

## **Sootha Theatre, A Critical Analysis.**

**Ch Anantha Sai Lakshmi**

Through this book, Sootha Theatre, the writer Dr. D Vizai Bhaskar expresses his view to educate the under trodden communities in India who are being exploited even in the light of the present day scientific advancement. In order to present his stance, he gives the examples from scriptures. His view to liberate the weaker sections of the community is idealistic. He also presents the various solutions from his side and this must be appreciated. He describes the varnasrama dharma of the traditional Indian society and says how the first sootha character was born and the things he did to uplift these weaker sections. His work is so persuasive that he makes his readers agree with his view point's regarding the treatment relating to the down trodden.

At the outset, the writer begins the book with referring to the Natya Shastra, the most ancient treatise in the world. It is the authoritative text for performers, practitioners and also a text of principles for Teachers and Masters of theatre as well as of poetry and other fine arts. Therefore, it is reverentially called as the Panchama Veda. It is a holistic representation of Indian way of life. It was written by the great Bharata Muni with a highly purposeful and socially responsible ideology to pave noble ways for common man.

He speaks of classical art and folk art. Folk art had its roots in tradition which is the result of communal interaction and it's stabilizing cultural value-systems. Art is the representation of the highest creative

ability. Based on the creative ability, many philosophies came into existence in understanding the universe. “The inner spirit of Nature is its creativity and the whole universe is its Theatre.” Theatre is the manifestation of life that the human civilization created. Man in search of his real self, enacts many characters on this world-stage. Though conflict is the central theme of drama, it directs the people to come out successfully by facing the challenges of life. The story of such successful people is history. History for India is not a mere account of dead facts, but a narration of life. The ancient historical narrative, the Purana is a narration which presents the tales of heroes as well as common man in order to inspire him and preserve the cultural dynamics of the race. These chronicle of events called Puranas introduced Sootha character to the world of thought.

In India or Western countries, the theatrical presentation was initially a solo performance and Sootha, the first narrator has presented the stories of the world. Sootha accounts both the visible and the invisible, complementing each other in the path of Truth. Sootha is a product of a social history, the first name given to is Soodra. He is the progeny of a Kshatriya or a Brahmin male and a Dasi female. As he was a product of a mixed caste system, he was not treated on par with them. He was given the job of singing the glory of the King. Though the social realities compelled him, he did not become a rebellion, but turned as a Rushi. He taught the world not the helpless compromise but a spirit of mediation between reality and idealism. The writer gives the examples of such self-transformed Rishis like Vyasa and Valmiki. The

writer says that Indian culture is a grand museum of caste strategies, the strategists are displayers and the suppressed are onlookers.

When there is an end in social equality, there start the social miseries. Sootha, the Mahasoodra is a symbol for social misery and deprivation. The magic of democracy has given way to the Sootha to manifest him as a neo-Kshatriya. Sootha, the awakened voice, now comments on the running history of today. Soodras are the real custodians of Indian culture. Now it is the time for Sootha to awaken the oppressed sections to which he belongs.

The Soodras were split into hundreds of castes that never would unite by any reason. Their disunity is a boon to the modern democratic rulers. In the process of destination, certain Sudra communities got elevation. Lands and money went into their hands and they became the next educated communities after Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaisya varnas. But after industrialization, all the communities based on occupations were thrown out their livelihood one after the other. The result is that now they are left shelter less. Now they are leading the most pitiable lives. Though the Scheduled Castes and Tribes are on the path of progress, they are facing the atrocities of oppression.

The writer here refers to the restriction on these suppressed communities as in the traditional times. Now they are lucky says the writer that there are no restrictions on the Soodras which were imposed on them like ---

“An accumulation of wealth should not be made by Soodra even if he is able to do so for the sight of mere possession of wealth by a Soodra injures the Brahmin.” (Manu Smruthi X – 129)

The intention of the writer quoting such things is not to blame the history, but an attempt to show how entrenched the roots of the present pitiable situation of Soodras are. But during the foreign rule, the Soodras started acquiring human characteristic for their existence and emancipated from servitude after independence. The Reservations provided in the Constitution, brought the scheduled castes, tribes and backward classes on to the road of development.

Enlightened souls like the Buddha, Mahaveer etc challenged the four-fold caste division and some of these communities were recognized and honoured. But they were of short spells only. Poverty, suppression and insult experienced through ages could not be eradicated by any government. The writer urges that the revival of these groups has to be taken quickly. The Sootha theatre took its birth to enlighten the marginalized groups in Soodras about their self respect and empowers them to capture their share in property, position and power.

The writer then shifts his ideas to the objectives of Sootha Theatre. Some of them are to stand by the side of the poor and the weak, to enlighten the masses about their right of accession to positions, to establish all the aesthetic values behind various crafts, professions and occupations, to present the realities of life, to focus on creating awareness among the public on constitutional and human rights of citizens etc.

The writer concludes by saying that the art of Theatre visualizes the changes of the society and presents them effectively. All the arts says the writer, complement them to make it a holistic presentation. The Sootha Theatre contemplates to train the young artists in their traditional forms of art. As the first step, it concentrates on conducting workshops to new writers who take up the art of writing a purposeful drama.

This work is persuasive to appeal to the reader's emotional side. When we tend to read, we will also try to educate these sections of the communities. The writer's idea of conducting workshops to the new writers to take the side in upliftment of these communities must be appreciated.

**Reference:**

Bhaskar, Vizai. D Sutha Theatre , Visalandra publishing house, Vijayawada, 2018.

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Anantha Sai Lakshmi completed her PG course in MA English from P.B. Siddhartha College of Arts and Science from 1997- 99 and stood first in Acharya Nagarjuna University and received two gold medals in the year 1999. Participated and presented papers in various National and International Seminars and published papers in various books. Presently working as a Lecturer in English at P.B. Siddhartha College of Arts and Science Vijayawada.