nandini and Supriyo drives to meet Mukul's family. Both Mukul and Arati was arrogant to except any logic from the couple. But as soon the police personnel accompanied with them show them that the guru was a real fraud and was an escaping criminal after several cases of rape and molestation at other places, they were ashtonished. Then the doctor explained that infertility is no more a challenge to modern science. Mukul and Ramala can have their own child through medicated procedure and bio-engineering. The course of the treatment was a bit costly but Dr. Supriyo was agreed to give Mukul the fund, not as a loan, of course, if he receives back his beloved wife. Mukul was ashamed of his foolishness and did as was suggested by his employer and there was a happy ending all the way.

Solution II. Here also the significant move was taken by the doctor couple. They exposed the religious fraud with the help of the police and convinced Mukul, Arati and Ramala to adopt an orphan child from the local orphanage and give him/her the love and care. All of them agree on the solution. Mukul and Ramala become parent of a beautiful little girl adopted with the help of the doctor couple.

Both the conclusions were melodramatic and emotional, however, Janasanskriti agreed to project both the solutions as both of these resolution leads to the spreading of awareness towards two other social causes, firstly towards the scientific attitude and secondly towards philanthropic attitude.

6.5 PERFORMING REALITIES : WOMEN'S ISSUES AS SHARED EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED.

“Experiencing” and “Living through” are the parameters that the performers of Janasanskriti Centre of Theatre of the Oppressed use when they try to define the problem the women face at the grass root level. Through the performance the integration of the theme and the viewers are built through easily flowing dialogues and physical acting. Moreover they use the methodology of interventions by means of bringing the narrator in between the progress of the theme. This imparts a handy training to the audience about how to intervene and why to intervene. Through such interventions the theatre works to develop the individuality and community feeling among the women, and *the theatre of the oppressed* introduces them to a collective space. They, then become a group, and detect diverse ways of discussion and sharing within the group, and most essentially they find the opening to exercise what they obtain as ‘real life’ solutions.

The *Theatre of the Oppressed* has been observed as effective in two major ways, firstly it projects the problems to be really closer to ‘real life’ that instead works as a ‘reminder’ and not as a ‘sympathy’ in the minds of the spectators, secondly, it also work as means by which women are reorganised as a community which in turn ensure women the scope to find out or build and engage in renewed position. The *Theatre of the Oppressed* enables women to argue their case against oppression.

Far from the hustle bustle of madly crowded cities and urban settlements where the theatre has become an elitist affair of entertainment, Janasanskriti has taken up the activism for the real people in real time and real causes and changing lives through

theatre. Collectivity and interactivity are the two major pillars of this approach that has markedly differentiated the Theatre of the Oppressed with the so called mainstream Group Theatre movement. Inside the *Theatre of the Oppressed* workshops, women performers collectively decide what topic would be dramatized based on the shared oppressions and may be performed before an audience. And through interactivity, the collectivity is extended further to encompass other women in the audience. To put it in simple words, the procedures of the *Theatre of the Oppressed* connects women through a chain of collectivity starting from the preparation to the performance and interactions. Through the involvement of the addressees, a collective space to talk about their oppressions is shaped. As a substitute of exhibiting a written script to the audience through memorizing all dialogues and actions, the *Theatre of the Oppressed* emphasizes on the cooperative work in the construction and re- construction process of forum plays.

Creating a play and responding to the strategies of the spect-actors are equally important in the process of Theatre of the Oppressed. Since these productions are result-oriented and based on shared common experiences of oppression, the dual experience of conscious raising for both sides, the performers and the audience, is very crucial. The performers has to remain conscious to welcome suitable changes in their performance that would immediately change the performed scenario of oppression on stage and the viewers who react through interventions become cautious about the solutions of the oppression in real life situations.

Another aspect of the methodology of Theatre of the Oppressed is, the script is never performed. Every show becomes a rehearsal as interventions from the audience changes the course of the play. There are numerous possibilities to reach conclusion in this methodology. Therefore the play is a continuous experience, not a built up show to repeat in every occasion of performance.

I began my journey of the present academic research with two sets of questions in mind. My primary enquiry was from the core of a performer's thought, as I referred earlier, what I consider as the fundamental question that arises in the mind of a

performer having long association with theatre that what is more important to the theatre itself, to react or to create reactions? Thanks to Janasanskriti and their activism through the Theatre of the Oppressed, that, perhaps, I have harboured to some satisfactory answer to that question. Theatre has the power and dynamics to achieve both the ends at a time, that is, to react on certain stimulation and to create reactions as a metaphor. Theater activism around the proverbial Group Theatre movement has already lost its way and aims, yet theatre is very much alive and reaching the root of public sphere to introduce the people with their own potentials to bring changes in their life and surroundings what they seek to change.

So far my academic queries within the limits of the present study are concerned, let me conclude in a separate chapter that follows.

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CHAPTER 7

Concluding Observations.

7.1. INTRODUCTION

“..... আমাদের আর তখন কিছুই আর অপ্ৰকাশিত ছিলো না। লোকে জানতো তারা কি দেখতে যাচ্ছে, কিভাবে নাটকটা শুরু হবে, কিভাবে শেষ হবে, কারা মুখ্য ভূমিকা নেবেন, কেমন আলো হবে, কেমন বাজনা হবে - সবটাই লোকে আন্দাজ করে ফেলতে পারছিলো। গ্রুপ থিয়েটারের নাটক আসলে তখন একটা চেনা ছকে বাঁধা পড়ে গেছিলো। সাকাসের রিং'এর ভেতর বাঘের মতো, রিং মাস্টারের হাতে চাবুকের ইশারায় তার আঙ্গুলন একেবারে **Very much predictable** হয়ে গেছিলো। তাই সমাজ বিপ্লবের সাধনা তো দুরের কথা, তাকে দিয়ে একটা সামাজিক অন্যান্যের প্রতিবাদও ঠিকমতো করানো সম্ভব ছিলো না! সফদর হাশমীর মৃত্যুটা যতখানি **romanticize** করা হলো, ততখানি কিছু তা কাজটাকে এগিয়ে দেওয়া হলোনা! ... তো এসবের একটা অনিবার্য পরিণাম তো অপেক্ষা করছিলোই আমাদের জন্য! তাই না?”

[‘... Nothing exactly remain hidden of us. The audience could already guess well about what they are going to see, how the act shall begin, how will it end, who shall be playing what kind of role, how would be the lighting and music, this and that - people could frame it prior to their visit to theatre. Group Theatre was by then fitted to familiar compartments. It was like the tiger in the circus who roars on the whims and whips of the ringmaster. Group Theatre had lost its immunity to injustice, it was far distance a possibility to bring about the social revolution. Safdar Hashmi's martyrdom was highly romanticized, yet his efforts are gone fade away... These had to have certain resultant for us, is'nt so ?”] [*Interview with Rudra Prasad Sengupta, Director, Nandikar, by me; 3rd January, 2007 at Dinabandhu Mancha VIP Guest Room*]

One of the primary benchmark for measuring the effectiveness of whichever variety of political theatre is its communicative capacity with the audience – its reception and concurrence by the viewers as a channel for spawning political responsiveness.

The majority of the Group Theatres engaged, since their inception, into cultural activism having in mind an aspiration to become "instruments of protest" for the disadvantaged or browbeaten classes of Bengali society. Group Theatre, as a movement, intended to haul theatre to the underprivileged portion of the Bengali audience, to inspire this viewers at large and to renovate their view. The Group Theatre practitioners desired to produce a theatre form which would be gratifying to a generously proportioned audience outside the city margin.

7.2. ON LEFT POLITICAL IDEOLOGICAL ROOT IN GROUP THEATRE MOVEMENT

Under the auspices of the trend often identifying itself as Group Theatre Movement, sundry theatre troupes, few of which were half-professional and others totally amateur, set the groundwork of leftist dedicated theatre established on an array of ideological principles. In their preference of plays and areas of performance they used to chose approaches which were characteristically anti-establishment. Moreover, their stern loyalty to specific norms of asceticism, sombreness, matt finishing as contrasting to the allure of metropolitan mainstream theatre carried these shows nearer to a group of viewers, who had meagre space in the bourgeois profit-making theatre arrangements. The preliminary tendency of the Group Theatre Movement was en route for a revolutionary trialling stir up by the inheritance of IPTA. The activists of Group Theatre tried to revise the ascendant proscenium-auditorium interface / affairs of the city's profit-making theatre, so that the chemistry of performer-audience relationship could be reformulated to make it more undeviating and elastic and less arbitrated by rules and standards of elitist theatre. Most of the performances of Group Theatres were rejuvenated with counter-cultural communications to a great extent were intended to forbear the influential socio-political stability.

However, as the time passed, aggressive anti-establishment posture of the Group Theatres quieten down to a momentous point and it resorted to a modest attitude in ideological theme. Very few Group Theatres based in the rural areas, could create

genuine impacts through performances. Although a leading segment of Group Theatre artists supported the requirement of dissemination of the ideology of left progressive theatre but in spirit and in the core of their practices Group Theatre continued to be an 'avant gardist' cultural performance, and an urban minority theatre. The deteriorating prominence of the Group Theatre Movement from early 1980s is the most apposite marker of its malfunction to persist as an important dais for 'ideological arbitrations' of class interests. Neither it could endorse any wide-ranging artistic viewpoint which could amalgamate the eccentricities of urban middle-class theatre audience with proletarian viewers. Samik Bandyopadhyay, one of the most insightful critics of modern Bengali theatre has aptly pointed - "Bengali [alternative] theatre is...the theatre of middle class. Our peasants and workers are far away from this bourgeois derivative theatre. However much we talk about workers and peasants they haven't yet arrived in it...limitations of leave and leisure in the life of a worker and its general spending pattern provides very little room for theatre." [Bandyopadhyay, Samik. *"Aro Darshak? Na Minority Theatre?"* in Bahurupee ; 7 March 1967]

The moral decline of Group Theatre Movement heightened in the most significant way ever since the onset of the Left Front regime in West Bengal. The advancement of Bengali political theatre, more precisely to say, the leftist variation of political theatre in Bengal, had been rigorously cramped since lefts came to power in West Bengal. It was evident that the leftist political theatre that accolade the party ideology of the leftist parties, except some superficial (so called "constructive") criticism, remained largely unsuspecting towards the policies of Left Front Government. Many Group Theatre activists started propagating that a 'friendly and supportive Left Front government' would patronise and nurture the glorious tradition of Group Theatre Movement, which evicted to be totally mistake. Rather, in reality, the highly regimented left politics tamed the Group Theatre Movement to earn its election benefits in exchange of extending some infrastructural facilities, awards and complements. As the Group Theatres became more and more reliant on

state sponsorship and subsidy, the sponsoring agency set up a superior domination on the ideological direction of the movement and diminished its oppositional propel.

Many drama activists have laid emphasis on the requirement of some political stir and a return journey to the theatre of the mass as an urgent prerequisite for Group Theatre to revive its relevance. But the prevalent and pervasive disenchantment with leftist party politics in West Bengal during contemporary times trim down and demote the likelihood of its restoration to its past laurels.

Group Theatre Movement had created the scope of a model avant-garde experiment amidst a counter cultural phenomenon and inflamed strategies of resistance by means of performance. However, examined from the standpoint of ideological development, the afterwards progressions of the movement appears to be extremely convoluted and inconsistent at some points. Its optimistic journey since the initial phase of experimentation during 1950s to 1960s, its abundance and consolidation during 1970s, gradual but sure deterioration and disintegration during 1980s, to a near extermination in 1990s had been a testimony that Group Theatre Movement was an cultural litmus so far the acid test of changing socio-political-historical milieu of West Bengal was concerned [Kershaw, Baz; *The Politics of Performance: Radical Theatre as Cultural Intervention*; Routledge; Abingdon; 1992].

Thus, I conclude the answer to the research question that the way the typical Group Theatre Movement epistemologically inherited the Leftist ideological aphorism faced a serious decline since 1980s and was in the verge of termination by 1990s as it failed to sustain any self-reliant contingent or approach as a whole and its well-knit connection with the audience.

7.3. ON LEFT POLITICAL IDEOLOGICAL ROOT IN GROUP THEATRE PRODUCTION ON WOMEN'S ISSUES.

Conventional Marxist analysis about power and its resistance power always uphold a stance that the concept of power has concrete class element embodied. As Poulantzas observe “power should be understood as the capacity of one or several classes to realize their specific interests” [Poulantzas, Nicos; *State, Power, Socialism*; New Left Books; London; 1978] But for Foucault, power relations are themselves the foundations of the social sphere and has diminutive connection to someone's class status. According to him it is through the formation of "subjectivity, of a self-consciousness perpetually alert to its own weaknesses, to its own temptations..." that an independent individual may affirm his or her authority in the society [Foucault, Michel; *Religion and Culture*; Routledge, New York; 1999]. Relations of might lead to antagonism or hostility and therefore resistance exists all through the arrangements of power relations. In the core of Foucault's point is the claim that resistance must be comprehended as an unbalanced array of relations amongst which a character continuously come across numerous intersecting points or relations together which necessitate the chance of resistance. Therefore, the intrinsic potentials of resistance are generally situated in the “tactical reversal” and not in class-struggle [Hartmann, John; “*Power and Resistance in the Later Foucault*”; 3rd Foucault Circle; Cleaveland; 2003]. Foucault was very much aware of 'local struggles' or 'specific examples of resistance' against state power and domination but he strongly advocated that the application of power and the apparatus through which it is applied can't be indoctrinated in holistic approaches of class exploitation and class struggle anymore.

The thrust of Feminist approach on the Masculinity/Feminine binary, therefore, remains a problematic as a social discourse following Foucault's line of agreement. Moreover, when attempted to implement feminist approach to performance at the general level and Group Theatre's venture in particular several complex issues appeared as well. Of course, since 1990s, when the Group Theatre Movement was weakening to decay along with its highly patriarchal attributes, there emerged several strong female directors with conviction to portray the exploitation of women in all sphere of their life came to surface, so far treated under left political ideological

bias. These new generation women directors, of whom some were already veteran, clearly spelt that they were keen to address the women's issues through their creative efforts, but they do not want to restrict themselves in the limits of feminist theatre. They rather found such identity, out and out restrictive and off-putting. Neither they were agreeing to identify themselves as belonging to Leftist brand of political-ideological camp. Overtly, by then, the ruling Lefts were losing grounds both amongst the middle class intellectuals and the toiling mass at the grass root level.

1990s brought another cross current into the realm of cultural activism throughout the nation. Big corporations, MNCs, TNCs were extending their fund to sponsor cultural landmarks of Bengal from Durga Puja to Group Theatre as the part of their corporate social responsibility schemes. Popular Group Theatres could easily drag enough endowment in this connection and their attachment with government subsidies, government committees and recognitions faded in no time. Group Theatre started producing plays based on individual crisis, generation gaps, psycho-social issues instead of its community orientation in previous decades. Hi-fi technologies, casting of film stars, complex stage craft and intricate designs of the plays transformed the Group Theatre activism to a highly 'urban elitist' position at the cost of sacrificing its own audience.

At the backdrop of such a byzantine situation sentimentalizing or romanticizing women's issues through Group Theatre undertakings remain restricted to a more limited section of viewers, who perhaps were already convinced to acknowledge gender injustice through academic curriculum. Group Theatres, therefore, failed to generate any momentum through their works on women's issues taken up either by the women directors themselves or by their male counterparts.

History depicts that Group Theatre as a movement originated from a perspective of strong currents from political arena and aesthetic debates that spanned around five decades to reach its contemporary stature, where as feminism in India was imported

in the academic field as a discourse and not in the form of any movement as such, that too, approximately two decades ago. It has left some mark on the intellectual activities in the domain of performing art like theatre, but has not appeared as a trend or stream yet. Whereas the Group Theatre movement, till date, lacks any sound female playwright in exclusive sense of the term, women's issues that are being staged through the dramatic endeavor of the Group Theatre are mostly scripted by male playwrights. It makes no difference whether a man in the disguise of female is acting to reveal the plight of an women on stage as in early 19th century or female actors, big in numbers, come to perform those roles. Unless there emerges a plenty and qualified scripts where women has spoken about their experience and desires in their own word, no issue is a women's issue.

Thus it is quite visible, as an answer to the research question, that under the influence of globalised market economy emerged an opening for the female theatre activists to free themselves from patriarchal ethos and left ideological bias of the Group Theatre at the same time to speak of their own, but due to lack of resources and preparedness towards building the genuine grounds of feminist approach in theatre activism and more importantly due to drying connectivity with the commons triggered by high level abstraction of dramatic performances of Group Theatre the possibility of sensitizing women's issues through Group Theatre movement has scrambled to a great extent.

7.4. TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE WAY FOR GROUP THEATRE TO SENSITIZE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES.

It is the same period of 1990s, the declining phase of Group Theatre activism that an alternative paradigm started emerging in the field of theatre activism in West Bengal through the strivings of Janasanskriti Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed at the remotest part of the state where basic civic facilities are yet to develop properly. The *Theatre of the Opressed*, as championed by the Brazilian Theatre doyen Augusto Boal,

is changing the life and thinking of rural women and empowering them by growing a community feeling amongst the women as oppressed class. By means of the methodology of forum theatre, the women learn to share their experience and develop theatre shows that allow the viewers to intervene and change the course of the act to a decisive angle. Before adopting and responding to such interventions their practicability and consequences are debated by performers and viewers. Through this model of *Theatre of the Oppressed*, though silently but effectively, Janasanskriti has, to a considerable extent, changed the way women respond to gender injustice like dowry, domestic violence, selective reproduction, country liquor addiction etc. Janasanskriti is expanding in other areas of the state and throughout the nation to feel the pulse of the women from the weaker economy and greater social stigmas.

When Badal Sirkar introduced the Third Theatre in India, more specifically in West Bengal, it was a path-setting experience to break in the myth of colonial theatre and to mix the indigenous style of Nukkad with modern acting style using the body of the performer as a metaphor. Third Theatre could attain popularity amongst the theatre activists due to its flexibility, portability and inexpensiveness that match the prerequisites of a third-world aesthetics following the legacy of IPTA. Third Theatre opened enormous possibilities of creativity and became handy mechanism of agit-prop theatre in India. Similar is the experience, here, in Janasanskriti model of the *Theatre of the Oppressed*.

The present thesis asserts that *the theatre of the oppressed* has the potentials to operate as an instrument for women's empowerment, and in forbearing the authoritarian standards of patriarchy, and for construction of strategies opposed to women's subjugation. In the context of the present research trying to focus upon the efforts of the Group Theatre to highlight the women's issues in West Bengal during the Left Front regime, the Janasanskriti model of the *Theatre of the Oppressed* proves to be not only a means to resistance, but at the same time the method of enquiry and scrutiny

about women's repression and liberation, thus answering to the most vital set of research question of the present study.

What qualifies the Theatre of the Oppressed method in the native context is its interactive nature and the use of intervention as a procedure of progression not only to reveal and expose women's repression, but it also facilitates the commotion of regulatory customs of gender injustice and gender identities constituted through performance by means of construction of strategies against the gender oppression. As Judith Butler proposes, regulatory standards and customs and gender constructions are preserved and continued through their routine performances and bodily manifestation [Butler, Judith; *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*; Routledge; New York; 1993]. In that sense, the Janasanskriti methodology of the *Theatre of the Oppressed*, which emphasizes more on performance of experiences and experience through performances, facilitate to uncover the gender oppression and submit the formation and organization of gender perceptible and debatable. Although initially performances materialize in terms of imaginary tale within the preparations of the *Theatre of the Oppressed*, this fictiveness in point of fact opens up a space for the women to deliberate their domination in the context of that particular performance. The bodily expression, concurrently, authorizes the women to break off the hegemonic matrix, and produces an opportunity of resistance through performing in the techniques of the *Theatre of the Oppressed*.

I would, then, conclude referring to a famous quote of Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa, one of the leading figure of 19th century Bengal renaissance, as he once advised Girish Chandra Ghosh, the giant of early modern theatre of Bengal “থ্যাটারে লোকশিক্ষে হয়” [theatre works as an agent of mass education], Janasanskriti model of the *Theatre of the Oppressed* is thriving to 'educate' women towards a genuine empowerment.

Thus, from the Colonial Theatre to a Nationalist Theatre, from there to the Peoples' Theatre (IPTA), from IPTA to Group Theatre and from Group Theatre to the Theatre of The Oppressed, the dialectical development of Indian theatre continues to sustain.

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APPENDIX - I

LIST OF GROUP THEATRES IN WEST BENGAL (1977-2007)

Sl.	Name of the Group	Address and Contact	District
1.	Bankura Milan Tirtha	Kathjhuridanga, Purbashapally, P.O. Kanduhadihi	Bankura
2.	Hifen	Pro. - Nitai Samanta, Shadu Minar, Bouchhora, Bishnupur.	Bankura
3.	Nandimukh	C/39, Purbachal Apartment, Manikuthi, Basanta Choudhury Road	Bankura
4.	Rabindra Samsad	C/O Alok Ranjan Chowkidar, Haatbasantapur, Bishnupur, PIN -722122	Bankura
5.	Satirtha Natya Goshthi	C/O Santosh Midya, Nababbari Road, Bowlapara, P.O - Bishnupur	Bankura
6.	Santiswarup Natya Sangstha	C/O Arunava Bandopadhyay, Bankura Christian College, P.O - Bankura PIN - 722101	Bankura
7.	Shilpi Sangha	C/O Bikram Senapati, Kameswari Mandir Road, Beliatore	Bankura
8.	Aabirvab (Durgapur)	11/6, New Town Avenue, Durgapur	Bardhaman
9.	Aakhalpur Krira Sanskritik Sangha	C/o Amit Saha, Mandalpur, Jamudihahut	Bardhaman
10.	Aalapan	Pro.- Ranjita Dawanjee, 16/1, Shibaji Road, Durgapur	Bardhaman
11.	Aanarta	Pro.- Sujoy Samaddar, Seeharshol Rajbari, Raniganj	Bardhaman
12.	Aragami Natya Samaj	Pro.- Dutta Zerox O P.C.O.Kashkanda (Chichuriya More) Bahula	Bardhaman
13.	Agradut	KhaaskendaKoliari, Bahula, Bardhaman-713322, Contact-(03412)669429	Bardhaman
14.	Prasangik	Sudarshanpur, Mandalpur, Bardhaman	Bardhaman
15.	Alapan Durgapur	16/1, Shibaji Road, Durgapur, PIN-713204	Bardhaman
16.	Angikar	Bhatchala, Bakarmath, Nabadayapally, P.O.- Sreepally	Bardhaman
17.	Aonami	1B/30, Ramkrishna Avainu, Durgapur	Bardhaman
18.	Aritra	Pro.- Nilandhu Sengupta, Borhut, Kalitala, Natunganj	Bardhaman
19.	Arjya Natya Samaj	C/O - Ashok Bikash Ghosh, Kawotada, Jhapandanga	Bardhaman
20.	Asansole Charjapod	Near 1st Durga Mandir, Kabi Sukanta Sarani, Asansole	Bardhaman
21.	Asansole Repertory Theatre	C/O - Ashutush Dasgupta, New Students Book House, Sripally, Asansole	Bardhaman
22.	Baishaki Group of Theater	Panagar Rly. Colony, Hospital More, Durgapur	Bardhaman
23.	Barashul Kishore	Barashul, Ghatakbari, Bardhaman	Bardhaman

	Sangha		
24.	Bardhaman Drama Collage	Rashikpur Watertank, Golapbagh, Bardhaman City	Bardhaman
25.	Bardhaman Graph	Parbirhata, Sripally, PIN-713103	Bardhaman
26.	Burdwan Notun Kotha Theatre	27, Netaji Sangha Main Road, Rajganj, P.O-Nutanganj	Bardhaman
27.	Burdwan Pathikrit	Nutanganj, Ishwari Tala, P.O-Nutanganj	Bardhaman
28.	Dagapur Sanskriti Parasad	3/271, Sar Uponagari, Durgapur	Bardhaman
29.	Disari Burnpur	C/o Samar Chakraborty, Puranhat Main Road, Burnpur-713325	Bardhaman
30.	Durgapur Sommilito Natyaproysh	Deshbandhu Bhawan, Saratchandra Avenue, Durgapur	Bardhaman
31.	Inside Out	Pro.- Somya Deb, Sukantanagar, Rakhalpirtala, P.O.-Sreepally	Bardhaman
32.	Jajabor	Pro.- Debi Prasad Dutta, Vaishnabbadh, Burnpur	Bardhaman
33.	Kathakata Nattya Sangha	C/O Sanjib Gain, Kalitala High School, Debipur R.S., PIN - 713146	Bardhaman
34.	Katoa Anubhob	C/O Koushik Mukhopadhyay, Master Para, Katoa, Burdwan - 713130. Contact-9434572834	Bardhaman
35.	Katwa Ullash	C/O Subhash Nashkar, Hospital Para, Katwa, PIN-713130	Bardhaman
36.	Kinnar	Gopal Math,Durgapur-17,Contact-0343-2595371	Bardhaman
37.	Kothavassya	"Porosh", Mother Terasa Sarani, Ismail (Purba), Asansol	Bardhaman
38.	Kushilob	457, Bhubaneswar Road, Rajganj, P.O. - Nutunganj	Bardhaman
39.	Lok Theater	Pro.- Kartick Banerjee, Byadapur, Rathtala	Bardhaman
40.	Mancha Natyan	6, Kabiguru Sarani, Durgapur	Bardhaman
41.	Manchamita	C/O-Krishna Karmakar, 141,Nutanpally, Adikalibari, Samantabagan PIN - 713101	Bardhaman
42.	Mangal Choudhury Natya Charcha Kendra	C/O Gopal Raj, Ramkrishna Sarada Electricals, Uttar Fatak, Rajbati, Bardhaman	Bardhaman
43.	Moulick	Gopa Chowdhury Sanskriti Chorcha Kendra, Rashikpur Watertank, Golapbagh, Bardhaman City	Bardhaman
44.	Nabankur	Sarat Chandra Sarani, P.O. Seasole Rajbari, Searsole	Bardhaman
45.	Najrul Natya Sadan	Kobitirtha Churulia,Bardhaman,Najrul Bidyapith	Bardhaman
46.	Nandanik	Dr. Magnath Saha Road, Asansol	Bardhaman
47.	Nattyodip	Kalitala, Debipur, R.S.Bardhaman, Contact-(95342)2263374	Bardhaman
48.	Natyabhumi	D.V.C Road, Kanainatshal, Bardhaman City	Bardhaman
49.	Nirmal Natyacharcha Kendra	C/O - Sushil Kanti Banik, Kalitala Mandir Bajar, Debipur.	Bardhaman
50.	Natyasena	C/O Ajitesh Bhandari, Netaji Nagar Road, Damohani Bazar	Bardhaman
51.	Nillohit Natyosomaj	8 Artarial Road, A Zone, Durgapur	Bardhaman
52.	Notcharja	8, Manik Bhadhpadhya Poth, Durgapur	Bardhaman

53.	Paraboth	Pro.- Dhiran Chatterjee, Bijpur Notun Moholla, Madhya Bijpur.	Bardhaman
54.	Poroshmani	C/O - Ratul Chakraborty, 421, Aryapally, Bornilpur	Bardhaman
55.	Prayash	Pro.-Collage Of Art And Design, Krishnasayar Eco Gardan, Mahatab Road	Bardhaman
56.	Prochesta Nattya Sangstha	Malancha, Rabindra Pally, P.O-Bhatar, Bardhaman Town	Bardhaman
57.	Proyashi Natyajjan	Baburbag Kalitala, Rajbati, Bardhaman City	Bardhaman
58.	Ranjan Club	Boidyapur,Boichi,Bardhaman	Bardhaman
59.	Sahebbagan Sabuj Sangha	Sahebbagan,Rosulpur,Bardhaman	Bardhaman
60.	Sambhabana Theatre Group	30 Kaniska North, A-Zone, Durgapur-713204	Bardhaman
61.	Satirtha	C/O Avas Bhattacharjee; Hoton Road Kalibari, Asansole-713301, Contact-9933902729	Bardhaman
62.	Searsole Kisholay Natyagosthi	Searsole Rajbari, Searsole, PIN - 713358	Bardhaman
63.	Silpayan Durgapur	F 1/35, P.C.Road, Durgapur-713205	Bardhaman
64.	Somokal Natya Sanstha	Chotobainan Bardhaman Sadar, Pyeta (1 No.)	Bardhaman
65.	Srisangha	Kalna Gate,Bardhaman,Rabindrapally,Contact-0983270507	Bardhaman
66.	Shreeshreekshu	18A/4/25, S.E.P.C.O Township, Durgapur	Bardhaman
67.	Subhash Samiti	Gurupada Roy Smrity Bhawan, N.R.R. Sarani, Asansol	Bardhaman
68.	Swapnaangan	C/O-Prabir Haldar, 1, Rabindra Sarani, Nutanganj, Ishwaritala, Burdwan- 713102	Bardhaman
69.	Tarun Sangha	Rayna,Bardhaman	Bardhaman
70.	The Puppaiers	Maharaja Road, Bhatchala Colony, P.O. Sreepally	Bardhaman
71.	Third Eye	Pro.- Sudip Biswas, 143, Dakhinapally, Bank Road, Durgapur	Bardhaman
72.	Toromin	Priotosh Roy, U 10A/15 Tarabag, Rajbari	Bardhaman
73.	Aanan	Studio Rupchaya, Manimadhab Road, Suri	Birbhum
74.	Aashor Natyam	C/O- Pranatosh Pramanik, Kalitola Road, Sainthia,	Birbhum
75.	Aatmaja	C/O - Mukul Siddiqi, Sonatorpara, Suri	Birbhum
76.	Abhijatri Nattyo Sangstha	C/O - Jibanananda Khastagir, Sonator Para, Siuri.	Birbhum
77.	Amphetheatrewala	C/O - Anindya Acharya, Shibram Colony, Sainthia, Contact- 9434660750	Birbhum
78.	Bakrashwar Binodoni Sanstha	C/O - Ratan Banik, Quarter No. F/56/Third Row, B.K.T.P.P. Township, Bakrashwar	Birbhum
79.	Bhabanipur Saptapradip Sanskriti Society	Radha Sweets, Magrabazar, Bhabanipur, Saithia	Birbhum
80.	Bharataya Ganantya Sangha (Uttarran)	Sreenikaton Road, Bolpur, PIN-731204	Birbhum
81.	Bharatia Ganantya Sangha (Victor Jara)	Rajani Sen Road, Dubrajpur	Birbhum
82.	Binapani Natya	Popara Sahapur, Tarapith	Birbhum

	Sanstha		
83.	Birbhum Sanskriti Bahini	Sanskrit Bhawan, Lovepur	Birbhum
84.	Daul A Theatre Group	C/O - Bivash Bishnu Chowdhury, Vishwa Varati, Shantiniketan, Pin-731235	Birbhum
85.	Dishari Sanskritik Chakra	C/O - Anukul Dhara, Ma Sarada Sarani, Lovepur, Bolpore	Birbhum
86.	Eklabyya	Pro.- Bapi Kundu, Gandhi Nagar Main Road, Dubrajpur	Birbhum
87.	Ellora	Sister Nibedita Road, Nutun Pukur, Kalitala, Bolpur	Birbhum
88.	Natyotirtha	C/O Atanu Barman, Sreejani, Satyen Bose Road, Amodpur, PIN-731201	Birbhum
89.	Prabaha Nattyam	Bibekananda Road, Hattala Para, Rampurhat, PIN - 731224	Birbhum
90.	Rangam Natya Sanstha	College Para, Ward No-16, P.O - Rampurhut, PIN - 731224	Birbhum
91.	Ruptapash	Pro. - Shubhom Ghosh, College Road, Sainthia	Birbhum
92.	Sagnik Nattyogosthi Rising Club	Hetampur Rising Club, Hetampur, Birbhum-731124	Birbhum
93.	Sainthia Wake Up Nattyodol	C/O-Pannalal Bhattacharya, Purba Netaji Pally, Ward No-15, Sainthia	Birbhum
94.	Shantiniketan Poyesis	"Anandaniketan", Daily Bread Road, Ratanpally, Shantiniketan, PIN-731235	Birbhum
95.	Sreerangam Natya Sanstha	C/O - Abhinaba Sengupta, Suri Kalibari Road, Suri	Birbhum
96.	Suri Young Natty Sangstha	C/O - Amitava Dastidar, Hospital Road, P.O+P.S-Suri, PIN-731101	Birbhum
97.	Swapno Theater	N.P. Chowdhury Lane, Barabazar, Suri, PIN-731101	Birbhum
98.	Theater Aviyan	C/O - Subinoy Das, "Sudhir Srmiti", Rabindranath Thakur Road, Sonatorpara, Suri, PIN-731101	Birbhum
99.	Uttaran	Near Vibgyor Academi School, Sree Nikaton Road, Bolpur	Birbhum
100.	Young Natya Sangstha	Pro.- Satyojit Das, Barobagan, Suri	Birbhum
101.	Young Parliament	Pro.- Nirmal Mandal, Irrigation Colony, Qtr. No. D-6, P.O.- Suri	Birbhum
102.	Yugbani	C/O - Anup Dutta, Kuduaghata, Via. Ahmadpur,	Birbhum
103.	Anughatak	Pro.- Ajoy Chakraborty, Harendra Narayan Road, Hazrapara	Coachbehar
104.	Anuranan	Pro.- Subha Chanda, Uttarpara, Makhliganj	Coachbehar
105.	Anuvab Natya Sangstha	Pro.- Snahashis Chowdhury, 321, B.S.Road, Natun Bazar	Coachbehar
106.	Coachbehar Agnee Natty Sangstha	Newtown, Dinhata Road, Near Harisabha Mathh, Coachbehar, PIN-736101	Coachbehar
107.	Coachbehar Barnana	The Medico, Pancharangi, Coachbehar	Coachbehar
108.	Coachbehar Brattyosena	C/O - Subhankar Dey, Subhas Pally, Silver Jubilee Road, P.O-Coachbehar, PIN- 736101, Contact-9832089223	Coachbehar

109.	Coachbehar Repertory Theatre	C/O - Kishorelal Chakraborty, Siliguri Road, Khagrabari, PIN - 736104	Coachbehar
110.	Coachbehar Theatre Group	C/O - Purbachal Dasgupta, Soiripu, Kalika Das Road, PIN - 736101	Coachbehar
111.	Compass	C/O - Debabrata Acharya, Mohishbathan, Khagrabari, PIN - 736118	Coachbehar
112.	Guillotine	Puroshaba Office, Mathabhana, Mathabhanga, PIN - 736146	Coachbehar
113.	Indrayudh	Pro.- Dipayan Bhattacharjee, Netaji Road Bylane, Pancharangi	Coachbehar
114.	Institute of Parforming Arts	"Nilanjan", Pro.- Niladri Biswas, Hazrapara (Near Tarun Dal Club)	Coachbehar
115.	Janantik	C/O - Kalyanmoy Das, South Khagrabari, Shib Jagnya Road, PIN - 736101	Coachbehar
116.	Jisketed	C/O - Alok Kumar Guha, Sarada Debi Road, PIN - 736101	Coachbehar
117.	Natyakriti	Khagrabari Natya Sangha, Rajbari Road, Khagrabari Pashim.	Coachbehar
118.	Noboshakti Sanskritik Sangha	Netaji Bylane, Sonaidighi, New Town	Coachbehar
119.	Pragati Natya Sanstha	Rabindra Sarani, Dinhata, PIN - 736101	Coachbehar
120.	Prantik	C/O Swapan Dutta, New Cenama Road, Morapora Chowpathi.	Coachbehar
121.	Rupkatha	Pro.-Uttariya Dey, Kalika Das Road Byelane, Nutun Bazar	Coachbehar
122.	Songsaptak	New Yuba Natya Sangha, Morapora Chowpathi	Coachbehar
123.	Srijani	C/O-Ashoke kumar Ganguly, Tufanganj Mahavidyalaya, P.O - Tufanganj.	Coachbehar
124.	The Jewel Dramatic Club	Abbasuddin Road, Dinhata, PIN - 736101	Coachbehar
125.	The Poiner Theatre Club	Fatakgora Bazar, Dinhata, PIN -736101	Coachbehar
126.	Theater Collage (Coochbehar)	Senko, M.J.N. Studiam, Stall No. 4, Silver Jubily Road	Coachbehar
127.	Udayan Natyam	Pro.- Mithu Sarkar, New Town, Chatguriyahaati (Netaji Nagar)	Coachbehar
128.	Balurghat Mask	C/O Amit Saha, Chawkbhriugu, Balurghat	Dakshin Dinajpur
129.	Balurghat Natya Academi	C/o Bhaskar Chatterjee; Rabindra Sarani, Balurghat	Dakshin Dinajpur
130.	Balurghat Natyamandir	Natyamandir, Balurghat College Road, Balurghat	Dakshin Dinajpur
131.	Bharatiya Gananatya Sangha (Shapath)	C/o Haran Majumdar; Dipali Nagar; Balurghat	Dakshin Dinajpur
132.	Samabeta Natyakarmi	C/o Pradosh Mitra, Near Purta Bhaban, Balurghat Main Road, Balurghat	Dakshin Dinajpur
133.	Samamon	C/o Pranatosh Bhattacharjee, Moktar Para, Balurghat	Dakshin Dinajpur
134.	Tritirtho	Gobinda Natyangan, Chawkbhabani, Balurghat	Dakshin Dinajpur
135.	Balaka Natya Gosthi	Pro.- Sreekrishna Liabrary. New Cinema Road, P.O. Siliguri Town	Darjeeling
136.	Damama Natya	Shaktigarh, Main Road No. 5. Shaktigarh, Siliguri	Darjeeling

	Goshthi		
137.	Darpan Nattuosangstha	Deshbandhupara, Pandit Gyanprakash Ghosh Sarani, Pipe Line, Siliguri- 734004	Darjeeling
138.	Karnik Natya Sangstha	18, Aban Thakur Sarani, Deshbandhu Para, siliguri	Darjeeling
139.	Mitra Sammilani	Hill cart Road, Siliguri. P.O - Siliguri PIN - 734001	Darjeeling
140.	Natyaranga	C/o Byomkesh Ghosh, Subashpally, Siliguri	Darjeeling
141.	Siliguri Sishu Natyam	Dipojjal Chowdhury, House No. 22, Near Rathkhola Nabin Sangtha, P.O. Rabindra Sarani,	Darjeeling
142.	Siliguri Rangamalanca	C/o Dr. Tapan Chattopadhyay, Sarada Pally, Siliguri, 734006	Darjeeling
143.	Siliguri Srijansena	C/O-Parthpratim Mitra,26 Sishir Vaduri soroni,Khudirampally,Siliguri-734001	Darjeeling
144.	Siliguri Theater Academy	C/o Kuntal Ghosh; Mahananda Colony Buddha Mandir; Near Shanti Nursing Home, Siliguri	Darjeeling
145.	Thoughts Arena	C/o Dr. Shyama Prasad Bhattacharya, Paul Paper House, Hathi More, Subhash Pally, Siliguri	Darjeeling
146.	Uttal Natya Goshthi	Behind New Cinema Hal, RRB Office, Tikia Para Math, Siliguri	Darjeeling
147.	Writtik Natya Sangstha	Subhash Pally, opposite to Matri Sadan Nursing Home; Siliguri	Darjeeling
148.	Aalingan Drama Unit	Pro.- Prasanjit Roy, 53/2, Kotarang Joyanta Nagar, P.O. Hindmotor	Hooghly
149.	Aamra Natya Sangstha	49, Charakdanga Road, Uttarpara	Hooghly
150.	Aarohi (Bandel)	Bikramnagar, Bandel Station Road	Hooghly
151.	Anulap	Pro.- Maloy Kumar Sen, Mannapukur, 2nd Goli, Haridradaganga	Hooghly
152.	Aschitpur Avaya Sangha	C/O - Sukleshwar Biswas, Master Para, Aschitpur, Khamargachi.	Hooghly
153.	Ashoni	9, Jhil Path, Nabagram, Konnagar(West), PIN-712246	Hooghly
154.	Banhishikha Sanskritik Sangha	57, Duttagoli (Kurnigoli), Shandeshur, Chinsurah	Hooghly
155.	Baksha Bratyo Nattyojon	C/O - Suvadeep Nandi, Village+P.O- Baksha, PIN-712304	Hooghly
156.	Bandel Nandonik	Bandel New Manuspur, P.O-Manuspur, PIN - 712123	Hooghly
157.	Bandhab Sangha	55/G,Thakurdas Babu Lane,Srirampore,Hooghly-712201,Contact-2662-4682	Hooghly
158.	Bhabhaghure	Baikanthapur, Sahapally, Tribani	Hooghly
159.	Bhadrakali Art & Culture	Pro.- Mrinal Das, 51, Ghoshpara Lane, P.O. Bhadrakali, Uttarpara	Hooghly
160.	Bharatiya Ganantya Sangha (People's Art Centre)	Pramod Nagar Road, Buro Shibtala, Chinsurah	Hooghly
161.	Brischik	Baniya Lane, Bansberia, PIN - 712502	Hooghly
162.	Chakrabak Natyapith	Pro.- Deb Banerjee, Khirkundee, Pandua	Hooghly
163.	Chandannagar	16/5 Palpara Bylane, Mankundu, P.O-	Hooghly

	Rangalaya	Mankundu, PIN-712139	
164.	Chandannagar Rangapith Nattogosthi	C/O-Shibankar Chakraborty, Barohat Chakraborty Para, P.O-Chandannagar	Hooghly
165.	Chandannagar Swapnanir	Barohat Chakraborty Para, Chandannagar	Hooghly
166.	Chanditala Prompter	Barijahatty, Chanditala, PIN - 712702	Hooghly
167.	Chinsurah Boishakhi Sanakritik Sangstha	C/O - Ashim Praharaj, Anantadebpur Chowmatha, Chinsurah, PIN - 712101	Hooghly
168.	Chndananagar Unmukh	Panchanantola, Chandannagar, PIN-712136	Hooghly
169.	Dankuni Natyaniketan	Dankuni Sanskritik Samannaya Sangathan, Dankuni, Hooghly	Hooghly
170.	Dhrupad	66, Patuya Para Lane, Sreerampore	Hooghly
171.	Eshana	Pro.- Dilip Basu Thakur, 62, B.C. Basu Thakur Road, Motibagan, Chinsurah	Hooghly
172.	Ekshan	C/o Subodh Josh, 12, R. C. Majumdar Road, Motibagan, Chuchura, PIN - 712101	Hooghly
173.	Friends Corner	Jagannath Ghat Lane, Mahesh, Hooghly	Hooghly
174.	Gonochetona Nattyogosthi	Vodreswar, Station Road, Hooghly	Hooghly
175.	Hindmotor Theatre Society	25 No Daspara Lane, P.O - Hindmotor.	Hooghly
176.	Jagoran Natya Sanstha	Garbati Kundugoli Lane, Buroshibtala, Chinsurah	Hooghly
177.	Janai Koushik Nattyog Sangstha	Janai, Bajarpara, Hooghly-712304, Contact-(953212)260424	Hooghly
178.	Jouthik	Pro.- Utpal Dutta, 185, Chowmatha, P.O.Chinsurah	Hooghly
179.	Jibon Jatra	Pro.- Subhashish Dandapat, Deshbandhupara, Khalisani, Chandannagar	Hooghly
180.	Khamarpara Sishusangha	Bansberia, Hooghly, Contact-2858-7012	Hooghly
181.	KKB Natya Gosthi	18, Asutosh Chatterjee Lane, Mahesh, Sreerampore	Hooghly
182.	Konnagar Prateeti	C/O - Biswanath Modak, Charabagan, Konnagar.	Hooghly
183.	Krishti Chakra	Gobindanagar, Baidyabati, Hooghly, Contact-Sukanta Chowdhury, 9830419765	Hooghly
184.	Monalisha Sanskriti Sangha	C/O - Pradyut Boiragi, Katgora Lane, Jyotinagar, Arambag	Hooghly
185.	Mukhosh	Pro.- Avijit Chatterjee, Professior Para (Near Old Anandamarg School) Arambag	Hooghly
186.	Nanamukh	Purashree, Opposite Children Park, Chandannagar	Hooghly
187.	Nandanik	C/O - Hemendra Nath Sarani, New Manushpur, P.O. Manushpur, Bandel.	Hooghly
188.	Natyaprahari	C/O - Manabendranath Kushari, Phulbagan, P.O-Roypara, Village - Haripal, PIN - 712403	Hooghly
189.	Not Nikatan	2 No. Basudabpur (Priti Nagar), Tribani	Hooghly
190.	Pabok	Rameswarpur, Hooghly-712152, Contact-(953213)265186	Hooghly

191.	Pandua Dimond Club	Rupashree Sanskritik Sangha Club, Benepara, Kalna Road, Pandua	Hooghly
192.	Raktim Natya Sanstha	Pro.-Ratan Roy, Denamardanga, Talpukurdhar, P.O.Golandapara, Chandannagar	Hooghly
193.	Rammohan Peace & Cultural Forum	86, Rammohan Place, Master Para, Konnagar	Hooghly
194.	Rangamati (Chandannagar)	C/O - Rupayan Dasgupta; Purashree, Chandannagar	Hooghly
195.	Rangapriya Natyogosthi	C/O-Shibendu Chakladar, Barohat Deshbandhu Para, P.O-Chandanagar	Hooghly
196.	Rishra Shristi	49/66/5,Rabindra Sarani,Rishra,Hooghly	Hooghly
197.	Rishra Rabibasorio	4, Dr. P.T.Laha Street, Rishra	Hooghly
198.	Rupak (Chandannagar)	Pro.- Nitay Banerjee, Goswami Ghat Bylane, Chandannagar	Hooghly
199.	Rupkalpa	Pro.- Kanan Bhattacharjee, Makhla 1 No. Govt. Colony, Makhla	Hooghly
200.	Rupnattyam	Keota Shibtala Main Road,Sahaganj,Hooghly	Hooghly
201.	Sagnik	3 No. Santinagar Sarkar Pukur Lane, Telenipara, Bhadreswar	Hooghly
202.	Sahaganj Natya Chhandam	C/O - Adhir Bandopadhyay, Keota, Shibtala, P.O-Sahaganj	Hooghly
203.	Samatat Sanskriti	209, Jay Krishna Street, P.O - Uttar Para PIN - 712258	Hooghly
204.	Sandipan Natty Sangstha	Gourhati Govt. Quarters(D/2 X)Angas,Hooghly,Contact-26850344	Hooghly
205.	Sangita Dramatic Club	Brahmin Para, Khalisani, Chandannagar,Hooghly	Hooghly
206.	Sharathi	Dakshina Ranjan Road, College Para, Near Chinsurah College, Chinsurah	Hooghly
207.	Shilpak	Pro.- Timir Baran Roy, Makhla 1 No. Govt. Colony, P.O. Makhla	Hooghly
208.	Shristi	49/66/5, Rabindra Sarani, Rishra	Hooghly
209.	Sishu Sangha	Hangseswari Road, Bansberia, Hooghly	Hooghly
210.	Smaronik	23-A, Netaji Subash Road, Uttarpara	Hooghly
211.	Social Squad	Nabagram,konnagar,Hooghly	Hooghly
212.	Somkalin Sanskriti	23 Raja Kishorilal Street, P.O - Uttarpara PIN - 712258	Hooghly
213.	Songbad Natya Sanstha	Ranjit Paul, Paschim Sen para, Buroshibtala, Chinsurah	Hooghly
214.	Souvik Sanskritik Chakra	Pro.- Badal Das, 3, Joysankar Lane, P.O. Uttarpara (Near Tiptop Tailoring)	Hooghly
215.	Sreejon (Chandannagar)	Pro.- Dhiman Das, 15, Pirtala, Mankundu Station Road, Chandan Nagar	Hooghly
216.	Swapnil	Sandeep Dabnath, 37, Royal Park, Shuli Telenipara, Bhadreswar	Hooghly
217.	Theater Chandannagar	Saheed Kanailal Dutta Sarani, Ashokpally, Kholisani, P.O- Chandannagar	Hooghly
218.	Theater Proscenium	58/3, B.K. Street, Uttarpara	Hooghly
219.	Theater Society	Pro.- Ashish Majumdar, 25 No. Daspara Lane, P.O. Hindmotor	Hooghly
220.	Tribeni Not Niketan	Manasatala,Tribeni,Hooghly	Hooghly
221.	Unit Theatre	Pro.- Shiban Dutta, 53, B.N.Road, Uttarpara	Hooghly

222.	Uttarayan	52, Charakdanga Road, Uttarpara PIN - 712258	Hooghly
223.	Wriddhi	Kotalpur,Gurap,Hooghly,Contact-Tapas Laha(953213)253046	Hooghly
224.	Youngstar Cultural Association	Digsui,Hooghly	Hooghly
225.	Yugantar Natya Sangstha	Bore Panchanantala,Chandannagar,Hooghly-712136,Contact-26829090	Hooghly
226.	Yuger Yatri Chandannagar	C/O-Ramkrishna Mandal, Brahmin Para, Kholishani, Boubajar, Chandannagar, Hooghly-712138	Hooghly
227.	Zehad	Kalitala Colony, Konnagar	Hooghly
228.	Badamtala Bandhab Natya Samiti	185, G.T.Road, Badamtala, Baidyabati, Hooghly	Hooghly
229.	Amta Parichay	Gurukul Parichay,Vil-Sarpota,P.S-Amta,P.O-Debandi	Howrah
230.	Anami Angan	C/O-Ratan Mukherjee, P.O-Andul, Mouri(Daspara), Howrah-711302	Howrah
231.	Andul Anandamath	Dakshinpara, Andul-Mouri, Howrah-711302, Contact-2877-5912	Howrah
232.	Angeera Natya Sangstha	111/2, Goshami Para Road, Bali	Howrah
233.	Ankur	Pro.- Sabyasachi Bose, 100, Bajalpara Road, Salkiya	Howrah
234.	Annweshan	Bajarpara, Uluberia, PIN-711316	Howrah
235.	Anuvash	15/1, Kashundiya 2nd Byelane	Howrah
236.	Anwayee Mon	Bajekulpara, Uluberia, Howrah-711315	Howrah
237.	Avinayo	41/1, Prankrishna Ganguly Road, Bally	Howrah
238.	Bagnan Rangalok	C/O- A. Ghosh, Matiari, Bagnan, Howrah	Howrah
239.	Bally Bidrohi Club	65/A Karunakar Chakraborty Lane, Bally, Howrah-711201	Howrah
240.	Bally Natyakiyo Sanstha	Pro.- Shovan Shau, D. Saipara road, Bally	Howrah
241.	Bangalpur Boys Club	Singhabahinitola, Bangalpur, Bagnan, Howrah-711303	Howrah
242.	Basudebpur Yubo Sanghati	Foara More, Basudebpur, Banipur, Howrah	Howrah
243.	Bibak (Bally)	23/2, Dharmatala Road, Belur	Howrah
244.	Bidushak (Bally)	Pro.- Subir Goshwami, 14/1 Krishna Chatterhee Lane, Bally, PIN - 711201	Howrah
245.	Boitorok Natya Sanstha	2/A/5, Satish Chakraborty Lane, Bally	Howrah
246.	C.T.B.S.Sangha	10 Dinu Lane,Kadamtala,Byatra,Howrah-711101	Howrah
247.	Dwandik	76/4, Tatipara Lane, Buro Shibtola, Kadamtala	Howrah
248.	Drama Society (Mouri)	Mouri Gurudas Smriti Mandir, Andul, Mouri	Howrah
249.	Fuleswar Uddipon	Fuleswar, P.O-Uluberia, Howrah-711316	Howrah
250.	Howrah Jonaki	16/1/2 Kailash Basu Lane,Howrah-711101	Howrah
251.	Howrah Kadamtala Theatre Works	182/5,Belilius Road,Howrah-711101	Howrah
252.	Howrah Nattyojon	4/6, P.K.Roychowdhury Lane, P.O-B.Garden, Howrah	Howrah
253.	Howrah	19/1,Panchanantala Road, Howrah-711101	Howrah

	Swapnasrijan		
254.	Kothok Performing Repertory	Mirabhita, Muchipara, G.I.P Colony, Howrah	Howrah
255.	Manchajon	Ramchandrapur, Co-Operative More, Sankrial	Howrah
256.	Maandaash	18/5/3, Bhattacharjee Para Lane	Howrah
257.	Medha	77/13, Bangalpara, 2nd Byelane	Howrah
258.	Nabarun Sangha	Dewan Gaji Road,Bali,Howrah	Howrah
259.	Nattyodol-Noborongo	Khardah,amta,Howrah	Howrah
260.	Sanghabaddha Natyapremi	6/B, P.C. Sarkar Lane, Botanical Gardan, Shibpur, Howrah	Howrah
261.	Natyangan (Bally)	67,/2A/1, Goswamipara Road, Bali	Howrah
262.	Nobanatya Shikha	109/1, Sitanath Bose Lane, Salkiya	Howrah
263.	Notadha	Ramgopal Mancha, P-14, Church Road	Howrah
264.	Salkia Sanskriti Charcha Kendra	C/O- Nemai Bardhan; Basudebpur Chowmatha, Salkia, Howrah	Howrah
265.	Padmapukur Sangskritik Parishad	Salil Dutta, 76/2 Bangalpara,2nd Bylane, Santragachi, Howrah - 4 Contact-26885554	Howrah
266.	Pilshuj	65, Nivadita Sarani, Durgapur, Bally	Howrah
267.	Poribrajok	C/O - Robi Dey, Jagachha Govt. Colony, Jagachha, PIN - 711112	Howrah
268.	Pragati	84 Rabindra Sarani, Liluah, PIN - 711204	Howrah
269.	Prakhapot	26/2, Madan Biswas Lane, Salkia	Howrah
270.	Rangatirtha (Bagnan)	C/O - Mamun Yusuf, Gajipur Milanayatan, Gajipur Rajbari, Bagnan	Howrah
271.	Rupan	148/12, Netaji Subash Road, Kanubabur Bajar, Byantra	Howrah
272.	Salkia Sabyasachi	44, Khetra Mitra Lane, Salkia, PIN - 711106	Howrah
273.	Samipeshu	C/O Abhirup Samaddar, 27/6, Kali Banerjee Lane, Kadamtala, PIN - 711101	Howrah
274.	Sanghamitra Natya Sanstha	C/O - Ashutosh Halder, Shibtala, Jhapa	Howrah
275.	Shilpi Sangha	Natyaniketan Bhawan, 9, M.C.Ghosh Lane, Shibpur	Howrah
276.	Siddeswari Mancha	Siddeswari tala,Andul,Howrah	Howrah
277.	Songborto (Howrah)	Pro.- Mowshumi Shaw, 4/6, P.K. Roychowdury Lane, P.O. - Botanical Gardan	Howrah
278.	Srishti	99/1, Sitanath Bose Lane, Salkia, PIN - 711106	Howrah
279.	Sukirti	C/O - Dinabandhu Khashnobish, Panchanantala Road, Kadamtala, PIN - 711101	Howrah
280.	Swarsangam	C/O - Rohini Kumar Sarkar, Deamland Park, Panchanantala Road, Kadamtala	Howrah
281.	Theater Workers	120/1, Baruipara 1st Byelane, Bajeshibpur	Howrah
282.	Trisha	C/O - Bimal Krishna Raha, Shibpur, Mandirtola	Howrah
283.	Aanarta	Turning Point D.B.C. Road Bylane	Jalpaiguri
284.	Aarjo Natya Samaj	Rabindra Bhaban, Samaj Para, Jalpaiguri	Jalpaiguri
285.	Anami Theatre Centar	Pro.- Proloy Bhattacharjee, Shialpara	Jalpaiguri
286.	Annwasha	C/o - Sandip Bandhapadhya, Netaji Para Bus Stand, Jalpaiguri	Jalpaiguri
287.	Anuvab	Pro.- Parijut Rakshit, Ashrampara	Jalpaiguri

288.	Emon	Samaj Para, Jalpaiguri, PIN -735101	Jalpaiguri
289.	Bandhab Natyasamaj	Theatre Road, Kadamtala, PIN-735101	Jalpaiguri
290.	Chittapot	Pro.- Shakhhar Majumdar, Purto Aabasan, Hakimpara	Jalpaiguri
291.	Durbeekshan	C/O Sweta Choudhury, Sealpara, Jalpaiguri	Jalpaiguri
292.	Ichaadana (Jalpaiguri)	Pro.- Subhadayal Chakraborty, D.S.P. Bunglow, Racekorspara	Jalpaiguri
293.	Jalpaiguri Darpan Nattyogosthi	Pro. - Tandra Chakraborty, Atri Abasan, 2nd Floor, Shialpara, Jalpaiguri Town, PIN -735101	Jalpaiguri
294.	Jalpaiguri Kalakushali	Theatre Road, Samaj Para, Jalpaiguri Town, 735101	Jalpaiguri
295.	Jalpaiguri Muktangon	Pabitrpara, Jalpaiguri Town, PIN-735101	Jalpaiguri
296.	Jalpaiguri Rupayan	C/O-Dipankar Roy, Hotel Safari Pathar Rastha, Hospital Para, Jalpaiguri-735101	Jalpaiguri
297.	Runner Natya Sangstha	C/O Anirban Sarkar, Mohanta Para, Falakata, Jalpaiguri	Jalpaiguri
298.	Mukhosh Natya Sanstha	Pro.- Turning Point, D.B.C. Road (Byelane) (Back side of Sani Mandir)	Jalpaiguri
299.	Prachesta	Pro.- Prnoy Kumar Sarkar, Old Police Line, (Back side of Dishari Club)	Jalpaiguri
300.	Tarun Natya Sangstha	Dhupguri Main Road, Post Office Para, Dhupguri.	Jalpaiguri
301.	Sanghashree Yaba Natya Sanstha	16/449, Damodar Debnath Sarani, Alipurduar	Jalpaiguri
302.	Soilush	Pro.- Alok Chakraborty, Race Course Para (Beside of Jilla Granthagar)	Jalpaiguri
303.	Sombodhi	Pro.- Prasun Dasgupta, Ukilpara	Jalpaiguri
304.	Udichi Natty Sangstha	Pro.- Kalyan Sen, Hakimpara, Opposite Rotary Club, Jalpaiguri	Jalpaiguri
305.	Hing Ting	Kuntal Sen, Shilpara, Jalpaiguri Town	Jalpaiguri.
306.	Aahiree (Kasba)	786, Kamal Mukherjee Lane, Ruby Circle, Kasba	Kolkata
307.	Aahoran	34/D, Chitpur Road, Shyam Bazar	Kolkata
308.	Aakhar (Paikpara)	1/4, Nriyagopal Chatterjee Lane, Paikpara, PIN - 7000037	Kolkata
309.	Aatmoja (Behala)	Pro.- Satyapriya Sarkar, 64, Eshar Mitra Road, Behala	Kolkata
310.	Aayna	2C/1 Narayan roy Road, Behala, Kolkata-700008	Kolkata
311.	Abekhyan	Sishu Bhawan, 6, Purbapara Road Extension	Kolkata
312.	Abhaash Daksin Kolkata	A/52,Ramkrishnanagar,P.O-Laskarpur,Garia	Kolkata
313.	Agit-Prop	Puratan Rashkhol, P.O - B.D Sopan, Khardah	Kolkata
314.	Agnish	174/1, Purba Kodaliya School Road, Noba Barrakpur	Kolkata
315.	Aikyo Natyoo Sangstha	9, Rajani Gupta Row, Sealdah	Kolkata
316.	Alipur Ahana	100/3 B ,Alipur Road,Kolkata-700027	Kolkata
317.	Anasambal	357/2B Prince Anwar Shah Road, Kolkata-32	Kolkata
318.	Anashan	165, Main Road West Noba Barrakpur	Kolkata
319.	Aneek	B.C 24/6, Saltlake, Kolkata-700064	Kolkata

320.	Anganika Natya Sangstha	Pro. - Deepojwol Roy, Hotath Colony, 4 No. Water Tank, Kazi Para, Balghoriya	Kolkata
321.	Angan (Belgharia)	C/0-Avi Sengupta,10 M.B Road,Block A/7 Kolkata-700083,Phone- 9903047174/7980598929	Kolkata
322.	Ananya Shakh	Aakra Noyapara, Mohashtala, P.O - Behala	Kolkata
323.	Any Chatona	29/1, Sree Gopal Mallick Lane	Kolkata
324.	Antar-Ranga	31 A Jheel Road, Kolkata-700031	kolkata
325.	Anukar (Behala)	P-101 A, Senhati Colony, Behala	Kolkata
326.	Anukarak	Basantika Appartment, Ground Floor, 139/64. Chowdhurypara, Rahora	Kolkata
327.	Antarik Mancha	124,Priyatosh Boral Road, Birati	Kolkata
328.	Anunatok Bikash Mancha	114,Jagadish Basu Road,New Barrackpore,Kolkata-700131	Kolkata
329.	Anubartan	87/4D, Old Canal Road, South Dumdum	Kolkata
330.	Anuva Natya Gosthee	95/97, Bose Pukur Road, Bank Plot, Kasba	Kolkata
331.	Aparanho Club	Netajinagar,7 No. Ward,Tollygunj,Contact-Tapash Mitra(24213454)	Kolkata
332.	Ariadaha Khola Haowa Natyo Dal	167, A. P. C. Roy Street, Majherdanga, Ariadaha	Kolkata
333.	Arindam (Bajbaj)	86, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bajbaj	Kolkata
334.	Arunaday Sangha	150 Postal Park, Bansdroni, Kolkata-70	Kolkata
335.	Aarushi	55/4, Kalikumar Majumdar Road, Kolkata-700075	Kolkata
336.	Atondra Natty Sangstha	43/B Azad Hind Park, Kolkata	Kolkata
337.	Aveek Nattyogosthi	C/o Jayanta Bandopadhyay, BG-150, Salt Lake	Kolkata
338.	Avijatree (Panihati)	Joygopal Roy Chowdhury Road, Panihati	Kolkata
339.	Baghajatin Alap	C-2/6 ,Baghajatin Mangalik Abasan	Kolkata
340.	Baguiati Prottay	Adarsha Pally, Jagatpur	Kolkata
341.	Balaji Rangalay	190/2, Barasat Road	Kolkata
342.	Ballygunj Antarmukh	18, Deodar Street, Kolkata - 70019	Kolkata
343.	Bandish	193, Green Park, Block-A	Kolkata
344.	Sammilita Natyajan	C/O - Satyabrata Giri, Pragati Kalakshetra, Jadavpur	Kolkata
345.	Bangiyo Nattyangan	Jadavpur,Sulekha more,Kolkata	Kolkata
346.	Bansdroni Sarbajanin Natyo Sangstha	Suravi Abasan 3,D/8, Niranjana Pally, Bansdroni, Kolkata-700070	Kolkata
347.	Barendrapara Kothokota	Sonarapur, P.O-Rajpur, Barendrapara,Kolkata-700149	Kolkata
348.	Barisha Agrani	11, K.K Roychowdhury Road, Shakherbajar, Barisha, Kolkata-700008	Kolkata
349.	Barisha Rupchaya	55/2 K.K Roychowdhury Road, Barisha, Shakherbajar, Kolkata-700008	Kolkata
350.	Barisha Subrittayan	51, D.H. Road, Behala Chowrasta, Contact-9804366247	Kolkata
351.	Barrackpore Karubhash	Barrackpore, 61/3DR, N. N. Bagchi Road	Kolkata
352.	Bashdrani Sabyachachi Natya	C/39, Purba Anandapally, Purba Putiyari	Kolkata

	Sanstha		
353.	Basirhat Kingshook	Kacharipara,P.O-Basirhat,PIN-743411	Kolkata
354.	Batanagar Ankur	Taltala, Batanagar, Kolkata-700140	Kolkata
355.	Byatikram	11, Bikramgar, Jadavpur	Kolkata
356.	Behala Bratyojon	28/D/1, Mahendra Banerjee Road, Behala	Kolkata
357.	Belgachia Rongosrijan Natty Charcha Kendra	7B, Indra Biswas Road,Kolkata-37	Kolkata
358.	Belgachia Yubo Sammeloni	3, Voirab Mukherjee Lane, Kolkata-4	Kolkata
359.	Belgharia Godhuli	3 M.B Road,Belgharia,Kolkata-700056	Kolkata
360.	Bhaan Natyodol	Banshroni,Kolkata	Kolkata
361.	Bistarito	181, Haran Chandra Mukherjee Road, Shibbati Para, Khardah	Kolkata
362.	Bibhab Natya Academy	Kayabagan Vidyasagar Jubak Sangha, 16/1P/1, Roypukur Mandalpara Road	Kolkata
363.	Bidushak Nattyomandali	23/A, Shibkrishna Da Lane, Kolkata-54, Contact-Arup(9830623103)	Kolkata
364.	Bijoygarh Meghdoot	1/27, bijoygarh,Kolkata-700032	Kolkata
365.	Bochhor Kuri Pore	Golfgreen, Kolkata	Kolkata
366.	Bohurupee	7, Lower Range, Kolkata - 700017	Kolkata
367.	Bongoputul	B-26/1,Netajinagar,Piyali Town,Baruipur	Kolkata
368.	Brattyosenani	96, Arunachal Park, Kamalgazi , Kolkata	Kolkata
369.	Bratya Sarathi	146, Neelachal, Berati	Kolkata
370.	Candle The Cultural Group	Boral,Rishi Rajnarayan Pally	Kolkata
371.	Centre Stage	87/2,A.K Mukherjee Road,Saswati Housing Estate,P.o-Noapara,North 24 Pargana,Kolkata-700090	Kolkata
372.	Chalaman Natya Sanstha	Pro.- Suman Guha, 66/5 K. N. C. Road (South), Barasat	Kolkata
373.	Chhandanir	Pro.- Sutapa Sarkar, "Sutapaloy" 130/8 Lenin Sarani Bye Lane, Purba Kodaliya, Nababpur	Kolkata
374.	Chandradeep Nattyodol	17 /G,K.P.Roy Lane,Dhakuria,Kolkata-31	Kolkata
375.	Charbak	Pro.- Pradip Mukherjee, 37/B/2 Jhil Road, Dhakuria	Kolkata
376.	Chetona	61, Prince Anwar Shah Road, Tollygunge	Kolkata
377.	Children's Theatre Group	C/O-Saurav Sengupta, 26/5D Jhill Road, Contact No-9830707060	Kolkata
378.	Dahakuria Anandan Group Theatre	32 Dahakuria Station Lane,Kolkata-700031	Kolkata
379.	Dakshin Ruchiranga	14 A/1, Nandalal Mitra Lane, Ghoshpara	Kolkata
380.	Dalchhut	C/O Ananadabrata Bhattacharya, Mollargate, Mahashtala	Kolkata
381.	Daybaddha Natty Sangstha	S.L Chatterjee Street, Nimta, Kolkata-49	Kolkata
382.	Dhakuria On Stage Theatre Group	176, Dhakuria Link Lane, Kolkata-31	Kolkata
383.	Dhakuria Jitendra Smriti Chakra	1C, Jheel Road, Dhakuria, Kolkata, PIN-700031	Kolkata

384.	Dhakuria Yubotirtha	5/A, Sahidnagar, Dhakuria	Kolkata
385.	Dhansiri	136,Dr.Meghnath Saha Road,700074	Kolkata
386.	Dhritiman	Pro.- Bashkar Chakraborty, Indraprastha Apartment, Phase-III, 16, Shibchal Road, Birati	Kolkata
387.	Dhumketu Theatre	19B, Atalsur Road, Kolkata-700015	Kolkata
388.	Dilip Mukherjee Smriti Sangha	144 Picnic Garden Road,Kolkata-39	Kolkata
389.	Doibarik	93, Kanungo Park, Garia	Kolkata
390.	Dotyak	EB-110, Rajdanga Main Road	Kolkata
391.	Drishiti Ekhon	188 S.K.Deb Road, Patipukur, Kolkata-\$8	Kolkata
392.	Dumdum Charuranga	Shanti Sadan, Purba Sinthee Road, Flat No-11, Dumdum, PIN -700030	Kolkata
393.	Dumdum Raktokorobi Natty Academy	344/6/3, Laxmi Narayan Road, Dumdum Cantonment, PIN - 700065	Kolkata
394.	Dwitiyo Satta	P-101, Senhati Colony,Behala,Kolkata-34	Kolkata
395.	Eshona Natyam	86, D.B.C. Road, Padmapukur Park, Kestopur	Kolkata
396.	East Kolkata Cultural Organization	208.S.K Dev Road,P.O-Sreebhumi Kolkata-48	Kolkata
397.	Ebong	14/30, Barrister P. Mitra Road, Barahanagar	Kolkata
398.	Ebong Nandanik	P.Majumdar Road, Haltu, Contact - 9007000255,	Kolkata
399.	Ekti Daal	12G,Sabji Bagan Lane,Kolkata-700027	Kolkata
400.	Elevison Cultural Forum	4 No. Kholisakota Pally,rajbari,Kolkata-81,Contact-25122524	Kolkata
401.	Eso Natok Sikhi	BC 86,Kamal Park,Kestopur,Kolkata-700101	Kolkata
402.	Evening Club	16, Ghoshalpara Road, Barashat	Kolkata
403.	Expresion Natya Sansgtha	26, Netaji Subash Road, Behala	Kolkata
404.	Frankly Speaking Theatre Group	106/F, Block F, New Alipore, Kolkata-700053	Kolkata
405.	Front Stage	336 A/1, East Kodalia, New Barrackpore, Purbachal	Kolkata
406.	Fulki	472, Bankimpally, Sodpur	Kolkata
407.	Gardenrich Mitramon	A3/7, New Hajragoli Lane, Gardenrich, Kolkata-24	Kolkata
408.	Ghola Kalkrishti	Ghola Purbanchal, Block-A, Sodepur, Kol-111	Kolkata
409.	Godhuli	3, M.B.Road, Belghariya	Kolkata
410.	Gujob	3/78 Gurusaday Road, Kalikapur (7278055212)	Kolkata
411.	Hatekhori	C/O - Chiranjib Bhatta, Matangini Hazra Lane, Shitala Park, Belgharia	Kolkata
412.	Hypokrites	C/O Sukumar Chakraborty, 352/8, Diamond Harbour Road, Thakurpukur, Contact-9051654008	Kolkata
413.	I.P.A Theater Group	Tollygunjge, Banshdroni	Kolkata
414.	Ichchemoto	Thakurpara Road, Naihati	Kolkata
415.	Indian Mime Theatre	20/6 Seal Lane, Kolkata-700015	Kolkata
416.	Italgacha Friends Association	Dumdum 1 No. Busstop,Charakdanga,Contact-32053962	Kolkata
417.	Jabanika	C/O-Subir Chakraborty, Sonarpur, PIN - 700150, Contact - 9748108069	Kolkata
418.	Jadavpur Romyani	9/6,Bijoygarh, Jadavpur,PIN-700032	Kolkata

419.	Jagari Natya Sanstha	Barasat Evening Club, 16, Ghosal Para Road, Barasat	Kolkata
420.	Jagriti Sangha	Mahamaya Tola, Garia, Contact-2435-6317	Kolkata
421.	Jangam	140/A/6, B.T.Road, Bikram Supar Market, Olai Chanditala 3rd Lane, Nimta	Kolkata
422.	Jibankotha	Pro.-Nirmal Chatterjee, F.N.329, 3rd Floor-A, Talbagan, Rabindrapally, Krishnapur	Kolkata
423.	Jibanjyoti Natya Chakra	41/C, Dharmadas Sur Lane, Dhakuriya	Kolkata
424.	Janatar Sawal	Pro.- Prasun Bhandhapatya, 5 No. K.B. Bosu Road, Barasat	Kolkata
425.	Jourey Theatre	Madhyamgram Municipal Complex, Shop No-96, PIN-700129	Kolkata
426.	Kakurganchi Deepshikha	P44 C.I.T Road Scheme (9874186575)	Kolkata
427.	Kalakushali	1/1E, Talipara Lane	Kolkata
428.	Kaler Dhvani	C/O-Projesh Sengupta, Flat-A1, 37/6 Northern Avenue, Kolkata-700030	Kolkata
429.	Kalindi Natyasreejan	28, S K Deb Road, Jogmaya Apartment, Flat 3D PIN - 700048	Kolkata
430.	Kallol Theatar Group	B-3 Suniwas, Bidhannagar, Sector-2A	Kolkata
431.	Kalmukur	Pro.- Dipankar Bose, Ghola Purbachal (Block-A), Sodpur	Kolkata
432.	Kalpratima	42/10 Biren Roy Road, Monmohon Park, Behala, Kolkata-700008.	Kolkata
433.	Karunamoyee Saptarshi	29/5, Karunamoyee Ghat Road, Kolkata-700082	Kolkata
434.	Kasba Uttaran	286 Bosepukur Prantik Pally	Kolkata
435.	Khardah Aarohi	Pro.- Anil Chakraborty, 599, Pachim Khalpara Road, P.O. Kalyan Nagar	Kolkata
436.	Khardah Ahiri	P.O-Kalyan Nagar, Rahara, Khardaha, Kolkata	Kolkata
437.	Khardah Bhul Rasta	98/1 Uttarpara Road, Khardaha, Kolkata-700118	Kolkata
438.	Khardah Natokiyo	Rohora, Dangapara, Kolkata-700118	Kolkata
439.	Khanik Natya Sangha	C/O- Amitava Guha, Shyamasundari Sarani, Mandirhat Road, Rahara	Kolkata
440.	Kharij Theatre	28/45 Missionpara, Rahara, Kolkata-700118	Kolkata
441.	Kheyali Natty Sangstha	South Ramnagar, Baruipur, PIN-743387	Kolkata
442.	Kheyalkhola	17/1 Rajendra Avinue, Ultodanga, Kolkata	Kolkata
443.	Khidirpur Rong-Be-Rong	9, Soshthitola Road, Khidirpur, Kolkata-700023	Kolkata
444.	Khowabnama Theatre Group	Manikarnika, 65B Sukumar Roy Road, Jadavpur Contact - 9830019479	Kolkata
445.	Koushali Natty Sangstha	Subhasnagar, Nilganj, Kolkata-121, Contact-9339728718	Kolkata
446.	Kolkata Natya Sabha	Pro.- Kanuranjan Dey, 29, Ashutosh Colony	Kolkata
447.	Kolkata Natty Sena	60, N.N. Joardar Road, APURBAA Apt., Netaji Nagar, Tollygunge,	Kolkata
448.	Kolkata Natty Chakra	119, Indira Nagar Colony, Kolkata	Kolkata
449.	Kolkata Opera	589, Parnashree Pally, Kol-60	Kolkata
450.	Kolkata Prekshapot	C/O-Abhijit Ganguly, Mominpur Bibekananda	Kolkata

		Pally, 700139	
451.	Kolkata Chintapot	Harirampur, Vivekananda Pally, Maheshtala	Kolkata
452.	Kolkata Sreejak	16/ A,Chandranath Simlai Lane,Kolkata-2	Kolkata
453.	Kolkata Simana	78, Surya Sen Street, Kolkata	Kolkata
454.	Kolkata Swatantra	71/8/9, Dr. Nilmoni Sarkar Street, Baranagar	Kolkata
455.	Kolkata Theatre House	14/C, Gouri Shankar Ghosal lane, Narikeldanga, Kolkata-700011	Kolkata
456.	Komol Gandhar	3A, D.D. Mangalghat Road, Dakhineshwar	Kolkata
457.	Kushilab	Pro.- Madhab Hazra, 13 B/1, Amulya Charan Paul Street, Ariadaha	Kolkata
458.	Kothakriti	TG-2/10, Teghoria, Kolkata-700157	Kolkata
459.	Kothika	Pro.- Chiranjib Sarkhal, 138, Jagadish Chandra Bose Road,(Chota Bottala), Naba Barrakpur	Kolkata
460.	Krantikal	1 No. Dakhinpally, Sodepur	Kolkata
461.	Krishti	Pro. - Swagatam Mukherjee, 221, Jagadish Sinha Roy Road, Garia	Kolkata
462.	Krishti Doshom	3/1, Jiban Krishna Chatterjee Lane, Sodepur, Kolkata	Kolkata
463.	Krishti Sangsad	Abhijit Bhawan, Chowhatir More, P.O- Harinavi, Kolkata-700148, Contact- 9432828224	Kolkata
464.	Krishti Unnayan	Muktabagan, Kalighat, Kolkata	Kolkata
465.	Kushilab (Salt Lake)	F .E 214, Saltlale-3, Kolkata-700106	Kolkata
466.	Kushumita	16/12, Old Kalkata Road, Khardaha, Rohara, Dangapara	Kolkata
467.	Learners Theatre Society	Anandamohon Basu Road,Kolkata-700006	Kolkata
468.	Little Thespians	Lake Gardan Govt. Housing, Block-V, Flat No. 4, 48/4, Sultan Alam Road	Kolkata
469.	Lokayata (Barasat)	1/1A, Kadarnath Bhattacharjee Lane, Barasat	Kolkata
470.	Lokayata	23 Neogipara Road, Baranagar, PIN-700036	Kolkata
471.	Lokkrishti	AA-81, Bidhan Nagar, Sector-1	Kolkata
472.	Madhuban Natya Sanstha	Subashpally Moth, Nimta Paschimpara, Belgharia	Kolkata
473.	Makhla Shilpok	A,K Mukherjee Road,Kolkata-90	Kolkata
474.	Manchadut	26, Senbagan, Forth Street, Agartala	Kolkata
475.	Manchasree	196/E-4/1,Picnic Garden Road,3rd Floor,Picnic Park,Kolkata-39	Kolkata
476.	Medhaa	Biplabi Barin Ghosh Sarani, 34/6/1, Kolkata-67	Kolkata
477.	Milan Sangha	D.P.Nagar, Belgharia	Kolkata
478.	Mimewala	133,Kamal Park,Birati,Kolkata-700051	Kolkata
479.	Moitri Sangha	3 No.Mahajati Nagar, Agarpara, Kolkata-109	Kolkata
480.	Monchojon	125/122,Bhupen Roy,Kolkata-34	Kolkata
481.	Monchapran	8/125/1A, Bijoygar	Kolkata
482.	Muksena	Udaypur, Olaychandi Third Lane, Nimta	Kolkata
483.	Nabamayukh Nattyosangstha	5 F Fern Road, Kolkata-19	Kolkata
484.	Nabankur	9/4, Nepal Bhattacharjee Street	Kolkata
485.	Nabin Sangha	C/O - Sandip Chakraborty, 80,Baruipara Lane, Rabindrapally, Brahmapur, Garifa,Kolkata-38	Kolkata
486.	Nadikar	47/1, Shyambazar Street	Kolkata
487.	Nagorik Theatre	Barasat, Circular Road, Kolkata-26	Kolkata

488.	Naholi	18, Sukanta Park, Krishnapur, P.O-Prafulla Kanan, Kolkata-101	Kolkata
489.	Nanakotha	Nabopally, Nataghar	Kolkata
490.	Nandipot	26, Guruprasad Chowdhury Lane	Kolkata
491.	Natokar Dal	40/1, Rakhal Ghosh Lane	Kolkata
492.	Natundal	14C, Gorisankar Ghosal Lane, Nakardanga Rly. Bridge	Kolkata
493.	Natyamon	20/6, Sahapur Colony, New Alipur	Kolkata
494.	Natyaprachya (Belgharia)	21/2, Nabab Abdul Latif Street, Belgharia	Kolkata
495.	New Alipur Natyacharcha	98, Chatla Road	Kolkata
496.	New Barrackpore Frontal Creation	21A/675, Chaltabagan, Himachal Colony, New Barrackpore, Kolkata-131	Kolkata
497.	New Theater Group	128-A. Pashupati Bhattacharjee Road, Shyampally, Behala	Kolkata
498.	Novice Actor's Group	Sujata Debi Bidyamandir, Sujata Sadan, Hajra	Kolkata
499.	Niharika	C. Road, Anandipur, Barrackpur, Nonachandanpur	Kolkata
500.	Nimta Thespian Society	107 ,M.B.Road, Nimta, Kolkata-49	Kolkata
501.	Noya Obhinoy Theatre Group	4C Madhab Das Lane,KOL-700006	Kolkata
502.	Noye Natuya	25,A Rajnarayan Park, P.O- Boral Kolkata - 700154	Kolkata
503.	Panchamitram	140/2, Jagaliya Para Road	Kolkata
504.	Panchayudh	11, Jagadish Bose Road, Kanchangar, Jadavpur	Kolkata
505.	Panihati Sayudh	Ramchandra chatterjee Road,Panihati,North 24 Pargana	Kolkata
506.	Parampara Uttaran Sangskritik Chakra	Talpukur, Barrackpore, Kolkata-700123	Kolkata
507.	Paromanu	Shardhanjali, Nepali Bagan, Kajjialpara, Rajarhat	Kolkata
508.	Peoples' Art Centre	9/C, Shibtala Road, Nona Chandan Pukur	Kolkata
509.	Peoples' Puppet Theater	80, Acharjee Jagadish Chandra Basu Road	Kolkata
510.	Peoples' Little Theatre	Kallol, 140/24, Netaji Subhash Chandra Basu Road, Azadgarh, Tollygunj. PIN - 700040	Kolkata
511.	Platform	Kalasangam 72, Kabi Sukanta Sarani	Kolkata
512.	Platform Nattyogosthi	TG-1/7, Peyarabagan, Tegharia, Kolkata-157	Kolkata
513.	Prekshit (Mahashtala)	C/O- Shibani Bose, Ramkrishna Pally, Mominpur, Mahashtala	Kolkata
514.	Purbayon Natty Sangstha	C/O- Sintu Das, Banoshree Housing, Barrackpore, Contact-9432969085	Kolkata
515.	Purbachal Shakti Sangha	36 Purbachal Main Road,Kolkata-78	Kolkata
516.	Rabindranagar Nattyauddh	West Rabindranagar,Dumdum Cantonmet,North 24 Pargana,Kolkata-700065	Kolkata
517.	Radhanagar Darpan Cultural Orgination	Pro.- Ashim Kumar Dutta, 50/G/2, Dr. J. R. Dhar Road, Radhanagar, Damdum	Kolkata

518.	Rahi	12/ A, Radhakanta Jiu Street	Kolkata
519.	Raipur Ektara	21/1, Padmapukur Road, Raipur	Kolkata
520.	Rajasaja Natya Kendra	55A, Vivakananda Sarani, Thakurpukur	Kolkata
521.	Rajdanga Club Samannaya Committee	Purba Kolkata Uponagari,Rashbihari Connector,Kolkata-107,Contact-2442-1902	Kolkata
522.	Rajpur Agami	C/O - Nabyendu Das, Barandra Para, Rajpur	Kolkata
523.	Raktabindu	123/18, Gopal Lal Thakur Road	Kolkata
524.	Rakta Polash	90/2/C, R.N. Tagore Road, Dumdum Cant.	Kolkata
525.	Raktim Diganta (Nimta)	Ghanashyam Banerjee Road, Nimta	Kolkata
526.	Rangakarmee	200, Prince Anwar Sha Road, Office - 61, Anwar Sha (Scheme 14-B) 1st Floor.	Kolkata
527.	Rangalok	34, Kashi Mitra Ghat Street	Kolkata
528.	Rangapeeth	1/4 A Shyam Bose Road, Kolkata-700027	Kolkata
529.	Rangasava	C/O-Prabir sarkar,8/1,Postal Park,Bansdroni	Kolkata
530.	Rangashilpi	90B K.G Bose Sarani,moulali,PIN-700085	Kolkata
531.	Rashbehari Shailushik	7/2B, Gopal Banerjee Lane, Kolkata-700026	Kolkata
532.	Raipur Iskraa	190A/5 Raypur Road, Kolkata,-700047	Kolkata
533.	Renaissance	8B ,Nalin Sarkar Strret,Kolkata-700004	Kolkata
534.	Rickshaw Chalok Natya Samity	Nabagram Jhil Road, Garia	Kolkata
535.	Riktam	Bijali Park, Madhamgram	Kolkata
536.	Rombos Nattyodol	3/146,J.D.Nagar, Kolkata-700056	Kolkata
537.	Roots India	Block D, Abasan Apartment, 325,Green Park, Baghajatin	Kolkata
538.	Rupakaar	Pro.-Bijoya Farmacy, Rampur B.B.T.Road, Gobindapur, Mahashtala, 11 No.Ward	Kolkata
539.	Rupkotha (Krishnapur)	C/O- Nandipot, 26, Guruprasad Chowdhury Lane, Krishnapur	Kolkata
540.	Saltlake Dekhasona	F.D.308, Saltlake City, Sector-3, Kolkata-700106	Kolkata
541.	Sahajatri	C-50/ A,Sonali Park,Banshdroni,Kolkata-700070	Kolkata
542.	Samakalin Sanskriti	Pro- Dabashis Das (Ramu), 0/5, Durgapur Colony, New Alipur	Kolkata
543.	Samikshan	Tirupati Residency, Block-B, Flat No. B-2, 242/2 Jatin Sen Sarani	Kolkata
544.	Sammiloni Club	3 No.Sethh Colony,Dumdum,Kolkata-30	Kolkata
545.	Sandarvo	Souma Majumdar, 70, Ballygunge Gardan	Kolkata
546.	Sanghati	2, S.K.Deb.Road, Purba Kodaliya, Kolkata-48, Contact-9830247474	Kolkata
547.	Sangkranti Ganasangskritik Chakra	42 Rabindranath Thakur Road, Bediagara, Kolkata - 77, Contact-9830856020	Kolkata
548.	Samayer Sanglap	574, Arabinda Sarani, Shubuddhipur, Baruipur	Kolkata
549.	Sanskar Bharati	65/7, Joytish Roy Road	Kolkata
550.	Saptarshi	C/O- Arup Chakraborty, C/34, Azadgarh, Tollygunj -40, Contact - 9830477022	Kolkata
551.	Saradha Cultural Academy	8 No. Kadarpara, kasba Rubi Park	Kolkata

552.	Sarangsho	Parul Villa, 33/D, Gadadhar Chatterjee Street, New Garia	Kolkata
553.	Sampratik	232/ 7, Kazi Sabyasachi Sarani, New Garia	Kolkata
554.	Saraswati Natyasala	Someswar Apartment, 4rth Floor, Flat 4B, 8/69B Netaji Nagar	Kolkata
555.	Sarathi Natya Sanstha	218, Neelachal, Birati	Kolkata
556.	Saron Nattyosangstha	C/O-Mrinal Dey, Birpara, Dumdum	Kolkata
557.	Satadal Sangha	Taki Road, Barasat, Kolkata-124, Contact- Asish Baidya(2562-7041)	Kolkata
558.	Sathi	Netajinagar, Tollygunj, Kolkata	Kolkata
559.	Sawpnasandhani	107, Harish Mukherjee Road	Kolkata
560.	Sayak	Bijon Theater. 5A, Raja Rajkrishna Street	Kolkata
561.	Sayang Ayudh	66, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee Road, Gol Park	Kolkata
562.	Shabdomughdho Natyakendra	F-26/5, Karunamoyee Housing Estate, Saltlake City	Kolkata
563.	Shashtha Indriyo	14B, Northern Avenue, Kolkata - 700037	Kolkata
564.	Shilpayan Senani	Rajpur, Barendrapara, Kolkata-149	Kolkata
565.	Shimantika (Gariahaat)	19/1, Kamarpukur Lane, Gariahaat	Kolkata
566.	Shobhabajar Protibimbo	9, Shree Aurobinda Sarani, Kolkata-700005	Kolkata
567.	Shoubhonik	123 S.P Mukherjee Road, Kolkata-700026	Kolkata
568.	Protibarto	59 Surya Sen Street, Kolkata-700005	Kolkata
569.	Shrutirangam	194, Kalicharan Ghosh Road, Damdum Junction, Jamtala, Kolkata-700050	Kolkata
570.	Shudrak	C/O - Debashish Majumdar; 123, Ramanath Majumdar Street, Belgachhiya	Kolkata
571.	Shyambazar Natyacharcha Kendra	146, Raja Dinendra Street, Kolkata - 700004	Kolkata
572.	Simantika	Pro.- Shathi Biswas, B/4, Jamuna Sagar Apartment, 132, N.N. Road, Vivekananda Pally	Kolkata
573.	Sinthee Anuranan	8J/2A, South Sinthee Road, Dumdum, Kolkata-54	Kolkata
574.	Sinthee Sankharob	15/B Mondalpara Lane, Kolkata-90	Kolkata
575.	Sohon	7A, Talipara Lane	Kolkata
576.	Somoy-mafik	C/o Babul Basak, Surya Sen Road, Durgapur Colony, New Alipur	Kolkata
577.	Samaswar (Hridaypur)	Rishi Bankim Sarani, Hariharpur, Hridaypur	Kolkata
578.	Sanglap	P 17/1, Motijhil Avenue, Kolkata-74	Kolkata
579.	Sangstab	5/52A, Bijoygarh	Kolkata
580.	Sopoth	Ramkrishna Sarani, Behala	Kolkata
581.	Soujatya	29, Ashutosh Colony, Haltu	Kolkata
582.	Souptik	Sarbbapally, Nonachandan Pukur, Barrackpore	Kolkata
583.	Souvik Sanskritik Chakra	"Nastyanir" 3/B.D.D. Mandal Ghut Road, P.O. Dakhinashwar	Kolkata
584.	Spandan	34, Bholanath Sen Sarani, Mogradajar, Baguiati, Contact-Samudra Guha, 9830479834/9874447873	Kolkata

585.	Spandan (Barasat)	Pro.- Pabitra Mukherjee, C.P.T.A. Block, Hridaypur	Kolkata
586.	Sucharcha (Garia)	12/1/A, Baisnabghata Lane, Garia	Kolkata
587.	Sukhchar Manchamukh	Raja Rammohan Road, Sukhchar, Kolkata-700115	Kolkata
588.	Sukhchar Pancham Repertory Theatre	Jalsaghar, Art Gallery Studio Theatre, Sodepur, Kolkata	Kolkata
589.	Sundaram	57, Jatin Das Road	Kolkata
590.	Suruchi Sangha Cultural Org.	11, Priyadarshini Mahajan Road, Badamtola	Kolkata
591.	Sunilnagar Drama Centre	143/171, Picnic Gardan Road	Kolkata
592.	Sutanuti Canvas	545A Rabindra Sarani, Bagbajar, Kolkata-700003	Kolkata
593.	Swabak	12/1 Priyonath Chakraborty Lane, Kolkata-700035	Kolkata
594.	Sanirbandha	Anunay Abashan, 71/8/9, Dr. Nilmoni Sarkar Street	Kolkata
595.	Swapnasuchana	Goirik Apartment 5/3, Ballygunge Place, Flat 2E, 2nd Floor Kolkata-700019.	Kolkata
596.	Swapnachar	Pro.- Munmum Chakraborty, 373, Shahid Khudiram Basu Sarani, Manicktola	Kolkata
597.	Swapnil (Narkeldanga)	Pro.- Nibadita Das, 19 Motilal Sen Lane, Narkeldanga, Contact-9609816504	Kolkata
598.	Swapnil (Dumdum)	C/O-Rajib Chatterjee, 58/48 B.T Road, Khardah, Flat 4E&F, PIN - 700117	Kolkata
599.	Swatantra Swar	P-2, Brahma Samaj Road, Ram Narayan Para, Kolkata-700034	Kolkata
600.	Sayangsandha (Tollygunj)	13 Banerjee Para Road, Purba Putiyari Pump House, Tollygunj.	Kolkata
601.	Swopnashil Amra Ka'jon	C/O Abhijit Sutradhar, Deshbandhu Lane, Narkeldanga, Contact - 9609816504	Kolkata
602.	Taranga	32/B, Gray Street	Kolkata
603.	Sixth Sense Theatre	C/O - Arup Raha, Iswar Niwas, 12, Banamali Roy Lane, Regent Park, Kolkata-700040	Kolkata
604.	Theater Station	73/B, Guru Govind Sing Sarani, Ultadanga Rly. Crossing.	Kolkata
605.	Thealight	57/1A, Durga Chandra Mitra Sarani	Kolkata
606.	Theater Collage	Subrata Ghosh, 2/B. Sir Gurudas Road	Kolkata
607.	Theater Place	6/5 Bijoy Mukherjee Lane, Bhabanipur	Kolkata
608.	Theater Platform	"Maya" Kalyan Nagar, Via. Panshila, Kharda	Kolkata
609.	Theater Proscenium	241, Maharaja Nandakumar Road (North), Barahanagar, Alambazar	Kolkata
610.	Theater Shine	Bidhan Shishu Sarani, P.H.Complex, Block-C-1/302, Ultadanga	Kolkata
611.	Theater Orientation	43/C, Arabinda Ghosh Road, Manictala	Kolkata
612.	Theaterical	4/28, Purbapally, Sodpur	Kolkata
613.	Theaterwala	14B, Ram Chand Ghosh Lane	Kolkata
614.	Bharatiya Gananatya Sangha (Spandan)	DL-230/5, Sector-II, Salt Lake, Kolkata - 700091	Kolkata
615.	Theatre Tent	69/2, Jadav Ghosh Road, Kol-61	Kolkata
616.	Theatre Workshop	11, Paul Street, Kolkata-700004	Kolkata
617.	Tiljala Writu	51/2, C.N Roy Road, Kolkata700039	Kolkata

618.	Tollygunj Muhurta Natyagoshthi	76/3/A/G, Dakshina Ranjan Roy Sarani, Ranikuthi, Tollygunj, Kolkata-700041	Kolkata
619.	Tollygunj Swapnamoitri	85/13 B Chondi Ghosh Road, PIN-700040	Kolkata
620.	Tritiya Sutra	54, Tulip Gardan Road, Garfa	Kolkata
621.	Trishakti	152/1, Picnic garden Road, Kolkata-39	Kolkata
622.	Udayan Sangha	A/85 (I Block),Baghajatin Pally,Kolkata-92	Kolkata
623.	Uddeepan Natya Gosthi	4/4, Bajandra Ghosh Lane (Belegkata/Fulbagan)	Kolkata
624.	Uhini	30 P/2, Harekrishna Sethh Lane, Kolkata	Kolkata
625.	Unmilan Theatre Group	183/A , Bhattacharjee Para Road, Bharoti Sangha Club, Kolkata-63	Kolkata
626.	Utthaan Natyo Sangshtha	6/H/1 Kripanath Dutta Road	Kolkata
627.	Uttar Sarathi Natya Akadamee	C/39, Anandapally (Purba), Purba Putiyari	Kolkata
628.	Uttarsuri (Khardha)	Pro.- Anshuman Chakraborty, Dakhinpally, P.O. Rahara	Kolkata
629.	Vidyasagar College Drama Club	39, Sankar Ghosh lane, Vidyachakra Colony, Kol-700006	Kolkata
630.	Janakalyan Sangha	Khalpar, Gokulpur, Kataganj, Gour	Malda
631.	Malda Malancha	C/O-Parimal Tribedi, South Krisnapally, P.O-Malda Town, P.O - 732101	Malda
632.	Muskan Natya Sanstha	Kaliyachak, Baliadanga	Malda
633.	Malda Theatre Platform	C/O - Sudipta Kundu, Md. Sahidullah Road, Avirampur, Malda Town.	Malda
634.	Malda Dramatic Club	New Cinema More, beside Durgakinkar Sadan, College Road, Malda Town	Malda
635.	Aadarsha Natya Akademi	Gopinathpur (Petrol Pump), Kandi	Murshidabad
636.	Baharampore Chharpotro	70 Ukilabad Road,Baharampore,Murshidabad	Murshidabad
637.	Baharampore Rangabhumi	Khagra, Murshidabad, B-502/13/3 A C Road, P.O-Khagra, Murshidabad- 742103	Murshidabad
638.	Baharampur Rano Natty Sangstha	Dhopghaat, Baharampur, Murshidabad,742101	Murshidabad
639.	Farakka Cultural Unit	Junior Indenius Association, Farraka Barrage, Murshidabad	Murshidabad
640.	Farakka Barrage Recreation Centre	Farakka Barrage,Murshidabad-742212	Murshidabad
641.	Jhar Natya Gosthi	C/O Sumantra Sadhunkha, Shrabangola, Kandi	Murshidabad
642.	Jivdharpara Dramatic Club	Kandi Jibdhar Para, Sasthitala	Murshidabad
643.	Joar-A Wave of Evolution	P.O+P.S-Jiaganj, PIN-742123	Murshidabad
644.	Baharampore Repertory Theatre	Jubonaswo Mancha, Baharampore,Murshidabad	Murshidabad
645.	Lalgola Natty Srijan	Srimantapur, Lalgola(8972274252/8436306383)	Murshidabad
646.	Nattyamandali	Madrassa Road, Notungola, Jongipur	Murshidabad
647.	Natyam Bolaka	Raghunathgange, P.O. Raghunathpur, Jangipur	Murshidabad

648.	Natyom Sradhyanjali	Babubazar, Jongipur, PIN-742213	Murshidabad
649.	Prantik	31, Krishnanath Road, Baharampore	Murshidabad
650.	Raghunathganj Nattyo Niketan	Ranani,Raghunathganj,C/O-Souvik Banerjee	Murshidabad
651.	Raghunathganj Theatre Group	Gopalnagar,P.O+P.S-Raghunathganj	Murshidabad
652.	Rakhaliya Natya Gosthi	Jamobazar, Kandi	Murshidabad
653.	Rangatirtha	241, J.C Bose Road(bi-lane), P.O- Khagra	Murshidabad
654.	Rangashram (Berhampore)	Shardhanjali Aabashan, 195, A.C. Road (Main) P.O. Khagra	Murshidabad
655.	Vivakananda Natya Sanstha	C/O - Manikanchan Halder, Godadhar Nagar, Chhatina, Kandi.	Murshidabad
656.	Writtik	Bimal Singha Road, (Back side of Berhampore Club) Berhampore	Murshidabad
657.	Yugagni	Old Post Office Road, Beharampore, PIN-742101	Murshidabad
658.	Aboyob	Bogula,Nadia,P.O-741502,C/o-Biswajit Biswas	Nadia
659.	Angikar	Vill+P.O-Matiari, P.S-Kaliganj, Nadia-741153 Contact-(953474)269395	Nadia
660.	Avuto Nattya Sangstha	10 RK Banerjee Lane,Ranaghat,Nadia,PIN-741201	Nadia
661.	Bee Theatre	Haripada Mukherjee Road, Boubajar, Krishnanagar,Nadia	Nadia
662.	Birnagar Malancha Gosthi	P.O-Birnagar,PIN-741127	Nadia
663.	Chakda Ganamukh	P.O-Chadah,Netaji Park,PIN-741222	Nadia
664.	Dipandra Natya Accademi	Pro.- Chitta Bhaduri, Rangabinda Road, Nabadeep	Nadia
665.	Goyeshpur Songlap	C/O Atanu Chakladar; Hariharpally, Goyeshpur, Kalyani, PIN -741234	Nadia
666.	Goyespur Monchosena	8/887,Goyespur,Nadia-741234	Nadia
667.	Haw Jaw Baw Raw Law	N.S.Road, Chakdaha, PIN-741222	Nadia
668.	Hinash	Netaji Subhash Road, Chakdah	Nadia
669.	Icchepakhi Sangskritik Songstha	Matiari,vill+P.O-Matiari,P.S-Kaliaganj	Nadia
670.	Jaguli Natya Sangha	Barajaguli,Chowmatha,Nadia	Nadia
671.	Jantrik Natya Sanstha	Pro.- Subrata Bhattacharjee, 2 No. Gobindanagar, Madhanpur	Nadia
672.	Kalyani Kalamandalam	B-6/98,Kalyani,Nadia,PIN-741235	Nadia
673.	Kalyani Nagorik Samiti	C/O-Sankar sarkar(2582-8214),Kalyani,Nadia	Nadia
674.	Kalyani Town Club	Kalyani,Nadia,Contact-Shankar Chakraborty(25829320)	Nadia
675.	Krishnanagar Sinchan	5,Baghadanga lane,Krishnanagar,Nadia-741101	Nadia
676.	Madanpur Abhinoy	Vill+P.O-Madanpur,Nadia-741245	Nadia
677.	Madanpur Yatrik Nattyo Sangstha	2No. Gobindanagar,P.O-Madanpur,Nadia-741245	Nadia

678.	Malancha Natya Gosthi	Pro.- Tarak Guha, Birpara	Nadia
679.	Manchasena	8/887, Gayeshpur, Nadia	Nadia
680.	Nabadwip Sammilani	Prachin Mayapur, Nabadwip, Nadia-741302	Nadia
681.	Nabarun	Kashyap Para,Shantipur,Nadia,Contact-Bijan Ghosh(953472)279335	Nadia
682.	Pratibadi Padatik	Pro.- Aniruddha Modak, 14, B.K. Goswami Road, Santipur	Nadia
683.	Protivash (Nabadwip)	Pro.-Pankaj Majumdar, Poraghat Road, Nabadwip	Nadia
684.	Ranaghat Chetona	Lenin corner,Netaji Subhas Road,Chakda,Nadia	Nadia
685.	Ranaghat Srijok	Satigacha,Binpara,Anuliya,Ranaghat	Nadia
686.	Rangapith	70/1, Perer Hut Lane, Rannagar Mistri Para, Santipur	Nadia
687.	Roddur	Village-Vidyanagar,P.O-Charashyamdas,P.S-Bishnupur,PIN-741101	Nadia
688.	Rupkatha	24, Station Approach Road, Krishnanagar	Nadia
689.	Sajghar	C/O Ashoknath Basu, Gopalganj Khelar Math, Shantipur.	Nadia
690.	Sanglap	Natokar Ghar, Pouro 3 No. Ward, P.O. - Gayeshpur	Nadia
691.	Santipur Anweshan	Rajput Para, Santipur, Nadia	Nadia
692.	Santipur Sreejoni	15, Uttam Kumar Street, Golapganj, Santipur	Nadia
693.	Sayak	Nabadwip, Prachin Mayapur	Nadia
694.	Shantipur Anweshan	Rajput Para,P.O-Shantipur	Nadia
695.	Shantipur Sanskritik	58/2 K.B.Pramanik Street,Shantipur,Nadia	Nadia
696.	Shilpi Chakra	A-11/282, Kalyani	Nadia
697.	Shinchan	Bagdanga Baylane, Krishna Nagar	Nadia
698.	Souptik	B-13/15, Surjo Sen Sarani, Baidya Pally, Kalyani	Nadia
699.	Sokanta Smriti Nattyosangstha	15, Basundhara Park, Kalyani,PIN-741235	Nadia
700.	Srinattyo	43, Manikuntala Sen Road, Saheedchawk, 5th Row, Chakdaha	Nadia
701.	Sutrapaat	Purano Bajar Road, Nonaganj More, Bagula-741502	Nadia
702.	Suchana	Pro.- Madan Mohan Dey, Nonaganj, Bagula	Nadia
703.	Tarun Natya Gosthi	P.C. Ghosh Road, Nabadwip	Nadia
704.	Tehatta Angikar Goshthi	Duttapara, Tehatta, P.O-Tehatta, PIN-741160	Nadia
705.	Tehatta Lalon	Basundhara Millenium Centre, Tehatta, P.O - Tehatta, PIN - 741160	Nadia
706.	Theate Makers	A-8/372 Shilpanchol, Bidhan Chandra Para, Kalyani, PIN - 741235	Nadia
707.	Theater Angan	C/O Alok Dutta Patra, Baghajatin Colony, Krishna Nagar	Nadia
708.	Tritoy	Pro.- Atunu Sarkar, Paschim Para, Madanpur	Nadia
709.	A-AA-KA-KHA	C/O-Debasish Nandi, Rohini Apartment, Rail Boundary Road, Halisahar Chowmatha Bajar, PIN-743136	North 24 Pargana
710.	Aabirvab Natya Sangstha	Khantura, Uttarpara (Bottala)	North 24 Pargana

711.	Aajker Dishari Natya Gosthi	12/2 Gopal Jieo Mandir Road	North 24 Pargana
712.	Aalapan	235, M.G Road, Kutubganj, P.O.- Ichhapur	North 24 Pargana
713.	Aalor Dishari	Majher Bagan, Bawshali, Duttapukur	North 24 Pargana
714.	Aalor Porosh	36 No. Jadar Box Lane, Kanchrapara	North 24 Pargana
715.	Aangeek	Akhya Kutur, 151, Banerjee Para Road, P.O. Naihati	North 24 Pargana
716.	Akaran Natty Sangstha	Leninnagar, Garulia, 24 Pargana(N), PIN-743133	North 24 Pargana
717.	Alor Pakhi	Gangapur-Baishali, Duttapukur	North 24 Pargana
718.	Alternative Living Theatre	C/o Prabir Guha, Akhara, Madhyamgram, 9836998709	North 24 Pargana
719.	Amra Amalkanti	Taki, North 24 Pargana-743429	North 24 Pargana
720.	Angakalpana	Jonpur, Khaldhar, Kanchrapara, Contact-9830746795	North 24 Pargana
721.	Ankur Natya Sangstha	Pro.- Goutam Paul, Purba Chandmari, Billpara, Third Lane Barakpur, Nona Chandanpukur	North 24 Pargana
722.	Ankush Natya Sangstha	Ichhapur, Lenin Nagar, P.O - Garulia	North 24 Pargana
723.	Anuran (Ashoknagar)	Pro.- Dipak Kumar Nata, 166/4 Ashoknagar	North 24 Pargana
724.	Anuranjan	Chikonpara, Goriyahat, North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
725.	Anwasha	847/1, Ashok Nagar	North 24 Pargana
726.	Arjun Natty Sangstha	Amrapally, Garifa, North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
727.	Avijatree	Pro.- Sukanta Das, 1033A/1, Ashoknagar, P.O. Ashoknagar	North 24 Pargana
728.	Avijan Suchana	Gandharbapur, Basirhat, North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
729.	Bachte Sekha	Naihati, Garifa, North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
730.	Bamongachhi Anubhob	Saratpally, Bamongachhi, North 24 Pargana, 743248	North 24 Pargana
731.	Barasat Jagori	Barasat jagori Evening Club, 16 Ghosalpara Road, Barasat, Kolkata-700124	North 24 Pargana
732.	Barasat Nagorik Theatre	Chitran, Nabapolly Circular Road, Barasat	North 24 Pargana
733.	Barrackpore Souptik	Sarbapally Main Road, Chandannagar, Barrackpore	North 24 Pargana
734.	Bhor Holo	Sukchar, Raja Pahari Road, North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
735.	Bihanga	Goipur Majhar Para, Gabordanga	North 24 Pargana
736.	Bijpur Choturtho Sutra	Sanskritik Chakra, B.B Ganguly Soroni, Halisohor, Bijpur	North 24 Pargana
737.	Chaloman	66/5, K.N.C. Road (South), Barasat	North 24 Pargana
738.	Chatak Natya Sanstha	Pro.- Narayan Biswas, Babupara, Barasat	North 24 Pargana
739.	Chirantan	Gobardanga, P.O. Khaturi	North 24 Pargana
740.	Chittapot (Khatura)	Shuvam, Kalidhala, P.O. Khaturi	North 24 Pargana
741.	Darpan Natya Sanstha	P-61, L.I.C. Township, Madhyamgram	North 24 Pargana
742.	Dayboddho	Pro.- Chandan Banerjee, N.L. Chatterjee Road, Nimta	North 24 Pargana
743.	Dhrubak	Sarojini Pally, Barasat, North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana

744.	Drama Lovers Association (Halisahar)	Halisahar Station Road, P.O. Nobanagar	North 24 Pargana
745.	Eatee Natya Dal	Vill. + P.O.- Naygut, P.S. Sandashkhali	North 24 Pargana
746.	G.P.C Organisation	Ongar Park,Agarpara,North 24 Pargana,Contact-Susanta Acharya(933800404)	North 24 Pargana
747.	Garapota Saptak Nattyosangstha	Garapota,Bongram,North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
748.	Gobardanga Naksha	C/O Ashish Das, Garpara, Gobardanga Contact - 9434316695	North 24 Pargana
749.	Gobardanga Rupantar	Rupantar Bhawan, Station Road Gobordanga, P.O-Gobordanga	North 24 Pargana
750.	Gobordanga Natyatirtha	Garpara, Gobordanga, North 24 Pargana, PIN-743252	North 24 Pargana
751.	Gobordanga Nattyangan	Babupara, Gobordanga PIN - 743252	North 24 Pargana
752.	Halisahar Not Srijan	C/O - Bidyut Ganguly, Ganguly Electricals, Khasbati, Hazinagar, Halisahar	North 24 Pargana
753.	Hansamithun	116, Ghatak Road, Kanchrapara	North 24 Pargana
754.	Haroa Sammiloni Club	North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
755.	Hijalpukuria Janajagarani	C/O - Bibhuti Ranjan Kirtania, Damodar Niwas, Das Para, Hijalpukuria, Habra,	North 24 Pargana
756.	Ichapur Aleya	387,W.C.Banerjee Road,Ichapur,Nababganj	North 24 Pargana
757.	Ichapur Ankur Nattyosangstha	Lenin Nagar,P.O-Garulia,North 24 Pargana,PIN-743133	North 24 Pargana
758.	Ichapur Rhythm Centre For Performing Arts	Kamalgarh,Ichapur,24 pgs(N)	North 24 Pargana
759.	Jaggik	228/5, Rabindra Pally, Golghar	North 24 Pargana
760.	Jagriti	13/1, Farighat Road, Aatapur, PIN-743128	North 24 Pargana
761.	Jana Sanskriti (Centre for Theatre of the Oppressed)	42 A, Thakurhat Road, Badu, Near Badu Bus Stop, PIN - 700128	North 24 Pargana
762.	Jantrik (Naihati)	Thakurpara Road, Naihati	North 24 Pargana
763.	Jugantar Natya Goshthi	C/O- Atanu Haldar, Hijal Pukuriya, Habra	North 24 Pargana
764.	Kakinara Kalabitan	Subhaspur, P.O-Narayanpur, PIN-743126	North 24 Pargana
765.	Katha Theatre	42/1, Bajar Ghat Road, P.O-Naihati, PIN-743165	North 24 Pargana
766.	Kothaprasanga	C/O - Shuvankar Das Sharma, Indira Colony, Gobardanga	North 24 Pargana
767.	Koyadanga Sobuj Sanskritik Kendra	405/3,Koyadanga,Kalyangar,Asokenagar,North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
768.	Kristi	Pro.- Amal Bandhapadhya, P.O. Kapa, Kanchrapara	North 24 Pargana
769.	Kalpa	C/O- Asit Mali, preetilata Dutta Sarani, Hakimpara, Monirampur, Barrackpore	North 24 Pargana
770.	Kutavash	Tushar Kanjilal, Rampada Haldar Road, Baneyapara, Manirampur, Barrackpur	North 24 Pargana
771.	Malancha Disha Sangskritik	Vill+P.O-Malancha(Halisohor)	North 24 Pargana
772.	Mayouk Natya	Station Road, Duttapukur	North 24 Pargana

	Sanstha		
773.	Monchasena	Babu Block, Kanchrapara	North 24 Pargana
774.	Mridangam	Pro.- Arun Kar, Prasanna Park, Gobardanga	North 24 Pargana
775.	Mukhosh	Subhasgram, 371,Gandipara Road(East), P.O-Subhasgram, PIN- 700147	North 24 Pargana
776.	Nabanagar Sukanta Sangha	Halisohor, P.O-Nabanagar, North 24 Pargana PIN - 743136	North 24 Pargana
777.	Nabik Natyam	Gobordanga, Bhattacharjee Para	North 24 Pargana
778.	Naihati Bankim Samriti Sansgha	113, Radha Bollab Road, Naihati	North 24 Pargana
779.	Naihati Samabeta Natyajon	219, K.C. Nag Road, Ganga Sweets, Basupara, Naihati	North 24 Pargana
780.	Naihati Unmukh	B.R.S Colony,Naihati,North 24 Pargana-743165	North 24 Pargana
781.	Nyajat Bhabna	C/O Manish Bhattacharjee, Netaji Pally, Najat, PIN - 743442	North 24 Pargana
782.	Nandanik	Sakar Phurmaci, Baraliya Road, Habra	North 24 Pargana
783.	Nandik	Kapa Kanchrapara, Senpara	North 24 Pargana
784.	Nattyo Milan Gosthi	Vill- Srinagar, North Habra, P.O-Habra	North 24 Pargana
785.	Nattyomukh	170/5 Ashoke Nagar,North 24 Pargana,Contact-Avi Chakraborty(953216)221351	North 24 Pargana
786.	Natyakallol (Kanchrapara)	Gram - Jatiya (Goyalpara) P.O. Jatiya	North 24 Pargana
787.	Natyamilan Gosthi	Natungram, Praffula Nagar, Habra	North 24 Pargana
788.	Natyangi	Digrah (Jhowbagan) P.O.- Duttapukur	North 24 Pargana
789.	Natyarath	Bida Narayanpur, PIN - 743234	North 24 Pargana
790.	Niharika	C Road,Anandapuri,Barrackpore	North 24 Pargana
791.	Niswash	Halisahar, Nabanagar, P.O. Nabanagar	North 24 Pargana
792.	Not Sansad	Halishahar, Dakshin Khushbati Road, Hajinagar	North 24 Pargana
793.	Panchali Natya Sanstha	Gupta Colony, Nabapally, Barasat	North 24 Pargana
794.	Phinik Kanchrapara	Pro.- Kanak Mukherjee, Dhobipukur Road,Circus Maidan,Kanchrapara-743145	North 24 Pargana
795.	Prantik	Basirhat, Collegepara, North 24 Pargana - 743412, Contact-Prasanta Chhtopadyay 9332552424	North 24 Pargana
796.	Pratishruta Sanskriti Sanstha	C/O - Subhash Biswas, Semulpur, Thakurnagar	North 24 Pargana
797.	Pratidwandi	122, S.B.Road, Gosttala, P.O.- Ichapur, Nababganj	North 24 Pargana
798.	Rabindra Nattyo Sangstha	Pro.- Biswanath Bhattacharjee, Akhil Pally, Gobordanga, North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
799.	Raktakorabi	Pro.- Rudraprasad Nath, Basakpara, Bangaon	North 24 Pargana
800.	Ramdhanu Theatre Group	Kaikhali,Chiriamore,P.O-Rajarhat Gopalpur,Ph NO-7980643019	North 24 Pargana
801.	Rangasena	8 No.Bijaygar,Naihati,North 24 Pargana-743165	North 24 Pargana
802.	Reeddhee	51/3, Old Nimta Road, Nandannagar Bazar, Belgharia	North 24 Pargana
803.	Renaissance Sangskritik Sangstha	Jethia,Halisohor,North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
804.	Rupak Theater	Pro.- Amal Sarkar, Rabindra Pally, Nimta, Kolkata	North 24 Pargana

805.	Rupantor	Shahid Bandhunagar, Sajir Hat, Gobardanga, P.O. Khantura	North 24 Pargana
806.	Rupkalpa (Madhyamgram)	P-223, Bosu Nagar, P.O. Madhamgram	North 24 Pargana
807.	Sabuj Sanskritic Kendra	805/3, Kyadangna, Kalyangar, Ashoknagar	North 24 Pargana
808.	Samaj Darpan	Dakhin Barasat	North 24 Pargana
809.	Sandhikkhan	Majhar Para, Ichapur	North 24 Pargana
810.	Sangbitti	C/O Anupam Mitra, Gobrapur, PIN - 743251	North 24 Pargana
811.	Saptak	Ganrapoat, Bangram	North 24 Pargana
812.	Sebak Samiti	8 No. Bijaynagar, Bot Tola, Naihati, North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
813.	Sirsha Natty Sangstha	Rishi Bankim Road, Naihati, North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
814.	Simanti	53/B/2, Shyam Road, Naihati	North 24 Pargana
815.	Shilpagan	Shyabal Bhattacharjee, 72, South Station Road, Agarpara	North 24 Pargana
816.	Shilpanjali	Khantura, Gobardanga Station Road, P.O - Gobardanga Contact-(953216)249021	North 24 Pargana
817.	Shilpayan	Gobardanga College Road, Khantura Gobardanga	North 24 Pargana
818.	Shutam	60, Rishi Bankim Sarani, P.O.Hridaypur, Barasat	North 24 Pargana
819.	Sishumela	Jethia Nagorik Samiti, Jethia, Halisohor, North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
820.	Smriti natya Sansgha	47/A, Anandamhot, Ichapur	North 24 Pargana
821.	Somoy (Naihati)	Akashganga Abashan, 29, R.K.Chatterjee Road, Buroshibatala, C-block, P.O. Naihati	North 24 Pargana
822.	Sonjog Britto	C/O- Rahul Ghosh, Gopal Naskar Road, Gobarpur	North 24 Pargana
823.	Soukhin Natya Sanstha	4/133, Jatin Das Nagar, Belgharia	North 24 Pargana
824.	Sukanta Sansgha	Nabonagar Main Road, Halishahar	North 24 Pargana
825.	Sundarban Oikotaan	Kalinagar, Nyajat, North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
826.	Swapnachor	Khatura, Gobordanga, North 24 Pargana-743273	North 24 Pargana
827.	Taki Cultural Unit	Pro.- Ranjan Chatterjee, Ghoshbabupara, P.O. & Vill.- Taki,	North 24 Pargana
828.	Theater Avijan	3/144, Jatin Das Nagar, Belgharia, Barrackpore	North 24 Pargana
829.	Theater Petal	27/1, Seetalatala Stree, Kolkata	North 24 Pargana
830.	Theater Point	Pro.- Rani Bhowmick, 5 No. House, 5 No. Street, Senbagan, Agarpara	North 24 Pargana
831.	Theatre Marginal	Hemanta Basu Nagar, Madhyamgram	North 24 Pargana
832.	Trikon Park Theatre Club	Madral, Naihati, North 24 Pargana	North 24 Pargana
833.	Urbee	Ukilpara, Basirhat Registree Office More (Noba Rang)	North 24 Pargana
834.	Uttarsuri	Pro.- Palash Ghosh, Kalyan Nagar, Pansheela	North 24 Pargana
835.	Aanandan	Pro.- Sanjit Sarkar, Kharadhara, Jhargram	Paschim Medinipur
836.	Drishyajan	C/O Biplab Mandal, Vidyachakra, Shalbani	Paschim Medinipur
837.	Krantik	23, Dasharathi Ray Road, Mirbajar, P.O- Ghatal	Paschim Medinipur

838.	Somobeto Konthoswar	Anzira Bazar Road; Bidhannagar, P.O - Dewanchak	Paschim Medinipur
839.	Anandolok Dramatic Club	Pro.- Sadhin Chakraborty, Parbatipur, Rakhith More, Tamluk	Purba Medinipur
840.	Anandan KalaKandra	Pro.- Sanjay Chakraborty, Mecheda, Kolaghat	Purba Medinipur
841.	Arunodayar Protoy Natya Sangshtha	C/O - Dilip Kr. Dhaki, Bhuyajee Road, Ramnagar	Purba Medinipur
842.	Avijan	Payakpari, Ballukhut, Tamluk	Purba Medinipur
843.	Basudebpur Binapani Club	Hajra More,Basudebpur,Khanjan Chalk,Purba Medinipur-721602	Purba Medinipur
844.	Eggra Kristichakra	Pro.- Santosh Khara, Eggra Shoping Comple, Eggra Bazar Bus Stand, Eggra	Purba Medinipur
845.	Haridaspur Natmahal	C/O - Keshab Panja, P.O-Haridaspur, Tamluk, Pin-721653	Purba Medinipur
846.	Kalpurush	M.G. Road (Infront of Hindu Balika Vidyaloy) Kathi	Purba Medinipur
847.	Kolaghat Ankur Kalakrishti Kendra	C/O Sujay Chakraborty, Kolaghat Bidyut Nagari, Kolaghat PIN - 721134	Purba Medinipur
848.	Kontai Protiki	Schoolbajar,Monoharchalk,Kanthi,East Midnapore	Purba Medinipur
849.	Korak (Durgachak)	E.H/Block-A, Romm No. 16, Haldia, Durgachak,	Purba Medinipur
850.	Lakkhyaa Podatik	C/O - Sripati Biswas, Lakkhyaa, P.S- Mahishadal, Haldia PIN-721654,	Purba Medinipur
851.	Lakkhyaa Silpakatha Natyasangstha	C/O - Chhoton Shukla, PWD Road, Lakshyaa, Mahishadal, PIN- 721654	Purba Medinipur
852.	Mahisadal Samavabna	C/O- Arjun Gorai, Geokhali Road, Mahisadal, PIN - 721628	Purba Medinipur
853.	Mahishadal Nattyokriti	Prop. - Sanatan Midya, Books, Near Dharmadebpur Bus Garrage, Mahishadal	Purba Medinipur
854.	Mahala	Kanthi,Purba Medinipur, Contact-Prasanta Giri (953224240530)	Purba Medinipur
855.	Mollar Nattyogosthi	Mollar Natmahal, Khanika Press Building, Mohishadal, PIN-721628	Purba Medinipur
856.	Phsycho	Stilko Furniture,Sutahata,Purba Medinipur-721635,Contact- Sanat Pandey(953224-281956)	Purba medinipur
857.	Prantik Nattyogosthi	Ektarpur, Mahishadal, Purba Medinipur, Contact-Rabindranath Das Bayen (03224)241874	Purba Medinipur
858.	Prabartak Natya Gosthi	Pro.- Dhirendranath Tapadar, Mahisadal, Ektarpur, Madhya Hingla	Purba Medinipur
859.	Pratiddhwani (Haldia)	136/A, Durgachak Colony, Block-D, Haldia	Purba Medinipur
860.	Pratiki	School Bazar, Manoharchak, Kathi	Purba Medinipur
861.	Rangan	Pro. - Samir Jana, Sadar Kacchari, Parbatipur, Tomluk	Purba Medinipur
862.	Samakal	C/O - Tapan Das, Guokhali Road, Rangibasan, Mahisadal	Purba Medinipur
863.	Sandeepan	Pro.- Hidrandra Nath Das, Nonakuri Bazar, Shahid Matangani Panchyat Samity, Tamluk	Purba Medinipur
864.	Sangrami Payerachali	Payerachali, Nakibsun, Tamluk	Purba Medinipur
865.	Sanglap	Kasthakhali, Boropul, Taropekhya Road.	Purba Medinipur
866.	Sangsaptak Haldia	Haldia Township,East Midnapore	Purba Medinipur

867.	Shilpakriti	Rangibasan, Mahisadal	Purba Medinipur
868.	Sreejon Sarathi	Tamluk Main Road, Parbatipur, Tamluk	Purba Medinipur
869.	Sreejok Natyakola Kendra	Pro.-Ellora Steel Furniture, Parbatipur, Tamluk Main Road, Tamluk, PIN-721636	Purba Medinipur
870.	Suchetana Sangskritik Sangstha	Kukrahati, High School Road, Haldia	Purba Medinipur
871.	Subharambha Cultural Forum	C/O- Modern Style Tailors, Old Bus Stand Road, Kukrahati Fruit and Vegitable Market, Haldia	Purba Medinipur
872.	Tamluk Spontaneous Act Dramatic Club	C/O - Prof. Arun Sanpui, Bhimarbajar, Tamluk.	Purba Medinipur
873.	Tamluk Amateur Dramatic Club	C/O - Haripada Maity, Tamluk, Purba Medinipur-721636, Contact-(03228)267196	Purba Medinipur
874.	Tamluk Srijak Nattyokala Kendra	C/O - Ellora, Parbatipur, PIN-721636	Purba Medinipur
875.	Udayan Natyatirtha	C/O - Ganesh Sen, Baromanikpur, P.O - Mahishadal	Purba Medinipur
876.	Upakshyan	Pro.- Shyara Agrani Sangha, Shyara, Alinan	Purba Medinipur
877.	Aamodi Natya Sangha	C/O Hotel Minakshi, Chaibasha Road, Purulia.	Purulia
878.	Abhinoy Anubhuti Natya Samaj	C/O Chiranjit Chakraborty, M.G Road, Near Hindi High School, Chaibasha Road, Purulia	Purulia
879.	Ahoran	32, Harihar Colony Main Road, Gorjoypur, PIN-723201	Purulia
880.	Ananta Bijay Natya Goshthi	C/O - Sukumar Mistri, Sarat Apartment, Banamali Hansda Road, Bagmundi	Purulia
881.	Arunodaya Natya Goshthi	Mohinath Poudel Bhaban, Netaji Road, Raghampur	Purulia
882.	Chirantani Theatre Troup	Ananda Bhawan, School Bajar, Barakar	Purulia
883.	Garjaypur Rajarshi	C/O - Mangal Dubey, Anandadhara Apartment, Kazi Nazrul Road, P.O-Garjaypur, PIN-723201	Purulia
884.	Kajori Natya Sangstha	C/O Tirthankar Biswas, Dhulabari, Kusumika Sanskritik Angan, Panuria	Purulia
885.	Kalakshetra	C/O Kanailal Barik, Milan Tirtha, Pathak Para, Ananda Pally, Raghunathpur	Purulia
886.	Kushilab Purulia	C/O - Ramapada Haldar, Beniapara, Maniramgarh, Barojora	Purulia
887.	Madal Natyadal	C/O Sukhendu Bera, Baroneelbari More, Adarsha Pally, Balarampur	Purulia
888.	Natyabradi Purulia	C/O-Satinath Mukherjee, Kulada Bhavan, Usha Biponi Lane, Doctor Danga	Purulia
889.	Natyajatra Tarun Dal	Saheed Smriti Bhawan, Girjaapara, Dhamailia, Para	Purulia
890.	Purulia Anyochokhe	Chorachor, Subhaspolly, Purulia -723101	Purulia
891.	Rupdarshi	Ranchi Road, Purulia Bus Stand, Purulia	Purulia
892.	Samakalin Natyadal	C/O New Gayetri Tifin Corner, Kalachandpara Main Road, Natunganj, Kashipur	Purulia
893.	Saptadeep Natyachakra	C/O - Malay Ghoshal, Rabindra Mancha, Manbazar, P.O - Manbazar - II	Purulia
894.	Shikor Natya	Barodebirhat, Murai, Jhalda	Purulia

	Sangstha		
895.	Surangam	C/O Tapas Sarbadhikari, Chirimarsarai, Golghar Sanskritik Kendra, Manbajar	Purulia
896.	Theatre Passion	C/O Anadi Mahapatra, Dilbagh, Hutmura	Purulia
897.	Agami Natya Goshthi	Vill-Kalipur, P.O-Bajbaj, PIN - 700138	South 24 Pargana
898.	Angan Natya Sangstha	5/5C, Sahid Khudiram Bose Road, Bajbaj	South 24 Pargana
899.	Bajbaj Arindam	4/3/P Khudiram Bose Road, Bajbaj	South 24 Pargana
900.	Batanagar Theatre Unity	Mallick Bajar Bhawan, Uday Nagar, Batanagar	South 24 Pargana
901.	Bijoyganj Natty Shilpi Sangsad	Laxmikantapur, Station Water Tank, PIN - 743336	South 24 Pargana
902.	Boral Porijan Natya Sangstha	62, Dinendranath Road, Boral, Garia, South 24 Pargana	South 24 Pargana
903.	Ever Glow Club O Nattyosangstha	Vill+P.O-Bijayganj Bajar,Mandirbajar, PIN-743343	South 24 Pargana
904.	Friends Unit	Sadarhat, Bottala, Baruipur	South 24 Pargana
905.	Gabberia Jajabor Nattyosangstha	C/O - Chinmoy Patranabish; Relief Medical Stores, Alampur Bazar, Gabberia,	South 24 Pargana
906.	J.M.L.T.	Pro.- Shyama Bhattacharjee, 56, Bamandev Bhattacharjee Road, P.O. Joynagar, Majilpur	South 24 Pargana
907.	Kalyan Sangha	Subuddhipur,Baruipur,South 24 Pargana,	South 24 Pargana
908.	Kishore Sangha Club O Pathagar	Ganesh Nagar,South 24 pargana	South 24 Pargana
909.	Kothashilpa	Pro.- Sujoy Sengupta, 145/A Sashibabu Road, Sahidnagar, Kachrapara	South 24 Pargana
910.	Kothon Sangskritik Chakra	C/O - Nirmal Dhara, Adyashakti Kalibari, Gopal Nagar Road, Raghunathpur	South 24 Pargana
911.	Kristee Sangsad	121, K.M. Roy Chowdhury, P.O.- South Jagaddal.	South 24 Pargana
912.	Milan Mitali Sangha	Bapuli Bajar,Mathurapur,South 24 Pargana	South 24 Pargana
913.	Nababarrackpore Chorus Theatre	Barrackpore,J.D.Nagar,Charupally	South 24 Pargana
914.	Nalgora Sanskriti Chakra	Vill+P.O-Purba Sonatikri, P.S-Kultali.	South 24 Pargana
915.	Narkeldanga Swapnil	C/O-Amit Ghosh, Manikpur, Ghosalpara, Horinavi, Sonarpur, PIN- 700148	South 24 Pargana
916.	Nona Theatre	Kakdwip,South 24 Pargana-743135,Contact-(953210255967)	South 24 Pargana
917.	Prekkhapot	C/o Abinash Modak, Dakshin Udaychakra, Baruipur.	South 24 Pargana
918.	Shilpi Sangsad	C/O - Siraj Ul Alam, New Paper House, Notun Bazar, Bijoyganj	South 24 Pargana
919.	Students And Youth Cultural Forum	South Barasat,Joynagar,South 24 Pargana-743372	South 24 Pargana
920.	Swapnadarshi Natyajon	C/O- Arpan Sharangi, 9 Jadunath Bhatta Sarani, Radhakantapur, Raidighi, South 24 Pargana	South 24 Pargana
921.	Swapnodishari	C/O Nipun Goswami, Mihir Sen Sarani, Udaychakra Pathagar, Radhakantapur	South 24 Pargana
922.	Taldi Netaji Sangha	Taldi,Kyaning,South 24 Pargana-743376	South 24 Pargana
923.	Tias	34, Saheed Kanailal Dutta Road, Ghateswar,	South 24 Pargana

		PIN-743336	
924.	Udichi Gobordanga	C/O - Subhasish Nag, Goipur, Gobordanga	South 24 Pargana
925.	Yubanatya Sangha	Satsanga Bihar, Kakdweep Bzar Road, P.O - Kakdweep.	South 24 Pargana
926.	Bichitra	C/o Chandan Chakraborty, Rashbehari Colony, Kaliyaganj	Uttar Dinajpur
927.	Chhandam	Manas Roy Sarani, Ramendrapally, Rayganj, PIN-733134	Uttar Dinajpur
928.	Jantrik Natya Gosthi	Pro.- Narandra Narayan Chakraborty (Gora), Netaji Subash Road (Station Road), Kaliyaganj	Uttar Dinajpur
929.	Rayganj Soisob Natty Academy	Debinagar, Rayganj, PIN -733123	Uttar Dinajpur
930.	Saroni	Grnth Bharati, Thana Road, Udnalpara, Raiganj	Uttar Dinajpur
931.	Vivekananda Natya Chakra	Sudarshanpur, Behind Santoshini Bidyachakra; Siliguri More, P.O. Raiganj	Uttar Dinajpur
932.	Abhinoy Milani	Ullaskar Dutta Road, Karandighi, P.O. Karandighi, Raiganj	Uttar Dinajpur

APPENDIX - II

LIST OF GROUP THEATRE'S DRAMATIC PRODUCTIONS ON WOMEN'S ISSUES DURING THE LEFT FRONT RULE IN WEST BENGAL (1977-2007)

1977				
Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Rangmahal Theatre	Aparichitaa	Anal Chattopadhyay	Samaresh Basu	Jahor Roy
Gandharba	Bodnam	Ashesh Chakraborty	Rabindranath Tagore	Deb Kumar Basu
Bohurupee	Boli	Tripti Mitra		Arijit Guha
Rangana	Bonhee	Ganesh Mukhopadhyay	Balaichand Mukhopadhyay (Banaphul)	Ganesh Mukhopadhyay
Theatre Unit	Mongalacharaner Bibaho	Joyanta Banerjee	Friedrich Durrentmatt	Joyanta Banerjee
Bidushak	Pashaner Meye	Anandamoy Bandopadhyay		Subir Goswami
Rangapeeth (Chandan Nagar)	Sahjadir Kalo Nekab	Aabdullah Al Mamun		Shibshankar Chakraborty
1978				
Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Jajabar (Bardhaman)	Alibabar Panchali	Abhijit Sengupta		Debi Prasad Dutta
Theatre Abhinoy (Bankura)	Aporanher Andhokar	Abu Atahar	Langston Hughes	Subinoy Das
Minarva Theatre	Bandhobi	Ajoy Bsu		Sumit Kumar Das
Pratidhwani (Bally)	Dharmasya Sukshma Gati	Aghor Nath Chattopadhyay	David Mamet	Sukumae Sengupta
Ranga Karmee	Guria Ghor	Usha Ganguli	Henrik Ibsen	Tripti Mitra
Calcutta Peoples Art	Informer	Mohit Chattyopadhyay	Bertolt Brecht	Sohag Sen
Nanamukh	Kamalekamini	Abdul Kader		Ishita Mukhopadhyay
Juger Jatri (Chandan Nagar)	Notun Tara	Achintya Kumar Sengupta	Anton Chekhov	Ramkrishna Mandal
Bohurupee	Rakta Karabi	Rabindranath Tagore		Shambhu Mitra
Rammohan Mancha	Thana Theke Ashhi	Ajitesh Bandhopadhyay	Anton Chekhov	Saran Dutta
1979				

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Mass Theatre	Anokhi Kanda	Nirup Mitra	Sam Shepard	Kalyan Adhikary
Arohi (Khardah)	Britto Biswa Bhalobasa	Ayashkanta Bakshi		Anil Chakraborty
Biswarupa Theatre	Dana Powna	Rashbehari Sarkar	Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay	Rashbehari Sarkar
Soubhanik	Debigarjan	Bijan Bhattacharjee		Chittaranjan Ghoshal
New Alipore Natyachinta	Ek Diner Bou		Tom Stoppard	Samiran Dasgupta
Sambodhi Ntya Goshthi	Jhinjhin Pokar Kanna	Agradut	Arthur Miller	Prasun Dasgupta
Bahurupi	Mrichchhakatik	Uttpal Dutta	Shudrak	Kumar Roy
Naihati Natty Samanvay Samti	Nakshi Kanthar Math		Jasimuddin	Rudrarup Banerjee
Damama Natya Goshthi (Siliguri)	Pratishruta Abhimanyu	Amal Chakraborty		Amal Chakraborty
Biswarupa Theatre	Subarnalata	Rashbehari Sarkar	Ashapura Devi	Rashbehari Sarkar
1980				
Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Ritwik	Maa	Satya Bandopadhyay	Maxim Gorkey	Pranab Chattopadhyay
Shatabdi	Nun Cha	Bimal Lal		Badal Sarkar
Minarva Theatre	Priyar Khoje	Samai Mukherjee	Eugene O'Neill	Sami Mukherjee
Theatre Unit	Sreemoti Bhoyankari	Sekhar Chattopadhyay	William Shakespeare	Sekhar Chattopadhyay
1981				
Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Nat Sangsad (Halisahar)	Aranyer Alo Aranyer Andhokar	Ghanshyam Chowdhury	Jane Anderson	Bisweshwar Bhattacharjee
Sayangsondhya (Tollyganj)	Ek Din Hothat	Chittaranjan Ghosh	August Wilson	Biplab Chattopadhyay
Writtik (Berhampore)	Jamgach	Saroj Moitra	Samuel Beckett	Goutam Roy Choudhury
Swapna Sandhani	Tapaswi O Tarangini	Buddhadeb Basu		Soumitra Chattopadhyay
1982				
Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Theatre Centre	Avigayan Sakuntalam	Samaresh Roy Chowdhury	Iswar Chandra Bandopadhyay	Tarun Roy
Theatre Passion	Dakhal	Moni Mukhopadhyay	Tennessee Williams	Debendraraju Ankur
Mass Theatre	Madhupurer Jatri	Anirban		Ganyesh

		Chowdhury		Mukhopadhyay
Shudrak	Prabahoti	Salil Sarkar		Debasish Majumdar
Theatre Passion	Sasti	Salil Sarkar	Rabindranath Thakur	Dabendraraj Ankur
Peoples Little Theatre	Sreematir Bicher	Utpal Dutta	David Selbourne	Utpal Dutta

1983

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Souvanik	Abosheshe	Kiranmoy Choudhury	Samaresh Basu	Kashinath Haldar
Classic (Chandannagar)	Barna Kotha	Malay Ghosh		Chinta Mukherjee
Ansambal	Ehudir Stree O Guptocho	Sisir Sen	Bertolt Brecht	Sohag Sen
Samikhon	Kanamachi Khala	Mohit Chattopadhyay		Pankaj Munshi
Krishtichakra (Egra)	Kanya	Tirthankar Guha		Mrinal Das
Mrichchhakatik (Howrah)	Krishnaa	Subhashish Banerjee		Subhashish Banerjee
Rangokormi	Maa	Usha Ganguly	Bertolt Brecht	S K Raina
Peoples Little Theatre	Maloo Parar Maa	Utpal Dutta		Utpal Dutta
Theatron	Medea	Sisir Mukhopadhyay	Euripides	Salil Bandhopadhyay
Theatre Passion	Munafa Thakrun	Satinath Bhaduri	Tennessee Williams	Ramaprasad Banik
Pancham Baidik	Nathabati Anathbat	Saoli Mitra		Saoli Mitra
Bhadrakali Art and Culture	Satidaha	Shibendu Guha Biswas		Shibendu Guha Bisas
Nirbaak Abhinoy Academi	Sita Theke Suru	Nabanita Deb Sen		Suranjana Dasgupta
Ganakrishti	Tomar Ami	Amitava Dutta	Evald Flisar	Amitava Dutta
Charbak	Uttar Purush	Tushar Dey O Jochhan Dastidar		Jochhan Dastidar

1984

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Narkeldanga Swapnil Natya Sangstha	Ardhanarishwar	Chandan Sen	Samuel Beckett	Nilanjana Biswas
Bhumika (Krishna Nagar)	Atmocharit	Sukhomoy Roy		Sukhomoy Ray
Bohurupee	Augunar Pakhi		Jean Anouilh	Kumar Roy
Prayash (Bardhaman)	Bedeni	Shyama Prasad Bhandari		Shyama Prasad Bhandari
Shilpok (Makhlaa)	Bhalobasa Preettilata	Timir Baran Roy		Timir Baran Roy

Playmakers	Byapika Biday	Amritalal Basu		Bratya Basu
Ichchhedana (Jalpaiguri)	Care Of Bedona Dasi		Jane Anderson	Joba Sharma
Theatre Workshop	Dibaratra	Umanath Bhattacharjee		Ram Mukhopadhyay
Natyaprahari (Bardhaman)	Duhitaa	Pulak Roy		Arup Roy
Amta Porichay (Howrah)	Eladidi	Subhendu Bhandari		Subhendu Bhandari
Ushnik	Ghar	Harimadhab Mukhopadhyay	August Wilson	Ishita Mukhopadhyay
Theatre Centre	Joshamoti	Nilkantha Sengupta	Athol Fugard	Nilkantha Sengupta
Songbarto	Niyoti O Debjani		Friedrich Holderlin	Sunil Das
Barasat Barnamoy	Nona Jal	Shiv Sharma		Achinta Biswas
Anami Natya Sangstha (Rampurhat)	Ora Charjon	Debashish Dutta		Sudhanshu Mallick
Rabindranagar Natyayudh	Rasta	Mohit Chattopadhyay		Dani Karmakar
Alternative Leaving Theatre	Ratdin	Prabir Guha	Siegafied Linege	Prabir Guha
Natyabrati (Purulia)	Shikhandini	Somnath Mukherjee		Somnath Mukherjee
Aparajito (Naihati)	Timir	Baijayanta Chakraborty	Orhan Pamuk	Prabir Shil

1985

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Arani Natya Sangstha (Hali Sahar)	Adalat O Ekti Meye	Alok Gangopadhyay	Neil Simon	Alok Gangopadhyay
Sreejak Natyakala Kendra (Tamluk)	Andhakarer Ayna	Amar Gangopadhyay		Satadal Chattaraj
Ichhapur Aleya	Baaksiddhaa	Bireswar Basu		Subhendu Majumdar
Nabamayukh	Basundhara	Ajit Kumar Sen		Rishi Mukhopadhyay
Avibyakti (Belgharia)	Ekaki Bihanga	Nirmalya Nag	Christopher Durang	Udaybhanu Sikdar
Mukhomukhi	Fera	Soumitra Chattopadhyay	Friedrich Durrenmatte	Soumitra Chattopadhyay
Uttal Natyagosthi (Siliguri)	Haayaa	Amal Roy		Palak Chakraborty
Aarabdho Natya Vidyalaya	Hajar Churashir Maa		Mahasweta Devi	Tripti Mitra
Nabankur (Raniganj)	Jantrik	Shyamaltanu Dasgupta	Jane Anderson	Prtha Bhowmick
Wake Up (Sainthia)	Megh Vanga Roddur	Subhendu Sinha Roy		Mridul Dasgupta
Nillohit Natya Samaj (Drgapur)	Pora Matir Kanna	Ajit Bandopadhyay		Subrata Kanjilal

Mitra Sammilani (Siliguri)	Rajkahini	Amal Roy		Asit Bandopadhyay
Charbak	Sitar Agnipariksha	Jagadish Chakraborty		Jochhan Dastidar
Writtik (Berhampore)	Strir Patra	Rabindranath Tagore		Goutam Roy Choudhury
Udichi (Gobardanga)	Sundori Kamala	Arunodoy Samanta		Joydeep Biswas

1986

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Sayak	Astitya	Debabrata Dasgupta		Meghnad Bhatterjee
Songborto	Atandra Golub		Rainer Maria Rilke	Anjan Dutta
Theatre Workshop	Bela Abelar Golpo	Ashok Mukhopadhyay	Arnold Oyaskar	Ashok Mukhopadhyay
Souvanik	Ghomta	Pannalal Moitra		Pannalal Moitra
Juger Jatri (Chandan Nagar)	Irabati Ekti Meyer Naam	Rudrarup Jana		Ramkrishna Mandal
Kakdweep Nona Theatre	Lajja	Karna Sen	Taslima Nasrin	Rabindranath Dash
Bohurupee	Malini	RabindranathThakur		Kumar Roy
Wake Up (Sainthia)	Maya	Lopamudra Saha		Pannalal Bhattacharjee
Nandikar	Nila		Ingmar Bergman	Rudraprasad Sengupta
Kalamndir (Duttapukur)	Rajkonyer Juto	Soumen Roy	John Patrick Shanley	Soumen Roy
Gandhar	Takhan Bikel	Asit Mukhopadhyay		Asit Mukhopadhyay
Theatre Centre	Vashan	Tathagoto Chakraborty		Debraj Roy

1987

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Aarobdho Natya Vidyalaya	Sarisreep	Bidhayak Bhattacharjee		Tripti Mitra
Souvanik	Sashti	Biru Mukherjee	Rabindranath Tagore	Sudhanshu Mondal
Class Thratre	Shakuntala Unmadini	Uttpal Dutta	Jean Jiraboun	Raman Sarkar
Charbak	Soti	Chandra Dastidar		Jochhon Dastidar

1988

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Theatre Workshop	Alibaba	Mohit Chattopadhyay		Ashok Mukhopadhyay
Nattyayan	Durgeshnandini	Bishnu Basu	Bankimchandra	Anil Dey

			Chattopadhyay	
Rangana	Joyjoynti	Ganesh Mukhopadhyay		Ganesh Mukhopadhyay
Anya Theatre	Madhab Malanchi Koinya		Moymonsingha Geetika	Bivash Chakraborty
Gandharva	Niyamvangha	Debkumar Basu		Debkumar Basu
Simuntik	Raktakto Ramio Juliet	Chiroranjan Das		Chiroranjan Das
Theatre Commune	Sadhabar Ekadashi	Dinabandhu Mitra		Nilkantha Sengupta
Playmakers	Sahaj Pather Galpo	Subhasish Khamaru		Koustav Dutta Gupta
Narkeldanga Swapnil Natya Sangstha	Theatre-er Meye	Bishnu Basu	Anton Chekov	Pramit Ghosh

1989

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Chenamukh	Agnishuddhi	Indrashish Lahiri	Arthur Miller	Ramaprasad Banik
Sundaram	Alokanandar Putrakanya	Manoj Mitra		Manoj Mitra
Indraranga (Paikpara)	Arabya Rajani	Ujjwal Chattopadhyay		Ujjwal Chattopadhyay
Shantiniketan Poesys	Kamala	Mohanlal Basu	Vijay Tendulkar	Ranjan Chattaraj
Kushilab	Kankabatir Ghat	Partha Chatterjee		Runu Choudhury
Majlish	Khesharat	Supriya Dutta		Prabir Polle
Rupadakhya	Mandakranta	Suvadra Sengupta	Nikolai Gogol	Tarit Chowdhury
Samikkhan	Manmoyee Girls' School	Bidhayak Bhattacharjee		Pankaj Munshi
Chittopat (Jalpaiguri)	Mejokakima'r Galpo	Nabanita Deb Sen	Noel Coward	Sekhar Majumdar
Samskar Bharati Repertory	Nishad	Sohini Roy	Jack London	Bikash Bhattacharya
Charbak	Pratyusha	Chandra Dastidar		Jochhan Dastidar
Theatre Workers	Suvadra	Maitreyee Bandopadhyay		Ashok Ghosh
Darpan (Radhanagar)	Tadaka	Soumitra Basu		Kishore Moitra
Ansambal	Uttaradhikar		Mahesh Elkunchwar	Sohag Sen

1990

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Ankur (Batanagar)	Aakosmik	Badal Bhattacharya	Tom Stoppard	Sukhomoy Sen
Baharumpur Rapertory Theatre	Danshan	Pradip Bhattacharjee		Pradip Bhattacharjee

Chatona	Duyan	Avijit Sen		Suman Mukhopadhyay
Taki Cultural Unit	Dwidhaa	Bidhayak Bhattacharjee		Shankar Kar Gupta
Natya Anan (Ashoknagar)	Jogajog	Ambarish Halder	Rabindranath Tagore	Chandan Sen
Simantik	Kamarar Kahani	Chiroranjan Das		Chiroranjan Das
Swapnasandhani	Kolkatar Electra	Buddhadeb Basu		Koushik Sen
Balaka Natya Goshthi (Siliguri)	Matripaksha	Debdas Basu		Kalyan Dasgupta
Kalyani Natyacharcha Kendra	Meyeti	Kaberi Basu	Ariel Dorfman	Kishore Sengupta
Bohurupee	Nindaponke	Kumar Roy	Jean Paul Sartre	Kumar Roy
Prekshapot	Sankranti	Biru Mukhopadhyay	August Strindberg	Shyamal Ghosh
Nandikar	Shankhopurar Sukanya	Ajitesh Bandopadhyay	Bertolt Brecht	Rudraprasad Sengupta
Bijoyganj Shilpi Sansad	Siraajmohishi	Byomkesh Mukhopadhyay		Beer Sen
Sudrak	Swapno Sontoti	Debasish Majumdar		Debasish Majumdar
Rangakarmee	Vama	Usha Ganguly	Franca Rame	Bibhas Chakraborty

1991

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Souvanik	Adhar Pareya	Samaresh Majumder	Frederick Nut	Bimal Bandopadhyay
Ingeet Natya Sangstha	Apanjan	Sreemanta Majumdar		Ananda Bhattacharya
Proush	Atorbalar Khalikuthi	Biduyt Nag		Bidyut Nag
Manchamita (Bardhaman)	Bera'tar Epar Opar	Krishna Karmakar		Krishna Karmakar
Churbuk	Bunjara	Chandra Dostidar		Jyoshan Dostidar
Naihati Aesthetics	Courastar Meye	Bibhas Chakraborty	Henry Lawson	Vidhu Khare
Kristi Sangsad	Dukhini Saraswati	Indrasish Labiri		Sangramjit Sengupta
Ranikuthi Angik	Honumati Pala	Manoj Mitra		Sushanta Majumdar
Dumurdah Anami Natyam	Je Deshe Ganga Boy	Ashish Sarkar		Prabal Mukherjee
Simantika	Jharar Pakhi	Chiroranjan Das		Chiroranjan Das
Natyam Balaka (Murshidabad)	Mejaj	Soumitra Basu		Barun Choubey
Semanti (Naihati)	Murti	Alak Mishra	Luigi Pirandllo	Alak Mishra
Angan Natya Sangstha (Bajbaj)	Nashtaneer	Amitava Chakraborty		Ashim Bhattacharjee
Bibekananda Natyachakra	Prithaa'r Ghar	Hiten Chakraborty		Bimalkrishna Sarkar

(Raiganj)				
Chenamukh	Ranikahini	Ramaprasad Banik		Ramaprasad Banik
Theatre Centre	Topati	RabindranathThakur		Pranab Choudhury
1992				
Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Souvanik	Akrut Banolata	Amal Mukhopadhyay		
Charbak	Banzara	Chandra Dastidar		Jochhan Dastidar
Niva Arts	Darpane Sorathsashi	Monoj Mitra		Soumitra Chattopadhyay
Pratikriti (Kolkata)	Drapane Sharatshashi	Manoj Mitra		Alok Deb
Chenamukh	Drishtikanya	Ramaprasad Banik		Ramaprasad Banik
Bivab Natya Academi	Elating Belating	Biplab Mukherjee	Harold Pinter	Biplab Mukherjee
Dakshini Theatre	Gharwali	Chittaranjan Ghosh		Shantanu Majumdar
Theatron	Khalaghor	J. B. Priestley		Salil Bandopadhyay
Mridanggam (Gobardanga)	Lekha Nai Swarnakshare	Diptangshu Deb	Golam Kuddus	Barun Kar
Chatana	Notir Kotha		Anton Chekov	Suman Mukhopadhyay
Nandikar	Pakhi	Swatilekha Sengupta	Leela Majumdar	Swatilekha Sengupta
Rangakarmee	Rudali	Usha Ganguly	Mahasweta Devi	Usha Ganguly
Dakshineswar Sanket	Rupai Sajur Kotha	Subrata Kanjilal		Priyangshu Roy
Bohurupee	Shyama	Sisir Kumar Das		Kumar Roy
Sangstob	Sundor	Mohit Chattopadhyay		Dwijen Bandopadhyay
Indrayudh (Coachbehar)	Swapner Haat	Deepayan Bhattacharya		Deepayan Bhattacharya
Hijalpukuria Janajagarani	Tarara Shone Na	Chanakya Sen		Rupashree Saha
1993				
Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Shantipur Anweshan	Aapnio Asben !!	Badal Sarkhel	David Mamet	Satyajit Pramanik
Natyabitan	Beyond Chitragada	Sanchayita Basu	Rabindranath Tagore	Sanchayita Basu
Sadavuj (Purba Medinipur)	Bhelay Vase Sita	Manas Mitra		Tarun Pradhan
Asar Natyam (Sainthia)	Binodinir Kotha	Debashish Sengupta		Bijay Kumar Das

Sutraput	Care Kori Na	Joyati Bose	Volker Ludwig	Joyati Bose
Anulap	Swikriti	Anirban Dutta		Sanchayan Basu
Shudrak	Chandalini	Debashish Majumdar	Rabindranath Tagore	Dabashish Majumdar
Birbhum Sanskriti Bahini	Chhutki	Nirmal Shib Bandopadhyay		Ujjwal Mukherjee
Natyasreejan (Lalgola)	Janani	Bimal Chakraborty		Shibasish Chakraborty
Kakdweep Nona Theatre	Jonakir Alo	Goutam Roy		Debashish Manna
Aarushi (Ballyganj)	Marmarita Pallabi	Saikat Ghosh		Sanjay Acharjee
Rang Be-Rang (Khidirpur)	Padma Patay Jal	Goutam Roy		Tanmoy Chandra
Samokalin Silpidal	Ras	Jyotisman Bhattacharjee	Narandranath Mitra	Ambar Roy
Natyataranga (Chandpara)	Rinki	Rakesh Biswas		Mahadeb Saha
Rabindranagar Natyayudh	Stree-Linga Nirman	Bratya Basu	Henry Denker	Dani Karmakar

1994

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Swapnangon	Ababahika	Mamun-Ur-Rashid		Prabal Halder
Chandam (Raiganj)	Chorabali	Kiran Mitra		Subir Bhatyacharjee
Theatre Workshop	Eka Ebong Eka	Samir Dasgupta		Ashok Mukhopadhyay
Sanglup	Ghore Fera	Kuntul Mukhopadhyay		Kuntul Mukhopadhyay
Rangrup	Ja Jon Aache Majhkhane	Sima Mukhopadhyay		Sima Mukhopadhyay
Sambodhi (Jalpaiguri)	Kagojer Ful	Indramadhab Bhattacharjee	Peter Handke	Prasun Mukherjee
Chenamukh	Lojjatirtho	Ramaprasad Banik		Ramaprasad Banik
Kathan Sanskritik Chakra	Nishana	Kingshuk Dutta		Biplab Joardar
Saraswati Natyashala	Pratibimba	Satyaki Sarkar		Badal Kanjilal
Mahishadal Samakal	Sahar Theke Dure	Kanailal Samanta		Tapan Das
Acto (Chandpara)	Shonibar Bikelbela	Durgadas Saha		Subhash Chakraborty
Thought's Arena (Siliguri)	Tritiya Purush	Abdulla Al Mamun		Shyamaprasad Bhattacharya

1995

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Bakreswar Binodini Sanstha	Agni Chayan	Amar Mallick		Ratan Banik

Sabuj Sanskritik Kendra	Antaral	Digendra Chandra Bandopadhyay		Nidhu Bhushan Samanta
Thought's Arena	Aurat	Safdar Hashmi		Shyama Prasad Bhattacharya
Prachesta (Jalpaiguri)	Baro Pisima	Badal Sarkar		Ayan Mukherjee
Natyaranga	Basona	Debasish Majumdar	Victor Hugo	Swapan Sengupta
Theatre Workshop	Brishtir Chhayachhobi	Manoj Mitra		Ashok Mukhopadhyay
Raktim Natya Sangstha	Char Prahar	Biru Mukhopadhyay	Vladimir Mayakovosky	Ratan Roy
Nabadweep Sayak	Draupadipurana	Biplab Chattopadhyay		Shantanu Chakraborty
Coachbehar Theatre Group	Drohangana	Sandeep Bhattacharya		Purbachal Dasgupta
Rang-Rup	Jejan Achhe Majhkhane	Sima Mukhopadhyay		Sima Mukhopadhyay
Souvanik	Khash Dakhol	Asit Ghosh	Dario Fo	Asit Ghosh
Rangakarmee	Khnoj	Usha Ganguly		Usha Ganguly
Smaranik	Nati Binodini	Chittaranjan Ghosh		Sayandeb Bhattacharya
IPA Coachbehar	Nayika Biday	Basanta Bhattacharya		Snehashish Chodhury
Jajabor (Bardhaman)	Nitai Gargarir Bou	Bibhuti Mukhpadhyay	Aaron Sorokin	Debiprasad Dutta
Anarta	Pramilaa	Ayaskanta Bakshi	Jane Austine	Suvashankar Chakraborty
Amphetheatrewala	Tarubala	Amritalal Basu		Sourav Acharya
Samokalin Shilpidal	Tomake Chai	Ambar Roy		Ambar Roy

1996

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Chandannagar Rangapeeth	Aayu	Dinesh Bharadwaj		Supriya Dutta
Jabanika	Abastab	Sukharanjan Das	Emile Zola	Subir Chakraborty
Samikhan	Antorul	Ujjal Chattopadhyay		Pankaj Munshi
Katowa Anuvab	Atho Sutanuka Kotha	Sreejit Ghosh	Narayan Sanyal	Suman Singha Roy
Rangakarmee	Beti Ayee	Jyoti Mahapeshkar		Usha Ganguly
Karubhash (Barrackpore)	Bonpolashi	Hirendranath Mukhopadhyay		Koushik Chattopadhyay
Bhabanipur Saptapradip	Dahankaantaa	Subrata Ghatak	Ben Johnson	Subrata Ghatak
Hypocretes (Howrah)	Dhulokhela	Chandan Sen		Shantanu Bhowmick
Anandan (Dhakuria)	Ebari Obari	Priyalal Majumdar	Jarasandha	Priyalal Majumdar
Kadamtala Theatres (Howrah)	Focus	Pradipta Bhattacharjee	Sam Shepard	Ashok Ghosh

Abayab	Kajal Rekha	Arya Hasan	Parvez Anowar Chowdhury	Imdadul Haq
Sayak	Karnabati	Chandan Sen	Amrita Pritam	Meghnad Bhattejee
Jehad (Konnagar)	Kheyali	Sanat Kumar Chakraborty		Sanat Kumar Chakraborty
Natyaranga	Madhurena	Goutam Roy		Swapan Sengupta
Nahali	Morgue'er Samne Saat Ghonta	Saibal Das		Apu Aich
Samatot	Nabashruti	Dilip Kumar Mitra		Basudeb Hui
Guillotine	Purano Punthi	Bivas Chanda		Kalyanmoy Das
Shuvashilpon	Sampurna	Suvankar Chakraborty		Subhashankha Mandal
Smaranik	Simantini	Utpal Jha	Somerset Maugham	Sayandeb Bhattacharya
Natyataranga (Chand Para)	Upekshita	Mannan Hira		Jayanta Mandal
Anuvab (Coachbehar)	Vashma	Ganapati Bose		Ashok Brahma

1997

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Shantipur Udan	Andhar Periye	Saroj Paul		Amarnath Saha
Rangapeeth (Chandannagar)	Chiruni Tallashi	Shibankar Chakraborty		Suman Singha Roy
Sayak (Nabadweep)	Hasnuhana	Sumanta Dutta	O' Henry	Sumanta Dutta
Elora Natyadal (Birbhum)	Hridaypur Katodur	Malay Ghosh		Malay Ghosh
Bandish (Kolkata)	Jara Brishtite Vijechnilo	Joy Goswami	Joy Goswami	Bijaylakshmi Barman
Swapnangan (Bardhaman)	Jashoda Maa	Shib Shankar Chakraborty		Prabir Haldar
Theatre Academy (Siliguri)	Jatileswar	Kuntal Ghosh		Kuntal Ghosh
Chupkutha	Jonmodin	Mohit Chattopadhyay		Asit Mukhopadhyay
Prekshapot (Maheshtola)	Khola Chithi	Rajat Subhra Sanyal	Lillian Hellman	Kalishankar Bhattacharya
Ganamukh (Chakdah)	Mohajibon	Amal Roy		Samar Mitra
Bardhaman Pathikrit Natya Sangstha	Sheuli	Rajat Ghosh	Elfriede Jelinek	Sankha Das
Saptak (Garapota)	Shono Go Dakhin Haowa	Swapan Haldar		Ram Nandy

1998

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Damama	Burimaa	Amal Chakraborty		Amal

				Chakraborty
Byatikram	Chhenra Suto	Tapan Bandopadhyay	Bertolt Brecht	Tapan Bandopadhyay
Theator Passion	Dahanshil	Chandan Palodhy		Ramaprasad Banik
Rangakormi	Himmatmai	Swadesh Dipak	Bertolt Brecht	Usha Ganguly
Chenamukh	Lajjatirto	Indrasish Lahiri		Arijit Guha
Bahrampur Repertry Theator	Maya	Partha Goswami	Syiad Mujtaba Siraz	Pradip Bhattacharjee
Bijpur Chaturtha Sutra	Nija Bhumikay	Kalyan Mitra	Jean Paul Srtre	Debotosh Gupta
Anasambol	Paap	Sajal Ghosh	Bertolt Brecht	Sohag Sen
Sudruk	Rangamati	Debasish Majumdar		Debasish Majumdar
Milan Mitali (Roghunathpur)	Sansar Simante	Kamalesh Mukherjee		Debraj Roy
Kushilab	Satabdi'r Sesh	Partha Chattopadhyay		Runu Chowdhury
Musafir	Seshkriyo	Sekhar Samaddar		Sekhar Samaddar
Nandikar	Shanu Roychoudhury	Swatilekha Sengupta	Shirley Valentine	Goutam Haldar
Sanglap Kolkata	Shudrayan	Kuntal Mukhopadhyay		Kuntal Mukhopadhyay
Swapno Sandhani	Tara Tin Bon	Shyamal Ghosh	Anton Chekov	Koushik Sen
Class Theatre	Valobasha Dekha Hobe	Ramen Sarkar	Kamal Kumar Majumdar	Ramen Sarkar
Janasanskriti	Vango Noishabdo	Workshop Production		Sanjay Ganguly

1999

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Durgadas Smriti Sangha	Adrishya	Sumantra Chattopadhyay	Akira Kurosaowa	Salil Kar
Natyasrijani	Anupoma	Shiv Sharma		Indrajit Paul
Natyaranga	Authokatha	Surojit Bandopadhyay		Swapan Sengupta
Malancha (Malda)	Dharmajatra	Sugata Sarkar		Parimal Tribedi
Ushnik	Jaan-E-Kalkatta	Smaran Basu		Ishita Mukhopadhyay
Alternative Living Theatre	Manipurer Maa	Workshop Production		Prabir Guha
Ankur Kalakrishti Kendra (Kolaghat)	Megher Opor Megh Jomechhe	Bhairab Ganguly		Chanchal Chakraborty
Theatre Comun	Muchi Bou Chamatkarini	Nilkantha Sengupta	Fedrico Garcia Lorca	Nilkantha Sengupta
Rangakarmee	Mukti	Usha Ganguly	Mahasweta Devi	Usha Ganguly
Ha Ja Ba Ra La	Phire Eso Pram	Chandan Sen		Chandan Sen
Saroni (Raiganj)	Punyatmaa	Sagarika Ghosh		Abhijit Majumdar

Aneek	Purna Apurna	Amallesh Chakraborty		Maloy Biswas
Sreejansena (Siliguri)	Shiter Surja Shreya	Partha Pratim Mitra		Partha Pratim Mitra
Janasanskriti	Sona Pakhi	Workshop Production		Sanjay Ganguly
Chupkotha	Swadhinatar Pore	Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee		Asit Mukhopadhyay
Theatron	Tomar Andhar Tomar Alo	Rita Dutta Chakraborty	Peter Shaffer	Saswata Biswas

2000

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Brischik	Amriter Sondhane	Kuntal Mukhopadhyay		Tapas Mukhopadhyay
Theatre Point (Agarpara)	Andhar Makha Sokal	Enakshi Das	Jean Cocteau	Romi Bhowmick
Sayak	Badhutantra	Manoj Mitra		Meghnad Bhattacharya
Kalakushali (Jalpaiguri)	Biswaran'er Por	Tamojit Roy		Tamojit Roy
Eshona (Chinsurah)	Bojhapora	Shankar Basu Thakur		Dilip Basu Thakur
Ingit Natya Sangstha	Chhayabrita	Biraj Mukhopadhyay	Jenifer Low	Ananda Bhattacharya
Porichay (Amta)	Eladidi	Shubhendu Bhandari		Shubhendu Bhandari
Rang Berang (Khidirpur)	idi	Sayantana Chanda	Sarah Kane	Tanmay Chanda
Parashmoni Natya Goshthi	Jahanara Jahanara	Harimadhab Mukhopadhyay		Sanjiban Dutta
Ushnik	Khela Bhangar Khela	Chandan Sen		Ishita Mukhopadhyay
Swapnasandhani	Nirbhaya	Reshmi Sen	Bertolt Brecht	Koushik Sen
Alapan (Durgapur)	Pank	Surathi Bakshi		Sanjay Joardar
Manchamita (Bardhaman)	Piprer Sari	Krishna Karmakar		Krishna Karmakar
Nandanik (Bandel)	Prabahaman	Amitava Chakraborty	Jon Fosse	Samiran Samaddar
Sreejansena (Siliguri)	Pratibandha	Partha Pratim Mitra		Partha Pratim Mitra
Angikar Natya Sangstha	Samatol	Badal Basu		Arnab Ghosh
Shikhor Natya Sangstha (Jhalda)	Supravat	Kajal Das		Gourab Munshi
Bharatiya Gananatya Sangha (Shapath)	Surja Shikha	Lakshmi Bramha		Haran Majumdar

2001

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
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Sreejansena (Siliguri)	Ebong Hate Hate Aday	Partha Pratim Mitra	Rabindranath Tagore	Partha Pratim Mitra
Blind opera	Manasa Mangal	Subrata Kanjilal		Subhashish Kanjilal
Sahityika	Phalguni	Deepro Majumdar		Subhashish Majumdar
Kalyani Udayan Natyakendra	Amlan Kushum	Sutirtha Banik	Nora Ephron	Sekhar Ghosh
Little Thespian	Safarnama	Mohan Rakesh		Uma Jhunjhunwala
Uttarpara Uttarayan	Antasalila	Loknath Bhattacharya		Shyamapada Gorai
Berhampore Repertory Theatre	Thanda Gosht	Saibal Basu	Sahdat Hassan Manto	Kinjal Chattopadhyay
Kinanka (Bolpur)	Manorama	Madan Mohan Mitra		Arghya Sanyal
Malda Dratic Club	Chyalakath	Sanjay Sarbadhikari		Arunesh Ghosh
Charjapad (Asansol)	Emon'o Hoy	Sukumar Joardar	Henry James	Sukumar Joardar
Natya Prahari (Haripal)	Seshraksha	Chandan Sen	Rabindranath Tagore	Jyotirmay Guha
Thealight	Durgaa	Suvankar Chakraborty		Atanu Sarkar
Ahana (Alipore)	Sandhi Bichchhed	Ranjit Samanta	Henry Denker	Gourishankar Beskari
Bratya Sarathi (Birati)	Kusum Kotha	Hillol Dasgupta		Suchetona Munshi
Peoples' Little Theatre	Tiner Talowar	Utpal Dutta		Utpal Dutta
Gobardanga Naksha	Ankhi Podma	Ujjwal Chattopadhyay		Mukunda Chakraborty
Rupantar	Bibhui	Ashish Paul		Ashish Paul
Curtain Call	Antareen	Tirthankar Chattopadhyay	Bertolt Brecht	Tirthankar Chattopadhyay
Duttapukur Drishti	Stree'r Patra	Ashesh Das	Rabindranath Tagore	Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee
Bharatiya Ganantya Sangha (Spandan)	Rape Particle	Sangram Guha		Shampa Sen

2002

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Sreejansena (Siliguri)	Amrita	Partha Pratim Mitra	Rabindranath Tagore	Partha Pratim Mitra
Anuranan (Coachbehar)	Haraye Khunji	Gopal Halder		Sanjib Mukherjee
Yugabani (Birbhum)	Antardahan	Sambuddha Seth	Tennessee Williams	Anup Dutta
Inside Out	Kotha Kaalmanabi	Suchismita Chatterjee		Suchismita Chatterjee
Anandan (Jhargram)	Purba Janmer Chhai	Hindol Chaki	Doris Lessing	Sourav Biswas
Mrittika Uttarpara	Itikathan	Sagnik Chattopadhyay		Sagnik Chattopadhyay

Dishari (Burnpur)	Golapsundori	Mamunur Rashid	Antonin Artaud	Nihar Bhattacharjee
Sanglap Kolkata	Abhinetri	Kuntal Mukhopadhyay		Kuntal Mukhopadhyay
Aneek	Shakuntala	Amalesh Chakraborty		Amalesh Chakraborty
Kothamukh (Konnagar)	Rajkonyar Khonje	Soumitra Basu		Soumen Mandal
Shilpok	Chou-Kath	Timir Baran Ray	Alphonse Daudet	Timir Baran Ray
Sreepur Rupayan	Eka Ebong Koyekjon	Swapan Das	Honore De Balzac	Tarun Guha
Gobardanga Natyayan	Ekti Meyer Galpo	Goutam Roy		Narayan Biswas
Gobardanga Naksha	Suva	Mainak Sengupta	Rabindranath Tagore	Ashish Das
Souvik Sanskritik Chakra	Bar Asbe Ekhuni	Dipak Karmakar	Anton Chekov	Goutam Mukherjee
Drishyapot	Charu	Anirban Bhattacharya	Rabindranath Tagore	Anirban Bhattacharya
Lokkrishti	System	Ujjwal Chattopadhyay	Martin Mc Donagh	Phalguni Chattopadhyay
Bandel Arohi	Rupkothar Jonne	Amitava Chakraborty		Ranjan Roy

2003

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Writtik (Berhampore)	Meghbati	Goutam Guha Roy	J.B. Priestley	Goutam Roy Choudhury
Naksha (Gobardanga)	Atmajaa	Tirthankar Chanda		Ashish Das
Uhini	Bijalibalar Mukti	Adrija Dasgupta	Moti Nandy	Adrija Dasgupta
Theatrician	Haybadan	Sankha Ghosh	Girish Karnad	Shuktara Lal
Smaranik	Drishtikanya	Indrashish Lahiri		Sayandeb Bhattacharya
Sayay	Shyama Kali	Indrashish Lahiri		Meghnad Bhattacharya
Antar-Ranga	Kande Keno Behula Sundori	Sailesh moitra		Sreejit Majumdar
Bivaban	Sab Pakhi Ghore Fere	Sushanta Pramanik	Patrick White	Anik Dhar
Madhuban Natya Sangstha	Kanna Nirobe	Swapna Sen		Menoka Banerjee
Rangashram (Berhampore)	Manideepa	Suvashish Roy Chowdhury		Sandeep Bhattacharjee
Gobadanga Naksha	Ami Madhobi	Sanjay Kar		Ashish Das
Gobardanga Udichi	Sondari Kotha	Selim Aldin		Jaydeep Biswas
Khardah Theatre Zone	No Protection	Ashoke Bhattacharjee	Sandeepan Chattopadhyay	Tapan Das
Ashoknagar	Kanya Tor	Tirthankar Chanda	Rabindranath	Abhi

Natyamukh			Tagore	Chakraborty
Keyadanga Sabuj Sanskritik Kendra	Mrinal	Nabamita Ghosh	Rabindranath Tagore	Rajesh Debnath
Kheyal Khola	Iti Bratya Kotha	Sougata Chattopadhyay	Alfred De Musset	Kalpana Baruah
Dhrubak	Joutuk	Ullas Mallik		Sanchayan Ghosh
Rangasena	Ishara	Mihir Sen	Mark Rylance	Koustav Sarkar
Arunodoyer Protyoy Natya Sanstha	Abarto	Mannan Hira		Dwijen Biswas
Tias	Mouna Manjari	Nirup Mitra		Sukhendu Sekhar Roy
Gabberia Jajabor Natyagoshthi	Tritiya Satti	Klyanashish Raha		Subhrendu Sarkar

2004

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Writtick (Berhampore)	Doodh Maa	Tamojit Roy	Kanai Kundu	Goutam Roy Choudhury
Darpan Natya Sangstha	Jatodur Roddur	Subir Chowdhury		Subir Chowdhury
Nandikar	Nachni	Sohini Sengupta		Swatilekha Sengupta
Janasanskriti	Sampurna	Workshop Production		Sanjay Ganguly
Uhini	Beje Othe Panchame Swar	Adrija Dasgupta	Rabindranath Tagore	Adrija Dasgupta
Swabak	Aj Sei Din	Mainak Sengupta		Nilima Chakraborty
Gobardanga Shilpayan	Padshi	Utpal Foujdar	Cormac McCarthy	Ashish Chattopadhyay
Natyam Balaka	Bigraha Pratistha	Tarashankar Bandopadhyay		Tarun Chowbey
Theatre Shine	Tomar Dake	Sumit Ganguly		Subhajit Bandopadhyay
Alternative Living Theatre	Krishnakali	Prabir Guha		Suvadeep Guha
Ichhapur Aleya	Bibaha Barshiki	Dhananjay Ghoshal	Neil Simon	Matilal Sen
Dakshin Ruchiranga	Jatismar	Manilal Bandopadhyay		Dilip Dutta

2005

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Ichhapur Aleya	Tamasa Sahasa	Sangita Chakraborty		Subhendu Majumdar
Balurghat Natya Academi	Kotha Amrita Saman	Bhaskar Chatterjee		Bhaskar Chatterjee
Nandikar	Madhabi	Swatilekha Sengupta		Rudra Prasad Sengupta
Janasanskriti	Ghure Dnarao	Workshop		Sanjay Ganguly

		Production		
Lokkatha	Dayen	Shyamaltanu Dasgupta		Ajit Banerjee
Anami Natya Sangstha (Jalpaiguri)	Kutabandha	Tirthankar Chanda	Neil Simon	Pralay Bhattacharya
Pratidhwani (Haldia)	Ful Fotar Shabda	Satya Mandal		Achinta Parui
Uhini	Misunderstanding	Sayanti Sahu	Albert Camus	Sayanti Sahu
Ashoknagar Natyamukh	Titli	Abhi Chakraborty	Guy De Maupassant	Sangita Chakraborty
Titas	Kuhakini	Mitul Dutta	Caryl Lesley Churchill	Debashish Ghosh Dastidar
Rabindranagar Natyayudh	Kanyadaan	Dhruba Das		Dani Karmakar
Kalindi Natyasreejan	Amrita Atit	Mainak Sengupta		Gourab Ghoshal
Shabdamugdha	Laajbarshan	Rakesh Ghosh	Humayun Ahmed	Rakesh Ghosh
Rajpur Agami	Simana Manabi	Basudeb Ghosh	Gore Vidal	Arup Hazra
2006				
Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Writtik (Berhampore)	Kusum Kotha	Goutam Roy Choudhury		Goutam Roy Choudhury
Pancham Baidik	Chandali	Rabindranath Tagore		Arpita Ghosh
Uhini	Mayar Chhayapotho	Maya Ghosh		Adrija Dasgupta
Purba Paschim	Angshumati	Ramaprasad Banik		Ramaprasad Banik
Nandikar	Tomar Naam	Swatilekha Sengupta	Oscar Wilde	Rudra Prasad Sengupta
Sayak	Pinky Buli	Indrashish Lahiri		Meghnad Bhattacharya
Belgharia Ethic	Brityante	Debashish Sengupta		Debashish Sengupta
Doll's Theatre	Saheb Baganer Sundori	Sudip Gupta	Harold Pinter	Sudip Gupta
Sailush (Jalpaiguri)	Digambari	Samar Choudhury		Alok Chakraborty
Baghajatin Alap	Goynar Baksho	Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay		Partha Pratim Deb
Chakdah Natyajjan	Tin Mohana	Ujjwal Chattopadhyay		Suman Paul
Gobardanga Mridangam	Banalata	Md. Zafar Iqbal		Barun Kar
Duttapukur Drishti	Manush Meyemanush	Samayita Dey		Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee
Sayak (Nabadweep)	Eso Basanta	Subrata Kanjilal		Subrata Kanjilal

2007-2008

Group Theatre	Production	Dramatist	Original Story / Drama	Director
Bohurupee	Birjashulka	Amit Moitra		Tulika Das
Arghya (Kasba)	Nagamandala	Sankha Ghosh	Girish Karnad	Abanti Chakraborty
Narkeldanga Swapnil Natya Sangstha	Bidyutparna	Manmatha Roy		Rajatshubhra Bhattacharjee
Writtik (Berhampore)	Phoolmoti	Goutam Roy		Shipra Sen
Theatre Workshop	Biye Gauni Kadnon Chapa	Chandan Sen		Ashok Mukhopadhyay
Nandikar	Rani Kadombini	Swatilekha Sengupta		Sohini Sengupta
Uhini	Tumi Daak Diyechho Kon Sakale	Sekhar Samaddar		Adrija Dasgupta
Naksha (Gobardanga)	Bilasibala	Ashish Das		Ashish Das
Sreejansena (Siliguri)	Hypatia	Partha Pratim Mitra		Partha Pratim Mitra
Arghya (Kasba)	Mourning Becomes Electra	Abanti Chakraborty	Eugene O'Neill	Abanti Chakraborty
Yuva Natya Sangha (Alipurduar)	Suromaa	Debashish Basu	Albert Camus	Sindhu Dutta
Ichhapur Aleya	Abichchhedyo	Sangita Choudhury		Subhendu Majumdar
Shrutirangam	Tobe Kemon Hoto ?	Poran Bandopadhyay		Poran Bandopadhyay
Samakalin Shilpidal	Notir Upakhyan	Jyotisman Chattopadhyay		Ambar Roy
Sundaram	Munni O Saat Chowkidar	Manoj Mitra		Manoj Mitra
Juger Jatri (Chandannagar)	Swarnachanpa	Meghnaad Bhattacharya		Ramkrishna Mandal
Manchamita (Bardhaman)	Jaatpala	Krishna Karmakar	Ketakadas Khemananda	Krishna Karmakar
Bichitra (Kaliyaganj)	Tusumoni	Rishi Mukherjee		Rishi Mukherjee
Sayak	Damini He	Chandan Sen	Amar Mitra	Meghnad Bhattacharya
Ballyganj Bratyajan	Ardhangini	Bratya Basu		Bratya Basu
Writtik Natya Goshthi (Siliguri)	Mohaprasthanar Pothe	Malay Ghosh		Suvankar Goswami
Purbaranga	Sitayan	Malay Roy	Mallika Sengupta	Malay Roy
Howrah Anubhash	Setubandhan	Rudraprasad Chakraborty	Edward Elbee	Shiben Bandopadhyay
Barasat Spandan	Tin Banker Kodi	Sahajad Firdaus	Leo Tolstoy	Pabitra Mukhopadhyay

APPENDIX - III

RESEARCH QUESTIONARE

গবেষণা তথ্য সংগ্রহ

গ্রুপ থিয়েটার প্রযোজিত গত তিব দশকের (১৯৭৭-২০০৭) বাংলা নাটকে নারীর সমস্যার অবু্ভব ও মধ্যায়ন .

প্রশ্নমালা

দলের নাম ::

দলের ঠিকানা ::

দলের প্রতিষ্ঠা তারিখ ও সাল ::

পরিচালক / পরিচালকগণ ::

প্রয়োজনে যোগাযোগের জন্য দরকারী টেলিফোন নম্বর ::

দলের মহিলা সদস্যদের সম্পর্কিত তথ্য : (কেবলমাত্র সংখ্যায় উল্লেখ করবেন)

১. দলে তাদের দায়িত্ব বা পদমর্যাদা ::

মহিলা সদস্য সংখ্যা	দলের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা সদস্য	সংগঠন পরিচালনায় যুক্ত	নির্দেশনা/ সহযোগী	নেপথ্যকর্মী	অভিনেত্রী/ শিক্ষানবিশ অভিনেত্রী

২. শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ::

কখনো বিদ্যালয়ে যাননি	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতায় বিদ্যালয় উত্তীর্ণ	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতায় স্নাতক	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতায় স্নাতকোত্তর ও তদুর্ধ্ব	কারিগরি শিক্ষাপ্রাপ্ত

৩. বয়স ::

১৫ থেকে ২৫ বছর	২৬ থেকে ৩৬	৩৭ থেকে ৪৭	৪৮ থেকে ৫৯	৬০ ও তদুর্ধ্ব

৪. উপার্জন ::

উপার্জন করেন না	শিক্ষার্থী বৃত্তি ইত্যাদি প্রাপক	আংশিক সময়ের কর্মী	বেতনভোগী / ব্যবসায়ী

৫. বৈবাহিক সম্পর্ক ::

বিবাহিতা	অবিবাহিতা	ডববাহ বিচ্ছিন্না / বিধবা	একক মাতৃ	জানাতে অনিচ্ছুক

৬. থিয়েটারে যোগাযোগের সূত্র ::

হঠাৎ ঘটনাচক্রে যুক্ত হয়েছেন	নিজ আগ্রহে শখ করে থিয়েটারে এসেছেন	কারো উৎসাহে থিয়েটারে এসেছেন	পেশাদার অভিনেত্রী	রাজনৈতিক দায়বদ্ধতায় অভিনেত্রী	সমাজসেবা হিসেবে থিয়েটারে যুক্ত

৭. দলের প্রযোজনা নির্মাণ সম্পর্কিত তথ্য : (এক কিম্বা একাধিক বিকল্পে ✓ চিহ্ন দিতে পারেন; উল্লিখিত বিকল্পগুলিতে সম্মত না হলে বিশদে লিখুন)

অ. প্রযোজনা নির্মাণের জন্য দলে নাটক বাছাই করা হয় কি পদ্ধতিতে ?

- ক) পরিচালক নিজেই নাট্যকার, তাঁর রচনাই দল প্রযোজনা করে
 খ) পরিচালক কিছু নাটক বেছে দলে শোনান, তা থেকে সকলে মিলে বেছে নেন
 গ) নাটক বাছাই করার জন্য আলাদা উপসমিতি রয়েছে
 ঘ) যে কোন সদস্যই নাটক বেছে আনতে পারেন দলের পছন্দ হলে তা প্রযোজিত হয়
 ঙ) (অন্য কোন বিকল্প থাকলে তা এখানে সংক্ষেপে লিখুন)

আ. প্রযোজনার মহলা কোথায় করেন ?

- ক) দলের নিজস্ব মহলাকক্ষ আছে
 খ) মহলার জন্য কোন মঞ্চ বা ভবন ভাড়া নেওয়া হয়
 গ) দলের কোন সদস্যের বাড়িতে মহলা চলে
 ঘ) যখন যেখানে সুযোগ হয় সেখানে মহলা চলে, প্রযোজনার কিছু আগে মঞ্চমহলা করে প্রযোজনার সবদিক গুছিয়ে নেওয়া হয়
 ঙ) (অন্য কোন বিকল্প থাকলে তা এখানে সংক্ষেপে লিখুন)

ই. প্রযোজনার সাথে কোন মহিলা বা মহিলারা যুক্ত হলে মহলা কিভাবে পরিচালিত হয় ?

- ক) মহিলারা নির্দিষ্ট সময়ে মহলায় আসেন এবং নির্দিষ্ট সময়ে মহলা সেরে ফিরে যান, অন্যরা থেকে যান প্রযোজনার অন্যান্য কাজ করতে বা মহলা চলতে থাকে প্রস্তুতি দিয়ে
 খ) মহলার আরম্ভ থেকে শেষ অবধি মহিলারা থাকেন, মহলার শেষে প্রযোজনার অন্যান্য কাজও সেরে ফেরেন
 গ) মহিলাদের অভিনয় অংশগুলি তাঁদের সুবিধামতো আলাদা সময়ে মহলা করা হয়
 ঘ) মহিলাদের নিয়ে আসা-দিয়ে আসা, আলাদা শৌচাগার, আলাদা সাজঘর ইত্যাদির ব্যবস্থা করা হয়
 ঙ) (অন্য কোন বিকল্প থাকলে তা এখানে সংক্ষেপে লিখুন)

ঈ. নারী-কেন্দ্রিক প্রযোজনার জন্য নাটক বাছাই করার সময় দলের মহিলাদের ভূমিকা কেমন হয় ?

- ক) এক্ষেত্রে কেবল মাত্র মহিলারাই ঠিক করেন নারী-কেন্দ্রিক প্রযোজনার জন্য কোন নাটক বাছাই করা হবে
 খ) পরিচালক নিজেই নারী বিষয়ক কোন সর্বজনবিদিত সমস্যাকে ভিত্তি করে লেখা নাটক বেছে নেন, তাই তাতে আলাদা করে মহিলাদের মতামত গ্রহণ দরকার হয়না
 গ) দলের মহিলা-পুরুষ সকল সদস্যই যথেষ্ট সংবেদনশীলতার সাথে আলোচনাত্রমে নারী-কেন্দ্রিক প্রযোজনার জন্য নাটক বাছাই করেন
 ঘ) দলের মহিলা সদস্যদের উৎসাহিত করা হয় নারী-কেন্দ্রিক প্রযোজনার জন্য নাটক লিখতে
 ঙ) দক্ষ অভিনেত্রী পাওয়া গেলেই তা নারীকেন্দ্রিক নাটক মঞ্চায়নের জন্য সহায়ক পরিস্থিতি তৈরী করে
 চ) (অন্য কোন বিকল্প থাকলে তা এখানে সংক্ষেপে লিখুন)

উ. দলের সাম্প্রতিকতম প্রযোজনা'টি অবধি মঞ্চায়িত নাটকগুলির অধিকাংশের চরিত্র নিম্নলিখিত কোন ধরনের ?
 (শূন্যস্থানে সংখ্যা উল্লেখ করুন)

প্রকার	সংখ্যা
ক) মৌলিক পান্ডুলিপি ভিত্তিক প্রযোজনা	
খ) নির্দিষ্টভাবে দলের জন্যই রচিত নাটক	

গ) নাট্য পত্র-পত্রিকায় বা অন্যত্র মুদ্রিত নাটক	
ঘ) স্বদেশী বিখ্যাত সাহিত্যিক বা নাট্যকারের সুনামধন্য নাটকের নবতর রূপায়ন/সংবাদে প্রকাশিত সূত্রে রচিত নাটক	
ঙ) বিদেশী সাহিত্যিকদের রচনাশ্রয়ী নাট্যরূপায়িত নাটক	
চ) (অন্য কোন বিকল্প থাকলে তা এখানে সংক্ষেপে লিখুন)	

৮. দলের প্রয়োজনশীল লিখে দলের মহিলা সদস্যদের ভূমিকা সম্পর্কে নিচে বর্ণিত ধরনগুলি লিখে কতজন মহিলা নাট্যকর্মী যুক্ত থাকেন/থেকেছেন তার সংখ্যা উল্লেখ করুন

অভিনয়	নির্দেশনা	নাট্যরচনা	আবহ ও সঙ্গীত	আলোক	মঞ্চ নির্মাণ	পোশাক	রূপসজ্জা	মঞ্চ উপকরণ	ব্যবস্থাপনা

৯. প্রত্যক্ষভাবে নারীকে ন্দ্রীক বিষয় নিয়ে অদ্যাবধি দলের প্রযোজিত নাটকগুলি লিখে সংক্ষিপ্ত বর্ণনা লিখুন

নাটকের নাম	নাট্যকার	নির্দেশক	প্রথম অভিনয় (কেবল সাল উল্লেখ যথেষ্ট)	কতবার মঞ্চায়ন হয়েছে	চলতি প্রযোজনা না আপাতত বন্ধ ?	আপাতত বন্ধ থাকলে তার কারণ ? # (নিচের বিকল্পগুলি মধ্যে বেছে নিয়ে পারেন)	আলো, আবহ, মঞ্চ নির্মানকারী	নেপথ্যকর্মীদের মধ্যে কারা দলে বহিরাগত/ পেশাদার ?

আপাতত বন্ধ থাকলে তার কারণ ?

- ক) পরবর্তী নতুন প্রযোজনার জনপ্রিয়তা
- খ) পরবর্তী একের পর এক প্রযোজনার চাপ
- গ) প্রধান চরিত্র/ চরিত্রগুলি লিখে পক্ষ থেকে উদ্ভূত সমস্যা
- ঘ) পরিবর্তিত পরিস্থিতিতে বিষয়/ বক্তব্যের গুণ রুত্ব হ্রাস
- ঙ) অত্যধিক প্রযোজনা ব্যয়ের তুলনায় কল শো কম
- চ) অন্য কোন কারণ থাকলে তা সংক্ষেপে উল্লেখ করুন

সম্ভব হলে উপরোক্ত প্রযোজনাগুলি লিখে ব্রোশিও/ কিম্বা লিফলেট ইত্যাদি পাঠাবেন

১০. প্রত্যক্ষভাবে নারীকে ন্দ্রীক বিষয় নিয়ে অদ্যাবধি দলের প্রযোজিত নাটকগুলি লিখে মধ্যে বিষয়বস্তব্যে কোন কোন দিকগুলি এ যাবৎ তুলে ধরেছেন (সংখ্যা উল্লেখ করুন)

বিষয়বস্তব্য	সংখ্যা
ক) একজন নারীর আর্থ-সামাজিক-রাজনৈতিক-ব্যক্তিগত প্রতিবন্ধকতা জয়ের একক লড়াইয়ের কাহিনী (মৌলিক কিম্বা সাহিত্যশ্রয়ী)	
খ) পারিবারিক হিংসা, সামাজিক নিগ্রহ, ধর্মীয় নিপীড়ন, অর্থনৈতিক বঞ্চনা, পারিবারিক মূল্যবোধের টানাপোড়েনে নিপীড়িত কোন মহিলার মর্মভেদী অভিজ্ঞতাভিত্তিক নাটক	
গ) ঐতিহাসিক বা সমকালীন কোন সুনামধন্য মানবীর জীবনাখ্যানভিত্তিক নাটক	
ঘ) গোষ্ঠী বা দলগতভাবে নারীদের প্রতি অবিচারের ও বঞ্চনার কাহিনীভিত্তিক নাটক	
ঙ) কিংবদন্তী, পুরাণ, মহাকাব্যের পরিচিত পাত্রীদের কাহিনীর আলোকে সমকালে নারীদের পরিস্থিতির সামুজ্য বিশ্লেষণের নাটক	
চ) (অন্য কোন বিকল্প থাকলে তা এখানে সংক্ষেপে লিখুন)	

১১. প্রত্যক্ষভাবে নারীকে ন্দীক বিষয় নিয়ে অদ্যাবধি দলের প্রযোজিত নাটকগুলির উপসংহার কিভাবে করা হয়েছে ?

উপসংহার	সংখ্যা
ক) প্রতিবাদীসত্তায় উজ্জীবিত নারীকে তার বিরুদ্ধে অবিচারের প্রতিশোধ নিতে দেখানো হয়েছে	
খ) নারীর অসহায় অবস্থা (এমনকি মৃত্যু) তুলে ধরে সমাজের দিকে কিছু তীক্ষ্ণ প্রশ্ন ছুঁড়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে	
গ) প্রশ্ন নয়, স্লোগান নয় - নারীর আর্থ-সামাজিক-রাজনৈতিক অক্ষমতার কারণগুলি পুঁথানুপুঁথি বর্ণনায় তুলে ধরা হয়েছে, উপসংহার আরোপ করা হয়নি	
ঘ) প্রতিবাদী নারীকে সমাজবন্ধন ছিন্তা করে একাকিনী সাহসিকার মতো পথ চলার আরম্ভ দেখানো হয়েছে	
ঙ) প্রতিবাদী নারী অপর সকলকে আলোচনায় সম্মত করে তার বিরুদ্ধে অবিচারের মূলকেই অপসারিত করার জন্য সকলের সাথে লড়াইয়ের ডাক দিচ্ছে - এভাবেই উপসংহার করা হয়েছে	
চ) অন্য কোন বিকল্প থাকলে তা এখানে সংক্ষেপে লিখুন	

১২. নারীদের ওপর প্রচলিত অবিচারের প্রতিকার নিরসন সম্পর্কে দলের মহিলা সদস্যদের মতামত ::

ক) শ্রেণীশোষণমুক্ত সমাজগঠনের সাথে সাথেই নারীদের ওপর শোষণ ও অবিচারের অবসান হবে	
খ) মহিলাদের রাজনৈতিক, সামাজিক, অর্থনৈতিক সশক্তিকরণের জন্য রাষ্ট্রকে উপযুক্ত কল্যাণকর পদক্ষেপ করতে হবে	
গ) মহিলাদের বিরুদ্ধে যে কোনও অন্যান্যের জবাব দিতে শক্তিশালী প্রতিরোধবাহিনী গঠন করে দৃষ্টান্তমূলক তৎপরতা দেখাতে হবে	
ঘ) সমাজে, সংস্কৃতিতে, ধর্মে, ইতিহাসে মহিলাদের মহিমাময়িত ভূমিকাকে আরো ব্যাপক আকারে প্রচার করতে হবে ও তার মাধ্যমেই সামাজিকীকরণ করতে হবে আগামী পুজন্মকে	
ঙ) কোনও হস্তক্ষেপ ও বাধানিষেধ ছাড়াই মহিলাদের গতিবিধির স্বাধীনতা দিলে তারা নিজেরাই সমস্ত অন্যায় অবিচারের প্রতিকার করতে সক্ষম	
চ) অন্য কোনও বিকল্প	

দলের সাংগঠনিক বিষয় সম্পর্কিত তথ্য : (এক কিম্বা একাধিক বিকল্পে ✓ চিহ্ন দিতে পারেন; উল্লিখিত বিকল্পগুলিতে সম্মত না হলে বিশদে লিখুন)

১৩. দলগতভাবে বা দলের কোন সদস্য সরকারী বা বে-সরকারী কোন অনুদান পেয়েছেন কি না ?

অনুদান	কোন বছর বা কোন কোন বছর পেয়েছেন ?
ক) রাজ্য সরকার বা রাজ্য সরকারী কোন সংস্থার প্রদত্ত অনুদান	
খ) কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার বা কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারী কোন সংস্থার প্রদত্ত অনুদান	
গ) বে-সরকারী কোন সংস্থার প্রদত্ত অনুদান	
ঘ) বিদেশী কোন সংস্থার প্রদত্ত অনুদান	
ঙ) ব্যক্তিগতসূত্রে প্রাপ্ত কোন অনুদান	

১৪. দলগতভাবে বা দলের কোন সদস্য সরকারী কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানের সদস্যপদ পেয়েছেন কি না ?

প্রতিষ্ঠান	কোন সংস্থা ? কোন বছর সদস্যপদ পেয়েছেন ? কত বছর ধরে সদস্য আছেন ?
ক) নাট্যবিষয়ক রাজ্য সরকারী কোন সংস্থার সদস্যপদ	
খ) নাট্যবিষয়ক কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারী কোন সংস্থার সদস্যপদ	
গ) নাট্যবিষয়ক বে-সরকারী কোন সংস্থার সদস্যপদ	
ঘ) নাট্যবিষয়ক আন্তর্জাতিক কোন সংস্থার সদস্যপদ	

১৫. দলে মহিলা সদস্যদের নাটক রচনা বা নির্দেশনা ইত্যাদিতে উৎসাহ দেওয়া হয় কি না ? হলে কিভাবে দেওয়া হয় ?

পদ্ধতি	বিকল্প
ক) মহিলাদের জন্য নাট্যরচনা প্রশিক্ষণ ও কর্মশালা করা হয়	নিয়মিত/প্রয়োজন হলে/সরকারী উদ্যোগে কর্মশালায় যোগদানের জন্য উৎসাহ দেওয়া হয়
খ) মহিলাদের জন্য নাট্যনির্দেশনা প্রশিক্ষণ ও কর্মশালা করা হয়	নিয়মিত/প্রয়োজন হলে/সরকারী উদ্যোগে কর্মশালায় যোগদানের জন্য উৎসাহ দেওয়া হয়

গ) মহিলাদের দ্বারা পরিচালিত নাট্যবিষয়ক সেমিনার করা হয়	নিয়মিত/প্রয়োজন হলে/সরকারী বা অন্য দলের এমন উদ্যোগে যোগদানের জন্য উৎসাহ দেওয়া হয়
ঘ) মহিলাদের দ্বারা পরিচালিত নাট্যবিষয়ক প্রকাশনা করা হয়	নিয়মিত/প্রয়োজন হলে/সরকারী বা অন্য দলের এমন উদ্যোগে যোগদানের জন্য উৎসাহ দেওয়া হয়
ঙ) মহিলাদের জন্য নৈপথ্যকর্ম প্রশিক্ষণ ও কর্মশালা করা হয়	নিয়মিত/প্রয়োজন হলে/সরকারী উদ্যোগে কর্মশালায় যোগদানের জন্য উৎসাহ দেওয়া হয়

১৬. দলে মহিলা সদস্যদের নাট্যপত্রপত্রিকা ইত্যাদি পড়তে উৎসাহ দেওয়া হয় কি না ? হলে কিভাবে দেওয়া হয় ?

(এক কিয়ুা একাধিক বিকল্পে ✓ চিহ্ন দিতে পারেন; উল্লিখিত বিকল্পগুলিতে সম্মত না হলে বিশদে লিখুন)

প্রত্যেক মহিলা সদস্যের জন্য নাট্যপত্রিকার সদস্যপদ বাধ্যতামূলক	দলগত সংগ্রহ থেকে যে কোনও সদস্য তা নিতে ও পড়তে পারেন	আগ্রহী সদস্যারা নিজ উদ্যোগে পড়েন, দলের কোনও ভূমিকা নেই	দলপতি উল্লেখযোগ্য রচনা সকলকে পড়তে বললে তা সকলের সাথে মহিলারাও পড়েন	অন্য কোন বিকল্প

১৭. দলে মহিলা সদস্যদের অন্যদলের প্রয়োজনা দেখতে উৎসাহ দেওয়া হয় কি না ? হলে কিভাবে দেওয়া হয় ?

(এক কিয়ুা একাধিক বিকল্পে ✓ চিহ্ন দিতে পারেন; উল্লিখিত বিকল্পগুলিতে সম্মত না হলে বিশদে লিখুন)

বাধ্যতামূলক	স্বাচ্ছামূলক	প্রচারভিত্তিক (ভালো নাটক দেখতে উৎসাহিত করা হয়)	বহিরাগত প্রয়োজনা ভিত্তিক (নামী দলের প্রয়োজনা দেখতে উৎসাহিত করা হয়)	অন্য কোন বিকল্প

১৮. দলে মহিলা সদস্যদের অন্যদলের প্রয়োজনা দেখতে উৎসাহ দেওয়া হয় কি না ? হলে কিভাবে দেওয়া হয় ?

(এক কিয়ুা একাধিক বিকল্পে ✓ চিহ্ন দিতে পারেন; উল্লিখিত বিকল্পগুলিতে সম্মত না হলে বিশদে লিখুন)

বাধ্যতামূলক	স্বাচ্ছামূলক	প্রচারভিত্তিক (ভালো নাটক দেখতে উৎসাহিত করা হয়)	বহিরাগত প্রয়োজনা ভিত্তিক (নামী দলের প্রয়োজনা দেখতে উৎসাহিত করা হয়)	অন্য কোন বিকল্প

১৯. দলের মহিলা সদস্যদের মধ্যে নারীকেন্দ্রিক বিষয়ে প্রয়োজনার ক্ষেত্রে কি প্রতিক্রিয়া দেখতে পাওয়া যায় ?

(এক কিয়ুা একাধিক বিকল্পে ✓ চিহ্ন দিতে পারেন; উল্লিখিত বিকল্পগুলিতে সম্মত না হলে বিশদে লিখুন)

দলের প্রতি আগ্রহ ও উদ্যোগ বেড়ে যায়	অন্য প্রয়োজনার মতোই নিয়মিত / স্বাভাবিক থাকেন	শুধু ওই প্রয়োজনা নিয়েই উৎসাহী থাকেন	সমালোচনামূলক আচরণ ও সতর্ক উদ্যোগ নেন	অন্য কোন বিকল্প

২০. দলের মহিলা সদস্যদের মধ্যে আন্তঃসম্পর্কের ক্ষেত্রে কি প্রতিক্রিয়া দেখতে পাওয়া যায় ?

(এক কিয়ুা একাধিক বিকল্পে ✓ চিহ্ন দিতে পারেন; উল্লিখিত বিকল্পগুলিতে সম্মত না হলে বিশদে লিখুন)

সুস্থ পেশাদারী প্রতিযোগিতামূলক	পারিবারিক/ সামাজিক প্রকোভভিত্তিক সম্পর্ক	নেতৃত্বমূলক (নতুন মেয়েদের দলে যোগদানে উৎসাহ দেওয়া ইত্যাদি)	অপ্রভাবিত ও আনুষ্ঠানিক সম্পর্ক	অন্য কোন বিকল্প

মোট কত জন সদস্যের মতামত যাচাই করা হয়েছে, তা পাশের খোঁপে উল্লেখ করুন

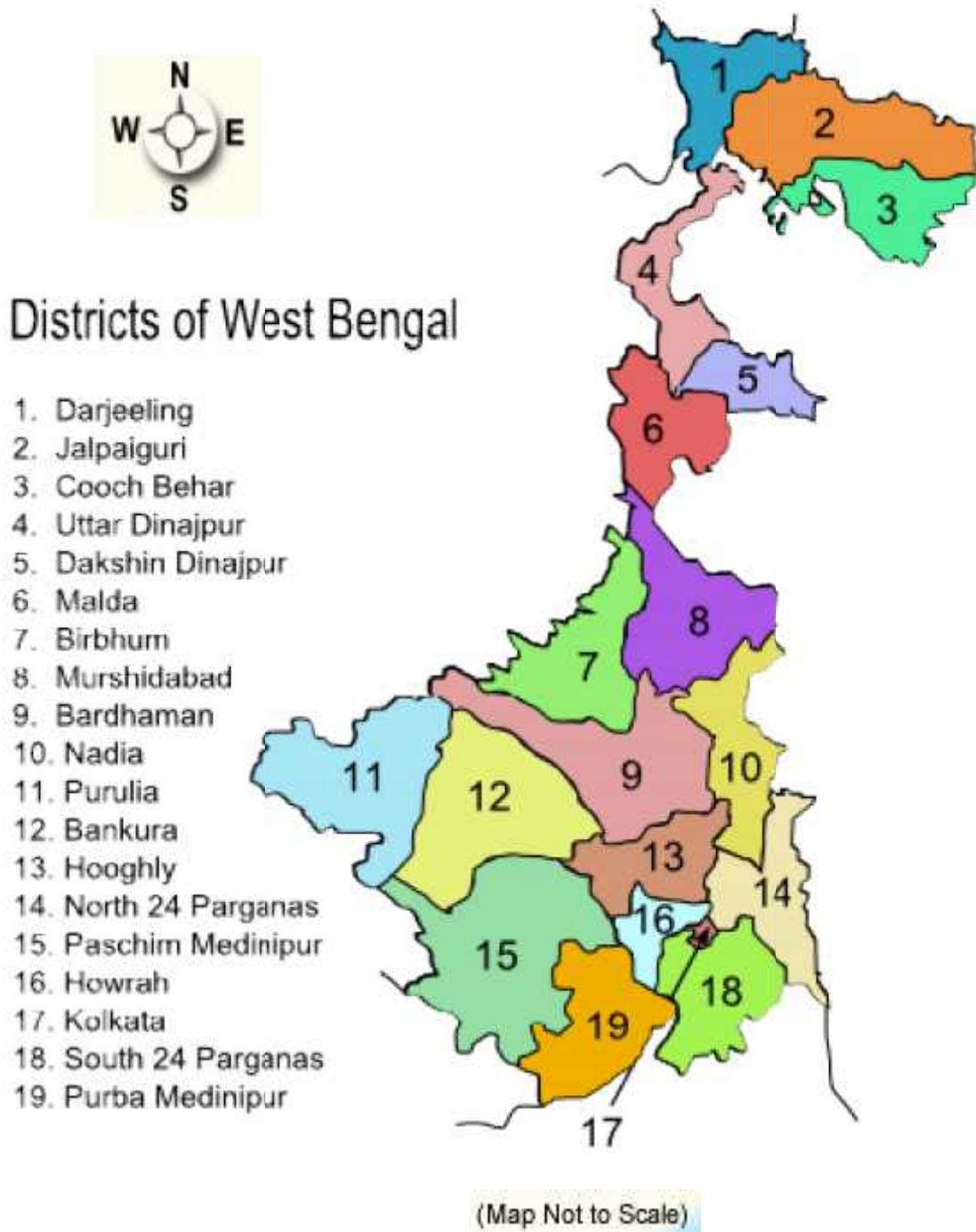
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দলের সীলমোহর

তথ্যপ্রদানকারীর
স্বাক্ষর, নাম, ও পদ

APPENDIX - IV

MAP OF 19 DISTRICTS OF WESTBENGAL



APPENDIX - V

PHOTOGRAPHS



After an interview with Playwright Chandan Sen(Sr.).



After an interview with Director Chandan Sen(Jr.).



During an interaction with theatre critic Samik Bandopadhyay.



During an interview with Actor/Director Rudra Prasad Sengupta.



In conversation with Actor/Dramatist Soumitra Chattopadhyay.



An intimate interaction with Director Usha Ganguly.



During a talk with Actor Debshankar Haldar.



A moment of interaction with theatre doyen Padmashree (Late) Habib Tanbir



After an interview with Actor/Director Nadira Babbar.



After a talk with Actor Shantilal Mukherjee.



Janasanskriti performing Women's issues



Janasanskriti performing in the household compound



Janasanskriti performing in public spaces





Janasanskriti show gathering and desi drum performance



A moment of INTERVENTION in Janasanskriti's performance.



Mastermind of Janasanskriti Sanjay Ganguly.

APPENDIX - VI

Research Article

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A GENDERED REVISION OF THE EARLIEST PHASE OF MODERN BENGALI THEATER

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ABSTRACT

The nineteenth century cultural history of Bengal reveals the deprivation of the women folk as actress in the dramatic productions in the contemporary Bengali theaters. Male actors used to appear in the roles of the heroines in disguise. Noted maestros like Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi, Amritlal Basu, Amritlal Mukherjee Mahendralal Basu, Tinkori Mukherjee, and Kshetra Mohan Ganguly played the role of the leading lady characters in many 'Pala's (drama productions) like 'Sadhabaar Ekaadashi', 'Neel Darpan', 'Jaamaai Baarik' etc. The appointment of the female actress was disregarded by both the petty-bourgeoisie popularly known as the "Babu"s, and the stalwarts of nineteenth century Bengal Renaissance. Many of the native News Papers vehemently opposed a case for women to enter the 'stage'.

Michael Madhusudan Dutta, was the first protagonist to have introduced three women, named as Golaapbala, Elokeshi and Jagattarini, in three characters of his drama 'Sharmistha' produced on 16th august, 1873 at Bengal Theatre. It would have hardly any possibility if the owners of the Hall did not care for the 'profit' motive. However, as their names suggest, all these actresses were prostitutes. And of course, Michael Madhusudan had to face enormous criticisms, social boycott, gossips, and humiliation for that. The history of Bengali theater is as old as 210 years (considering 'The Disguise' by Gerrassim Stepanovich Lebediyeff at Mallick's residence at Bagbajar in 1795 as the pioneering effort), yet the participation of the women on the stages was as late as 1873.

The notable point is, that the women education was in vogue in those days, ladies were joining the medical studies, riding horses with their husbands at the Garer Maath field, meeting the Governor at supper on invitation along with the husbands, editing literary magazines, writing in contemporary creative journals, yet kept a strange distance from the proscenium. The reason behind is obviously the age old patriarchy that allows no way for such inception that a girl from a "Vadralok" family would join the carrier of a theater actress crossing the limits of the typical nineteenth century Bengali family.

It was Ramakrishna Paramhansa, who acknowledged the contributions of women in Bengali theaters for the first time. He blessed Binodini Dasi, the noted actress of the age, and called her "Choitanyadayini" (donor of the senses). He also encouraged Girish Ghosh to bring more numbers of women to theater for their emancipation. However his wishes took long time to have realized. Due to the initiatives of Girish Chandra Ghosh many women joined the career of actresses in his Great National Theatre by the last few decades of the 19th Century. Many of them had marvelous spirit and talent as well they left noteworthy contributions to modern Bengali theater. The dedications and offerings of these women are great debts to the present Bengali Theater, and should be acknowledged with due respect.

KEY-WORDS : BENGALI THEATER; NINETEENTH CENTURY; WOMEN ACTORS; BROTHELS.

Any review of the history of theatrical and dramatic performance in India unleashes the fact that the women were debarred from this entertainment media to the furthest extent. In many cases, women were not allowed to enter in the theater hall without seeking a company from her husband. The entrance of an unmarried woman in the theater auditorium was strictly prohibited on the rationale of preventing her from moral perversion. The Naatya Shaashtra of Varata Muni observes that in the Vedic Age, those actors were socially condemned who used to play the character of a woman. They were ridiculed as 'Pungschali' i.e. professionals of a vulgar job. Their witness had no value in the court of law; Brahmins used not to take food in their home; their wives were also slandered. In the Artha Shaashtra of Koutilya, the author described them as 'Jaayaaajiba' which meant a person who earns the bread by acting as a woman or a person who has an occupation of acting as a woman. Though he cared little to make any moral judgment on such an act of

those actors, conventionally, so adamant was our traditional society on the issue of woman's 'right to entertainment'.

The 19th Century cultural history of Bengal reveals similar deprivation of the women folk as actress in the dramatic productions of contemporary Bengali theatres. In spite of the fact, that this century marks the intellectual reawakening through which transition was taking place in the Bengali culture and society, the reaction of educated and modern Bengali 'Vadralok's (Gentlemen) towards theater as a media of leisure and entertainment was very much gender biased. Heramba Chandra, one of the leading figures of Brahma Samaaj Movement once refused to give directions to a couple from the mufassil (parish), the way to Star Theatre, as he was deadly against the appointment of female actors in the modern Bengali dramas, and by then female thespians were appearing on the stage of Star Theatre. University of Calcutta, which owed acknowledgements of being the center for contemporary modern education and culture, did not allow men and women to act together in a drama till 70s of the 19th Century.

Though women were kept detached from acting in theaters, 19th Century conservative Bengali 'Vadralok' audience used to be charmed in the dramatic and literary creations based on life of women, their pain and pleasures, secrete desires, extramarital relations, illegal affairs and mythical and religious dictations on the role of the women in family and culture. Male actors used to appear in the roles of the heroines in women's make-up. Obscene mimicry of the women through these performances was admired by the elites and headmen of the community. This practice probed to become customary in Bengal's theatres till the last few years of 19th Century.

Similar practices in several rural theaters like Jaatraa continued even up to the 4th Decades of 20th Century. Noted Vaishnav cult, Sree Chaitnya himself characterized many women characters in Kirtanas, lyrical dramas based on Vaishnav mythology, as it is known from his biography, Chaitanya Vaagabat by Vrindaaban Das. Roy Ramananda, during the same period of Sree Chaitanya, incorporated a few female dancers and singers in his troupe of Kirtana. Interestingly, in some forms of folk theaters, since distant past women had played their role as themselves and the tradition continued till the early phase of 19th Century before gradual decline. According to Samaachaar Darpan, popular Bengali news daily of the period under study, a Jaatraa troupe came to Calcutta from Manipur (a state in North-East India) in 1826 which was led by women, and most of the actors in the troupe were women. In the same year, the same source reports, male and female actors performed together in a Jaatraa named as 'Nanda Bidaay' composed and directed by Raam Chaand Mukherjee of Joraasaanko. Incidentally, most of the Jaatraas in those days were mainly based on religious and mythological discourses and it was a general conscience that performing for a religious end shall sanctify and elevate the moral status of the women. It is on the same ground that the girls who had talent in dance and music were appointed to serve the temple as 'Devdaasi' (virgin maid devoted to the almighty) in later Vedic age. Gradually, women started appearing in public performing their talent of arts to preach the divine grace of the Lord. During the Muslim rule in India such customs were abandoned. Yet the undercurrent of this tradition remained limited within the scope of Folk Theaters. This was the route through which women came to perform in various folk forms of theater in Bengal, like Dhop, Kheyur, Aalkaap, Aakhraai, Kobiyaal since 17th Century. The social response to this kind of performances can be assumed as appreciative as common people patronage these indigenous versions of 'expressive' performance.

Social rejection to women's participation in urban and civil theater in 19th Century Bengal was not a unique phenomenon. History shows that similar problem had troubled the dramatic performances there at the theatres in London during the era of William Shakespeare (1564-1616). Conventionally, young boys used to act the female characters over there, as ladies were being debarred from appearing on stage. To tweak with such a quandary Shakespeare had to plot his heroines to appear in the disguise of men on the stage. Thus the play used to become 'the business of male actors' for quite a long hour. The characters like 'Ganymede' in *As You Like It*, 'Viola' in *Twelfth Knight*, 'Portia' in *Merchant Of Venice*, 'Imogene' in *Cymbeline*, 'Julia' in *Two Gentlemen In Verona* can be referred in this connection. During the reign of Charles II, in 1660, William Devinant, for the first time, introduced women actors in the theatres of London. Michael Redgrave wrote, 'we know, for instance, that Cleopatra was written for a boy and I think we can dismiss any wishful argument that in writing his great heroines Shakespeare foresaw the time when women would be allowed to act them. Though he may have done so, he certainly wrote them bearing the limitations of the boy-actors in mind, and

for this reason there is no scene for love-making either in Antony and Cleopatra or in Romeo and Juliet, where the greatest love scene in dramatic literature keeps the lovers separated by a balcony's distance.'

During the rule of the East India Company in India, the theater troops from abroad used to come to play acts here without actresses. The Board of Directors of the East India Company did not encourage the theater party to bring the lady actors in India on the ground that the endurance of the British staffs of the Company, who left their family behind in England to join Company's service, shall breach of a vow. However, it is during this period, in 1789, on 1st of May, in Mrs. Bristoe's Private Theatre, the female actors from the other shore of the sea came to Calcutta to take part in plays. By the last decade of the 18th Century and the early 3 decades of 19th Century women actors of foreign origin was acting in the leading theater halls in Bengal like Dum Dum Nattiyasaalaa, San Susie Theatre, Chowranghee Theatre, Leuse Dramatic Company, Calcutta Play House etc.

The farm houses and the courtyards of the aristocratic families were the play arena for Bengali acts at its initial stage in 19th Century. With few contraventions in two or three cases, many stalwart male actors of the period used to play the characters of female in the drama. This was a mainstream practice in Bengali frolics. Prasanna Kumar's Hindu Theatre or Joraasaanko Naattiyasaalaa of Pyaree Mohan Basu (established in 1731), Belgaachhiyaa Naattiyasaalaa (established in 1859), Shovaa Baazaar Naattiyasaalaa (established in 1867), and Metropolitan Theatre (established in 1859) – in all the contemporary playhouses, this tradition was firmly accomplished. The only exceptions to this customary practice were the Oriental Theatre in Chitpur and Baabu Nabin Chandra Basu's residence in Shyam Baazaar in 1835. Appointment of female players in their roles in Oriental Theatre in Howrah got the social approval as Oriental Theatre used to produce English One Act Plays, then. Hindu Pioneer, leading news daily of the contemporary period reports the participation of three women actresses in the Vidyaa Sundar Naatok at Baabu Nabin Chandra Basu's residence. Raadhaamoni acted as 'Vidyaa' and Joydurgaa played the character of 'Sundar' in the show. This was the path-breaking as well as pioneering effort to introduce females in amateur Bengali theater. Though not much information is available regarding the three actresses of the said presentation, their names, Raadhaamoni, Joydurgaa and Raajkumari, suggest that all three of them were from brothels, and were harlots in profession. Hindu Pioneer strongly criticized such 'inhuman', 'unethical', 'demoralizing' business of Baabu Nabin Chandra to 'earn money' which will 'drag Bengali society and culture to the filth of the hell'.

The star thespians who led this typical rite of appearing as the heroine in a drama in this period, received special recognitions from the contemporary media. When Mr. Sharat Chandra Ghosh, Mr. Mahendra Naath Mukherjee, Mr. Vuban Mohan Ghosh appeared in "Shakuntalaa" and "Mahaaswetaa" (both the dramas were the translations from their original Sanskrit version) in Shovaa Baazaar Naattiyasaalaa, local print media high held their talent. Samaachar Darpan appreciated the figure, make-up, acting genius and creative faculty of Sri Sharat Chandra Ghosh performing as Shakuntalaa and Taralika respectively, in those aforesaid plays. Later, in Belgaachhiyaa Naattiyasaalaa, Mr. Hem Chandra Mukherjee, Mr. Krishnadhan Banerjee, Mr. Kaalidaas Sil, Mr. Chunilaal Basu and Mr. Kaali Prasanna Mukherjee became the star attraction while performing the women characters in "Sharmisthaa" and "Ratnaabali". Coeval actors like Mr. Madan Mohan Barman, Mr. Shasthidaas Mukherjee, Mr. Jadu Naath Ghosh and Mr. Naaraayan Chandra Paul were also engaged in impersonating as female in Paathuriyaaghaataa Naattiyasaalaa.

Majority of the petty-bourgeois and aristocrat 'Baabu's of 19th Century Bengal use to spend lots of money for conspicuous consumptions like womanizing, organizing and attending the musical soiree of professional dance girls, called 'Baajjee', privately or in company, funding obscene literature contending secrete sexual desires of women or their extra-marital affairs, etc. They, however, did not encourage a case for bringing women in the limelight of the proscenium, even for their entertainment through theatre. The reasons behind should not be simplified to their feudal psyche. Neither this indecorous stand was limited to the mainstream of social elites. The leading lights of Bengal renaissance were not, even, free from such prejudice. When Pandit Ishwar Chandra Bandopadhyay, better known in Bengal as Vidyasaagar, mooted the widow remarriage movement, Keshab Chandra Sen, one of the patrons of the movement, thought of dispersion of the message of the movement through theatre. His plan was actualized and on 12th November, 1859 Bidhabaa Bibaha (widow remarriage) – a play by Umesh Chandra Mitra was produced at Metropolitan Theater. Paradoxical enough is the fact that, while these progressive men were truly feeling the injustice towards women who lost their husband, in the traditional social structure and initiated modern remedial to

this social bigotry, they strongly refused to bring women on the stage to speak their own pains in public. Thus, all the female characters of Bidhabaa Bibaaha were performed by male.

There was no sound role of the contemporary print media to this end. When the newspapers of Bengal used to invoke various aspect of individual liberty and political rights of the Indians, critiques of age-old superstitious social practices and institutions of orthodox Indians, rationales of a modernized and participatory culture through the editorials and articles published there in, they uttered no voice, even passively, on the installation of a woman's profile on the theatre arena by herself. Instead most of the newspapers of the period patronized the blunt tradition of men's portrayal of women on stage through feminine gesture. Sambaad Pravaakar in its 1857, 22nd February edition published a critique of "Shakuntalaa" at Shovaa Baazaar Naattyaalaa to appraise the role played by Mr. Sharat Chandra Ghosh in the title-cast. It wrote, 'Baabu Sharat Chandra's performance was not only stunning, attractive and amusing, he made the audience rejoice in the joy and mourn in the sorrow of the heroine. Some even wept bitterly in the theatre hall while watching his highly talented and dedicated performance.' Similarly, Amrita Bazaar Patrikaa²⁶ criticized the poor performance of the 'aged' actors in the female role in "Sadhabaar Ekaadashi" in its 1872, 14th May edition and opined that those actors should be immediately replaced with 'young boys' from Jaatraa parties before the next show of the play. National Paper²⁸ in its editorial on 27th September, 1869 edition vehemently opposed the entrance of the Zamindaars in the drama hall with their women 'kept's to ascertain that the women folk are restrained of theatrical amusement.

In the milieu of the Bengal Renaissance during 19th Century expectations about the debut of women players in theatre reached its natural height. But, unfortunately women could not divulge themselves in the lights and shades of the stage of Bengali Drama. The potentials of their exposure were condemned by the feudal sentiments of patriarchy. Conservative approach, affront attitude, reluctance and ignorance about humane treatment of the issue of self-actualization of the other sex was next to impossible for many of the prominent orthodox lads of the period, especially the exponents of revival of Sanaatana Vaidik Aachar (Early Vedic Nationalistic Spirits) like Dayaananda Saraswati (founder of Aarya Samaaj), Raajaa Raadhaakaanta Dev (founder of Dharma Sabha), Bhabaani Charan Banerjee (Editor of Sambaad Chandrika), Gourikaanta Bhattaachaarya (Editor of Jnananjan Patrikaa), Raamkamal Sen (grandfather of Keshab Chandra of Braahma Samaj), Mrityunjaya Vidyaalankaar etc.

Contemporary society was shocked beyond measure by the doings of Michael Madhusudan Dutta who on the eve of the show of his "Sharmishthaa Naatok" introduced three female artists in three characters of the play on 16th august, 1873 at Bengal Theatre. Golaapbala, Elokeshi and Jagattarini, introduced in the show of "Sharmishthaa Naatok" were the leading trio in Bengal to appear in the casting of women's characters in a Bengali theatrical production. All of them were from the local brothels, engaged in the profession of prostitution. Though their introduction to the proscenium in 19th Century Bengal was an epoch-changing episode, it would hardly be any possibility if the owners of the Theatre Hall had not mull over for the profit motive. And of course, Michael Madhusudan had to face enormous criticisms, social boycott, scandal, and humiliation for such an enterprising effort.

Manamohan Basu wrote in his news journal 'Madhyastha' that '....at last, the girls of brothels come to be equals as the nobles and aristocrats of Bengal – from now the Bengali audience shall publicly enjoy the acts of those shameless women and shall actualize the forbidden spirits of their ugliest desires entire society shall, therefore, attain new pace and direction of devaluation due to such unscrupulous initiatives of that 'converted' fellow (Michael Madhusudan Dutta)...'

Keshab Chandra wrote in 'Sulava Samaachar' that, '....men of the theatres are performing with those evil-spirited women, taking liquors, fighting amongst themselves in intoxication, yet, they are being patronage and encouraged by the educated gentlemen of Bengal who else, then, exterminate these entire nuisances from our civility?'

Shibnaath Shashtri commented in his tome Raamtanu Laahiri O Tatkaalin Banga Samaaj that '...What a disgraceful occurrence it is to see that the immature young lads from the eminent families of Kolkaataa is making merry with those pollutant women in the Theatres, it is further appalling to notice that some reach men are encouraging such noxious acts with their money....'

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (the creator of Vande Mataram) expressed similar anxiety in *Banga Darshan* and wrote 'I may experience many more sensational things if I live, but it has become a dreadful experience now to live tolerating all these acts ultra-modernity..... this shall cultivate the venom-plant (Bisha-Briksha) in every family of Bengal' It shall be worth-mentioning that, Bankim's third daughter Utpalaa Devi committed suicide because of the scandal about her husband, Satish Chandra's intimacy with a theatre actress.

It is not the fact that the entrance of the harlots in the stages of contemporary Bengali theatre made the moderate intellectuals antagonistic regarding the entry of the women from the patrician families to join the Bengali theatre. Even Rabindra Naath Tagore had to face lot of denigration when he ventured for composing and acting some of his dramas with *Jnaanadaanandini* in the traditional residence of the Tagores at *Joraasaanko*. Baabu Raaj Krishna Mukherjee produced the same dramatic performances written by Rabindra Naath in his *Veenaa Theatre* with a team of no female showy. It is because of this socio-religious orthodoxy of 19th Century that no lady from any reputed family ever came to join the career of actresses in public theatres of Bengal during the period under review and the theatre companies had to accept the women from the red-light areas as their heroine.

While the entire panorama of the socio-cultural and religious reforms of the 19th Century remained women-centric, like protest movements against Sati, Polygamy, Child-marriages, Daughter-sacrifice etc., the paradox remains in the fact that all those who instigated such movement were the educated lads of Kolkata who failed to realize the necessity of women's ego to be voiced by the women-selves, if not ignored such necessity.

In the midst of such complexities regarding the participation of women in their 'roles' in the 19th Century Bengali Theatre, it was Shree Raamkrishna Paramahansa who welcomed sacred-heartedly the prostitutes of *Sonaagaachhi* (local brothel of Kolkata) in the stages of Bengali drama. He blessed them and designated them as 'Chaitanya-Pradaayini' (the philanthropist of the sanity). Being inspired by his teachings, his disciple and the greatest thespian of the then Bengal, Girish Chandra Ghosh engaged many such women of so called sinful business in the acts of enlightenment, as Raamkrishna used to opine that 'theatre is the media of mass-enlightenment'. Due to the initiatives of Girish Chandra Ghosh many women joined the career of actresses in Girish Chandra's Great National Theatre by the last few decades of the 19th Century. Many of them had marvelous spirit and talent as well they left noteworthy contributions to modern Bengali theatre. The dedications and offerings of these women are great debts to the present Bengali Theatre, and should be acknowledged with due respect.

Sukumaari Dutta, popularly known as *Golaapsundari*, had a remarkable career on the stage between 1873 and 1875. Within her short career she acted in two of the most popular shows of her time – *Sarat Sarojini* and *Apurba Sati*.

- Binodini Daasi, better known as *Nati Binodini*, was associated with Girish Chandra's Great National Theatre from 1874 to 1886 and made incredible contributions to many dramatic productions, of which *Beni Samhaar* gave her finest fame.
- *Tinkodi Daasi* was attached to *Minerva Theatre* during 1877 to 1917. Her sensational performance in the character of *Lady Macbeth* on 27th January, 1893 made her celebrity of her own time.
- *Harisundari* was allied with *Emerald Theater* from 1882 to 1934 where stalwarts like *Amarendra Nath Dutta* and *Shishir Bhaduri* use to act and give directions to theatrical productions. Her debut appearance in 1882 in a character named *Bhramar* gave her much reputation.
- *Taaraasundari* and *Pramodaasundari* were associated with Girish Chandra and both of them appeared for the first time on the stage in his *Chaitnya-Lilaa* in 1884 at *Star Theater*. While *Taaraa* played in a character of a young boy, *Pramodaa* appeared as *Laxmana*. *Pramodasundari* ended her career of actress in 1902. Her last performance was in an act named *Bhraanti* by Girish Chandra, where she played the role of *Annadaa*. *Taaraasundari*, however, continued her career up to 1948.
- *Kiran Baalaa* had a very short career on stage from 1887 to 1890. She uses to appear as *Bishaskhaa* in Girish Chandra's *Rup-Sanatan* during this time.

- Nagendra Baalaa used to appear in satanic characters. Most successful of her staging as Mantharaa in Shreepada Mukhopadhyay's Raamaayan'e Art. She had such vocation of acting for 43 years from 1889 up to 1932.
- Narisundari, perhaps, had the most number of creations to her credit where she appeared in characters. She performed in at least 41 dramatic productions in Star Theater from 1892 to 1942.
- Kusum Kumari was associated with Minerva Theatre from 1892 till 1933 and played in many popular roles under the direction of Amarendra Naath Dutta. Her talent was highly acclaimed after her performance in Heerak-Churna in 1916.
- Sushilaa Balaa was also attached to the Minerva Theatre. Her acting career was short and extended between 1893 and 1914. However, her remarkable contribution in the character of Julekha in Madhabi Kankari by Ramesh Chandra Dutta gave her towering popularity.
- Neeradaasundari used to appear at Natya Niketan sometime during 1898 to 1942. She played a few sensational roles in dramas like Girish Chandra's Prafulla.

One noteworthy point is that all these and other actresses of this period were given some interesting nicknames by their producers and the wealthy patrons as Golap (Rose), Aangur (Grapes), Peyaaraa (Guava), Dalim (Pomegranate), Jui (Jasmine) etc. as they were consumed 'otherwise' by them like these consumable fruits and flowers.

19th Century marks the genesis and gradual spread of nationalist spirit in Bengal as well as India. Since its inception, Nationalism in India attained a cultural dimension and philosophical basis. The veneration of nationalism was distinctly echoed in the contemporary art and literature, performing art and journalism. Both men and women took part in the freedom struggle enlightened by the fortitude of nationalism. Contemporary Bengali Theatres also made notable contribution in voicing the nationalist ideals and therefore had to face several harassments from the end of the foreign rulers. In 1876 Dramatic Regulation Act was imposed to restrict the public presentation of any drama that contained anti-British memorandum. Many theatre personalities were arrested and assaulted in detention; bans were imposed on many of the dramatic productions like "Sadhabaar Ekaadashi Naatok", "Sati Ki Kalankini Naatok", "Neel Darpan Naatok", "Sarat-Sarojini Naatok", "Chaa-Kar Darpan Naatok", "Surendra-Binodini Natok", "Jamidaar Darpan Natok", etc. However, the contemporary Bengali Theaters failed to acknowledge properly the inseparable contribution of women in nationalist dramas being staged to invoke the true fortitude of liberty and never felt to highlight the feminine appeal for freedom from imperialist bondage. However, this is altogether a different perspective that entails specific attention and focus from the point of academic study.

This engendered silence of the show business in 19th Century mainstream Bengali theatre is an integral part of the cultural history of modern Bengal that can be hardly overlooked, if not overemphasized.

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