

Two Years More . . .

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We will enjoy two more eventful years of theatre research and documentation, thanks to the generous support of the Ford Foundation. *Facts and News* too will be at it again!

To learn from the past experience is not always easy and palatable, but we will try our best to do so in shaping the future course of action.

The feedback received so far is encouraging, at least in respect of the main thrust of the project. Hence the performance-orientation and the eager recording of facts will continue. Unfortunately, it has not been possible as yet to corroborate facts supplied by our informants! However we will take every opportunity to update and include corrections in the circulated information. Readers are earnestly requested to feel free to take us to task whenever errors of commission and omission are noticed. It can be safely assumed that we are always interested in being better informed and equally anxious to pass on the information. In the age of communication-explosion it will be absurd to hold back information which, in the final analysis, is the basis of all knowledge.

In addition to the performance-orientation and care for factuality, it is intended to lean more towards the contemporary scene. Thereby it becomes necessary to get more and more data about plans, projects and activities undertaken currently by individuals and institutions alike. After all today's concerns become tomorrow's archival material! All playwrights, actors, directors, theatre-craftsmen and researchers are welcome to let us know of their activities and plans. On our part, efforts will be made to contact them periodically, but their own initiative in this respect will not be interpreted as blowing one's own trumpet! The concern for the contemporary has also prompted us to think of the oral history approach towards theatre in general. The Indian belief in the efficacy and desirability of written documentation has been erratic on account of various factors. We seem to know and speak much more than what we tend to write down. Therefore the proposal is to select themes, events and ideas; keep them at the centre; place them on a chronologically structural axis/continuum and collect oral depositions from connected individuals. Obviously the experiential

component of what the informants speak about is likely to become the core of the material. May be it is not too wide off the mark to assume that the deeply felt forms the core of all organized attempts to pattern individual memories (as distinct from personal reminiscences). In this respect too all help is welcome.

The state of theatre-training in the country being what it is, the Theatre Development Centre has been holding intensive workshops of short durations. The workshops focus in the main on the technical aspects of theatre. Five such workshops were held in Bombay during the last phase. However the need of the hour is clearly to supplement the Bombay-based efforts with activities generated in non-metropolitan areas. Some workshops are therefore to be held in the interior of the western region provided a suitable, local, co-sponsoring agency comes forward to cooperate. It should, for example, be possible to offer workshops in voice-speech, make-up, costume and perhaps set-design to non-Bombay locations if the required arrangements could materialize. In case of such workshops most of the financial burden and the academic planning will be the responsibility of the Theatre Development Centre. The co-sponsoring agency will be expected to take care of the administrative aspects. Feedback to the idea will be gratefully received and keenly followed up.

A look to the interior is logically connected with a proper weightage given to the regional language, in this case Marathi. *Facts and News*, as an off-shoot of the Theatre Development Centre, accepts a two-fold accountability. It aims at providing a window in English on the regional theatre-scene and it also hopes to offer the non-Marathi national and international readership a basically factual and intentionally dispassionate view of an important segment of Indian theatre, namely that based in the western region. With this end in view twelve issue of *Facts and News* and two of *Rang-antarang* (Marathi) would be brought out. It is hoped that the change in format and content would be found more conducive to the accepted ideal of creating a sound and comprehensive base of theatre services.

In the new phase, attempt will be made to video-document landmark productions at least partially. During the last phase soliloquies were so recorded because of the realization that they constitute a vanishing species of theatric presentation. Documentation of soliloquies also made it possible to have representative and longer patterns of Marathi theatric speech and individual artistry. However it was felt all along that longer and more collective attempts of presentations also need to be documented. In the current run this issue would be illustratively tackled. Documentation of technical processes, namely make-up and set-design would be continued. Study of these aspects should form an integral part of the total theatric and

visual culture of various times and the aspects need more attention now, as suitable equipment and technology are not too difficult to get. Perhaps no other enterprise needs collaboration as does a study of set-design, if the past experience is any indication we hope to get it!

The statement of intentions/projections would hardly be considered complete unless reference is made to the follow-up productions of the Theatre Development Centre. Performance being the end-all of theatre-training, the trainees of the different workshops conducted by the Theatre Development Centre were encouraged to put up productions as an exercise. With the full facilities of the N.C.P.A. complex and the available in-house expertise, the productions not only made the trainees' efforts worthwhile, but they also attracted attention of serious theatre-goers in general. As this issue goes to the press *Ek Zunj Waryashi*, a full-length production of the Theatre Development Centre has notched up forty-odd performances without incurring any financial loss! On this background it may not be too ambitious to plan for four productions during the next couple of years with the active help of the selected trainees. It is heartening to note that (even) professionals are convinced of the joy of working with a group of sincere trainees for the serious purpose of giving everything for an artistic achievement and forgetting the concerns of a commercial success!
