

—RECOMMENDATIONS

This Seminar of Workers in the Field of Drama and Theatre in India, organised by the SANGEET NATAK AKADAMI, having considered the proud traditions of Indian drama and the remarkable efflorescence of dramatic activity during the last few years, expresses its deep faith in the potentialities of drama as a factor in the building up of the new India and offers the following general recommendations:

The Seminar felt that the absence of a continuous tradition of living drama and the existence of certain restrictions that came into being during alien rule have hampered the growth and development of theatrical arts in India and still continue to do so. While the other general and particular measures discussed at and recommended by the Seminar will encourage the growth of drama, the Seminar felt that the removal of these outdated restrictions is an urgent necessity.

**Factors Hindering the
Full Growth of the
Drama**

- (a) In the opinion of the Seminar, the Dramatic Performances Act 1876 is wholly out of place in the present context and should be repealed.
- (b) The Seminar commends the steps taken by some State Governments in exempting dramatic performances, both amateur and professional, from the Entertainment Tax, and strongly urges all other State Governments to take similar steps so that drama, which is much more than entertainment and which in the present conditions needs special incentives, should develop and prosper.

The Seminar is fully aware that in most modern and progressive countries in the world, the theatre being the life-blood of the country is receiving subsidies and other financial assistance from the State. They would, therefore, call upon the State and the Central Governments to earmark and provide in the Second Five Year Plan, and their annual budgets, funds for giving such assistance. This assistance may take the form both of subsidies and loans out of a revolving fund. The assistance should be given to dramatic activity, broadly under the following categories:

Assistance by the State

(i) Construction of Theatres

The Seminar welcomes the proposal to build at the Capital a theatre hall worthy of our national status, but it is strongly of the opinion that at the same time, as this project is launched, a number of suitable

theatres, both covered and open-air, should be constructed by the State, by the Municipal authorities and other such bodies. Without the construction of such theatres in the main towns and the countryside the existence of the national theatre at the capital will lose much of its significance. The plans for such theatres should be drawn up in consultation with experts in theatrical technique and should be consistent with modern needs and in conformity with Indian aesthetic traditions. These theatres should, whenever possible, be equipped with libraries, museums of theatrical interest and rehearsal rooms and be made available at nominal rents.

(ii) *Commercial Troupes*

The Seminar feels that a vigorous Indian theatre cannot emerge without the professional and commercial theatre companies becoming self-supporting. In the present situation the professional troupes can subsist only through liberal aid from the State for several years to come. The Seminar recommends subsidies and loans being given to professional companies and groups both of the travelling and the non-travelling variety. This assistance may be given in the form of cash subsidies or loans or properties or mobile vans and such other facilities.

(iii) *Amateur Groups*

There are broadly three types of amateur groups in the country :

- (a) Those connected with educational institutions.
- (b) Clubs and other groups in towns.
- (c) Dramatic groups at Community Centres, Social Educational Centres and other institutions in the villages.

All these and any other types of amateur groups as may come into being, deserve financial assistance in cash or kind from the State.

The Seminar would recommend the formulation of a well-thought-out scheme for this purpose.

In the present phase of the growth of dramatic activity in the country, the unmistakable enthusiasm for drama has to be matched by adequate training facilities in all branches of drama and theatre. The Seminar would, therefore, recommend a comprehensive programme of training broadly on the following lines :

Training

- (a) A Central Institute should be established to provide training of the highest standard in acting, production, opera, ballet and playwriting, and should equally emphasise technique and theory, both ancient and modern.

- (b) Apart from regular training to be imparted at this Institute, special courses, camps and seminars for those already in the field should be organised by the Akadami from time to time.
- (c) The Seminar notes with pleasure the pioneering work in the direction of training done by some institutions in different parts of the country and recommends that those and similar enterprises should be given suitable financial assistance in the light of the progress shown by them.
- (d) The Seminar is of the opinion that the training of the folk dramatic troupes should be organised in a manner suitable to their traditions and modes of expression and for this purpose a number of training camps and courses should be arranged and special assistance given to these trainees.

Preservation, Promotion and Study of Folk Drama

The Seminar is of the opinion that the regeneration of the Indian theatre can only be possible by revitalising the traditional folk forms so as to narrow the gulf between the dramatic forms that have developed during the last hundred years and the survivals from the past. The Seminar recommends that adequate steps be taken not only for the careful and scientific study of the folk drama in different parts of India but also for preventing their decay and disappearance and for giving them recognition and new life.

Drama and Education

An important factor in the emergence of the new Indian theatre would be the background and outlook in this matter of the new generations on whom would fall the responsibility of strengthening the tradition which is being matured by present day efforts. The Seminar feels that unless the study of drama and theatre and theatrical activities are given an important place in the educational system, such a generation would not arise. The Seminar would, therefore, recommend to the Central and the State Governments and the universities that both as an extra-curricular activity and as a medium of education, dramatic activity should be encouraged in schools and colleges, and that the study of drama in the curriculum should be given a practical basis.

In this connection the Seminar invites the attention of the Akadami and the States to the special problems of the children's theatre and suggests the formation of a committee to examine these problems.

The Seminar welcomes the festivals that are being organised by Government and other organisations. In this connection the Seminar would offer the following suggestions :

Festivals and Competitions

- (a) In order that the festivals may have their spontaneous and genuine character and the largest degree of participation, they should not be dominated by official control and supervision;

- (b) The festivals should be organised in a pyramidal manner so as to embrace the largest territory and population of the country and to give opportunity to promising talent even in remotest corners. It is suggested that there should be local festivals in blocks, tehsils, districts and States leading on to the national festival.

In order to make available to workers in drama and theatre all over the country, the results of studies, research and experiments in different regions, the Seminar feels that a publication programme should be undertaken by the Akadami and its affiliated bodies, and that in this programme the following items should be emphasised :

Publications

- (a) The existing Bulletin of the Akadami should become more comprehensive and serve as a clearing house for information from all parts of the country;
- (b) The results of the research in drama and theatrical activities and traditions should be published in the form of brochures or books both by the Akadami and by private enterprises with such assistance as may be necessary;
- (c) There should be a special programme of translations of well-known and stageable plays of the different languages of India into the regional languages enumerated in the Constitution. These plays should be made available at moderate prices.

