

T.I. E. (THEATRE IN EDUCATION) A TEACHER'S EXPERIMENTS IN GARHWAL HIMALAYA

Manoj Singh

*Department of English, Modern European and Other
Foreign Language, H.N.B.G.U. Sriangar Garhwal*

'Children unconsciously get easily involved in theatrical process and this offers their developing minds genuine excitements' (Salami 2000, p.73). says Salami in this explanation of the role of theatre in teaching individual discipline to the students. Scholars all over the world have laid emphasis upon significance of dramatic teaching of subjects, recreation of the different concepts in disciplines like mathematics, physics, chemistry and literature (Neelands1992; Salde1954; John Dewey1963; Courtney1974; Gavin Bolton1986)

Some scholars in India have undertaken the mission of introducing 'Theatre in Education' as the primary agenda of life. Kirtijain and Barry John executed this task in their practice of theatre in many parts of India. Theatre in Education of the National School of Drama Delhi has been experimenting upon several dimensions of the domains of theatre which can enhance the learning process of the mainstream school goers. The basic purpose of the Theatre in Education approach (herein after called as T.I.E) is to accelerate the learning process of fast learners and to supplement the cognition of slow learners.

In this paper the researcher has attempted to highlight and analyse the innovative teaching-technology consciously applied by a teacher in a remotely located school of Srinagar Garhwal. The teacher Shiv Darshan Singh Negi taught Physics initially at the high school level and then at the secondary level. Without ever knowing about the state -of-the-arts teaching methods of the T.I. E. Negi prepared dramatic scripts on different lessons and then also dramatized them in the schools he served turn by turn. (*Yugvaani* page 34).He was honoured by the M. H.R.D. with the national award to the teacher in recognition of the valuable service he offered to the community as a teacher of outstanding merit of the year 2004.

His teacher associate J.K.Painyuli tells that Negi prepared a theatrical production *Bidyut Chumbakiya Tarnagini* (Electro Magnetic Waves) in high school Manjhakot in 2000 with the help of Painyuli and his high school students. The result was very promising Painyuli recalls, that the event proved to be a catalyst to Negi's adventure into T.I.E. He pickup dramatics and poetry writing for such teaching problems and in 2006 published his book *Bigyan Ganit Geetika* (the lyrical science and maths teaching). Negi has unconsciously imbibed the existing principles of T.I.E. which broadly can be classified as under:

- 1- **Child centric approach**
- 2- **Purpose of teaching through drama**
- 3- **The emphasis on individual**
- 4- **A unique pedagogical situation**
- 5- **Teachers in role**

I. CHILD CENTRIC APPROACH

Conforming with John Dewey (1921) and A.S. Neill's (1964) who insist upon the child centeredness of education, Negi's theoretical and poetic pieces revolve round the child in his poem "Bal, Karya, aur sakti paheli" (force, work and power riddle) Negi says that he puts these words in the mouth of children "we are the kings of the entire animal world, we are the most intelligent among them all" (*Bigyan Ganit Geetika*, p 36). Negi seeks answers not from the teachers but from the child, for example in his poem "sakti/samarthya athwa pawar "(strength, capability and power) the answers to the question are given in the poem itself:

ekud ek=d gksrk okV]
gtkj xquk cus fdyks okV]
nl yk[k xquk rks esxk okV
NksVs ek=d dh tc ckrA
Hkkx gtkjoka feyhokV
rks nl yk[koka ekbØksokVA ¼ foKku xf.kr fxfrdk] i`0 42] ½

"Watt a mere measurement unit multiplied thousand times becomes a kilowatt. If multiplied hundred thousand times, becomes one megawatt, talking about the smaller units one thousandth part of a kilowatt is a millivatt (*Bigyan Ganit Geetika*, page42). The same process is followed in the poem "Parkas Wars" (light year) where the question and answer are based on the teacher and thought. A student's asks the other:

dqN vxkspj rks dbZ vxkspj]
uke crkvks rfud lksp dj\
og I;kjh izdk`k fdj.k gS
filds dkj.k tx mT;kjk
rjax fo/kk esa djsa lapj.k]
ek;/e dk Hkh ys u ldkjk ¼foKku xf.kr fxfrdk]i`0 48½

"Some are visible and some are invisible---what is it?" Another student answers that is the ray of light which enlightens the world. It moves through a wave and yet is not depended upon it. (*Bigyan Ganit Geetika*, page 48)

Negi foregrounds the curiosity of a child in his poem "Damakti Damini" (Flashing light,p 55).

fny esjk gS Fkjdrk] ?ku?kukrs l?ku ?ku tc]
py&pykrh gS piyrk cUn gks tkrs gSa u;u rcA
cknyksa dh vksV esa D;k fHkM+ jgs nks 'k=q ny gSa]
/ofur gksrh /ofu Hk;adj nkxrh rksiksa dk Qy gSA
tc /kjk dks ?ksjrh gS ?kqeM+rh ";key ?kVk;sa
D;ksa lge tkrk gS ;g eu dksbZ eq>dks rks crk;sa¼foKku xf.kr fxfrdk] i`0 55½

(Why does my heart tremble when the thick clouds collide and roar? Why do my eyes closed when there is a flash of light in the sky? Are the to enemy armies clashing in the shelter of the clouds? Is it a thundering sound of the cannon shots? When the earth is beleaguered by the billowing black clouds, tell me, why does your heart get shrunken ?) (*Bigyan Ganit Geetika*, page 55)

This curiosity of the child is answered by a girl name Durga Swarupa:

Cknyksa ds l?ku ny tc] nkSM+rs gSa Rofjr gksdj]

mPp vkosf`kr gSa gksrs rhoz ?k"KZ.k tc ijLijA

,d dk vkos`k /ku gS vkSj _k gS nwljs ij]

QwV iM+rh gS fpaxkjh mPPk gks tc foHko&vUrjA ¼foKku xf.kr fxfrdk] i`0 55½

(The instance troupes of clouds race towards each other they get highly charged and make a fierce combustion with each other. One is charged positive and the other negative. A great spark is burst open when the potential difference of the two charges is the highest. (*Bigyan Ganit Geetika*, page 55)

Similar patterns are repeated in his other poems like “Badriya aur Kuhariya; *Osh aur Paala*”. Negi in his stage production ‘Bivgoyr’ (Blue, Indigo, Violet, Green, Yellow, Orange and Red) made it compulsory, as his former colleague J.K. Painyuli relates, for the students to read the performance text themselves and perform their parts on the basis of their personal visualization of the rays of the Sun. He in a way was unwittingly following Stanislavski “emotional memory” or “as if” principle of Method Acting, With the repetition of the production, the students never forgot the names and properties of the sun rays .

II. PURPOSE OF TEACHING THROUGH DRAMA

Negi, by way of staging drama or training the students in dramatic of poetry, is aiming at epistemology of learning. He is trying to avoid accumulation of knowledge which Karl Popper (1972) calls “the third world knowledge” or “epistemology without a knower”. He works on a process of learning which in Karl Popper words can be called coming to know something from the inside:

I wish to claim that what drama does is to create an opportunity for coming to know something from the inside a subject-objective approach to the material to be understood that is akin to what Kierkegaard meant by knowledge, (according to potjam1978). That is both appropriate to knower and to the thing known (Gavin Bolton, p.154).

dk;Z (W) twy esa] le; (t) lsfdaM esa]

ljiV xuk dj ysa]

dk;Z (W) dks le; (t) ls djsa foHkkftr]

'kfDr (P) cjkj /kj ysa (P=W/t) ¼foKku xf.kr fxfrdk] i`0 42½

The work (w) should be measured in Jull and time (t) in seconds, the work (w) should be divided by time (t) which will be equal to power(p) (p=w/t) (*Bigyan Ganit Geetika*, page 42)

Negi’s colleague J.K Painyuli reminisces that Negi in his class room asked his students to play as” work, time and power” and thereby understood the process from inside. He simplified for his students the history of different discoveries in “*Parmaanuwam Padaarth ki Sarachna* “(*structure of atom and metal*49). Describing Neutrons, he says,

pSMfod us rc pV&iV pM+&pM+]

U;wV^akWu ls ukfer d.k pVdk;sA

ukfHksd ds vUnj dksuksa esa tks

viuk eqjg Fks Nqik;s

<aw< fy;k Hkb <wa< fy;k

U;wV^akWu dks tx us <aw< fy;k
ukfHkd ds vUnj izksVkWuksa lax

Qql&Qql djrs lwa?k fy;kA ¼foKku xf.kr fxfrdk] i`0 53½

Chadwick intentionally invented the particle named as neutron, which were hidden in the nucleus at the corner. Neutron has been invented by him in the nucleolus with great enthusiasm. (*Bigyan Ganit Geetika*, page

III. THE EMPHASIS ON INDIVIDUAL

Negi allotted to his students names such as Hydrogen, Lithium, Sodium, Potassium, Rubidium, Calcium, etc. Reports of his students corroborate that Negi created a social drama out of the total number of his students in Manjhakot High School. The most difficult subject of chemistry being the names of hundred and eighteen elements, Negi allotted these names to his as their roll call numbers to be pronounced loudly at the time of school prayer in the morning. Even the teachers would address their students not as Rahul or Pravin but as Hydrogen, Lithium, Sodium, Potassium, Rubidium and Calcium etc. And so would the students do among themselves. This strikingly compares with David Hardgrave (1982) and Gavin Bolton's (1984) who prescribe attention to the individual rather than to the group. Gavin Bolton supports the above points and says, "The use of drama promotes the individual growth. We have inadvertently distorted drama itself on two counts: the first is that drama is never about oneself and secondly drama is a social event not a solitary experience". (p 46)

IV. A UNIQUE PEDAGOGICAL SITUATION

Gavin Bolton writes that teaching through the theoretical medium creates a unique pedagogical situation:

"Here then in drama we have a unique pedagogical situation where a teacher sees himself as a teaching but the participant does not see himself as a learning; Where the teacher focuses on the aesthetic overcome or implications of a context, but the participants focus on the context; where the teacher looks for the opportunity to break the perceptions and conceptions of his pupils but pupils do not set out with this attention" Gillaham (1974)(Gavin Bolton page 157)

In these poems which were literally innovated in the class room he created two groups of students, one asking a riddle and the other answering it. Roles were them exchange so that each group might have one opportunity to ask and to answer. In his poem work he puts forward riddle on the relationship of force, displacement and work. The answer is given by a group of students.

cgqr lly gS dk;Z dh x.kuk] cy foLFkku eku Bkus]
foLFkku vkSj cy dk xq.kuQy fudys ftruk mruk ekusaA
dk;Z vf/kdre gksrk gS rc] cy foLFkku ,d fn'kk esa]

vkSj 'kwU; gh gksrk gS tc] ledksf.kd gks >qdsa fn'kk esaA ¼foKku xf.kr fxfrdk] i`0 41½

To determine work easily by simply multiplying the force with the displacement the work becomes maximum when force and displacement are in the same direction: it become zero when they are inclined at right angle. (*Bigyan Ganit Geetika*, page 41)

Negi's experiment to call students, who eventually began to identify themselves with the basic elements of chemistry, created learning, teaching situation where Negi had a subtle design of teaching whereas the students

took it as a play. When they went to the actual chemistry class, they were already familiar with the hundred and the eighteen elements. Thus they never needed the painful cramming drudgery at their study table.

V. TEACHER IN ROLE

In T.I.E experiments, quite contrary to the traditional theatre, a teacher frequently steps in and out of the whole performance. He becomes a participant as well as the student and also a critical observer-- always contemplating the process and also the effect of class room improvisation on the learning of the students. Gavin Bolton explains this unique situation: "when a teacher takes on a role as part of class drama s/he is, at a fictitious level, joining in with them, but at an educational or aesthetic level s/he is always working ahead of them. it is' as Geoff Gillham has pointed out, as if there are two plays going on at the same time- the play for the child and the play for the teacher" (Gillham1974, p. 41)

This situation naturally happened in Negi's class rooms which, for all practical purposes, were the entire campus of the high school Manjhakot where he was acting as a principle. He would ask the riddle himself and then stand aside to see the theatrical interaction among his students. J.K Panuli recounts that Negi would address his students by their element names even in the market and wedding parties, which would lead to more dramatic action in the private milieu of the students in production of his play Bivgyor. He would stand by the central place from which stripes of seven different colour were drawn to the hands of seven students with seven coloured dresses standing in the circle. He himself acted as a narrator interspersing with the dialogues of the seven characters. In between, he would come out of the play to the rest of the students. He would ask them "kaisa lag raha hai" (How do you feel).

Negi could have never imagined that he was working on the theory of Tony Jackson without ever having heard of them:

"The drama teacher has an advantage over the T.I.E. team in that s/he can, by slipping out of role at regular intervals, keeps this 'spectator in the head' functioning effectively. In role as, say, a messenger from the sheriff of Nottingham, to the class in their role as a village of craftsmen making weapons for Robin Hood s/he may have spoken the line: 'the Sheriff's attention has been drama to this village'- and almost immediately the teacher can slip out of role and invite the class to ponder the implications of that remark... and then, but a few moments later, the 'messenger' resumes his role again. (Gavin Bolton p42-43).

REFERENCES

- [1] Bolton, Gavin. *Drama as Education*. London: Longman, 1984
- [2] Dewey, John. *Experience and Education*: New York: Collier, 2008.
- [3] Garcia, Lorenzo. *Finding One's own Way through a Radical Critical Pedagogy: Applied Theatre Researcher* Brisbane. 26th May 2008.
- [4] Gardner, Howard. *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligence for the 21st Century*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.
- [5] Neelands, Jonathan. *Learning through Imagined Experience*: London: Hodder Education, 1992.
- [6] Salami, I. I. "Play Crafting for Children in I. HigherEd". *Theatre and Stage in Nigeria*. Abuja: Supreme Black Communication, 2000.

- [7] Salde, Peter. *Child Drama*. New York: Appleto, 1954.
- [8] Dewey, John. *The School and Society*. Cicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921.
- [9] Gillham, Geoff. 'What's Happening When Children are doing Drama in Depth'. *Schooling and Culture*: Issue 4, spring 1979.
- [10] Hargreaves, David. *The Challenges for the Comprehensive School*. -----Routledge and Kegan Paul 1982.
- [11] Neill, Alexander. Sutherland. *Summerhill*, Victor Gollancez 1964.
- [12] Popoer, Karl. *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- [13] Jackson, Tony. *Learning through Theatre: Essays and Casebooks on TIE*, 1st (Ed.). Manchester: Manchester University Press. 1988.
- [14] Uniyal, Mukesh. Yugbaani : "*bigyan ko Kavita se Jodta ek chhichhak*" March 2014.
- [15] Nautiyal Gajendra: Uttarakahnd baani : "*Bidhut Chumbakiya Tarangani*" Jan 2014