

HT JAIPURLive

'A strong medium is vital for awareness'

French director Jean Pierre Beasnard is in the city these days to conduct a workshop on the 'Theatre of the Oppressed'. Beasnard is working with the Carvan Group, the communication team of Jan Kala Sahitya Manch Sanstha (JKSMS), to spread social awareness through street theatre. Beasnard has been working with Jaipur artists for the past three years on two theatrical forms, 'Theatre of the Oppressed' and 'Clowning'. In an interview with Pankaj Bhardwaj, he explains how these techniques can prove to be successful in creating social awareness in India.

What is the 'Theatre of the Oppressed'?

This technique has been invented to raise the voice of oppressed people. Theatre techniques play an important role to give an entire level to a message of social content. But the participation of audience in this technique differs it from other theatrical techniques.

What do you mean by participation of audience?

In this technique, actors make an image on a specific social problem, or the Joker (key actor) asks the audience to give the solution of the problem facing the oppressed character. During the performance, solutions are given by audience for the problem. Many

spectators offer many solutions. So this process of giving many alternatives for the issue develops the thinking of the spectator. The audience is not only audience, it is part of the play. It develops a dialogue with the actors and prepares to fight the problem, to reject

aspect of the technique. Conversation provokes it to think. And, as the conflict starts, it gives the requisite indignation to reach the goal.

What is the importance of this technique in the Indian context?

I have experimented with this

can be a successful medium of awareness in the Indian context.

What is clowning?

Clowning is a European theatre technique. The character of the clown looks like the joker of the Indian circus, but his aim is different. The costume, coloured face and red nose of the clown present an innocent character of the clown. The curiosity of a child and to show transparently what he feels are the main qualities of a clown. The clown fulfils the social purpose of reflection on social problems and giving their solution very innocently.

How were you inspired to work with these techniques in India?

In 1998, when I first time came in India, I met with Kamal Kishore, secretary JKSMS. I saw the work of this organisation in slums. This organisation is also working for creating social awareness about child rights. I was quite impressed. I talked about these techniques and this organisation was ready for social awareness through this technique. Since then, our association is giving training to the communication team of JKSMS. I am very happy that this organisation has started to work for community mobilisation through street theatre based on these techniques. ♦



FOR THE LOVE OF INDIA: French director Jean Pierre Beasnard has been conducting theatre workshops in Jaipur for the past three years

oppression.

How can social issues be highlighted through this technique?

Just to keep a problem in front of the audience is not the aim of this technique. A give and take of the audience's views is an important

technique in India for the past three years through street theatre. There are many problems in India like other countries of the world. People also know how they can solve these problems, but they just need to be aware. This technique