

jagran

an awakening



Theatre of the oppressed

jagran

a voluntary organisation for social action through live media



THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

The pre-requisite for development is liberation from all oppressive structures and attitudes. Such work should lead to the total liberation of men and women. There should be development of the people themselves so that they will understand the issues in a situation and become aware of their own responsibilities.

Jagran's pantomime does not seek to solve any one problem. It seeks to arouse the consciousness of the people about contemporary issues. It opens their mind to the fact that "THERE ARE POSSIBILITIES". Once this is done, the most crucial problems in the process of initiation of social action can be tackled! Jagran has been working consistently over the past several years as a dedicated group. The fact that it continues to use the medium of mime as its vehicle for communication speaks volumes, thus enhancing the process of development.

The Jagran troupe performs in the midst of slums and villages in various states of India. It is an informal affair. The message goes round by word of mouth. And it is a matter of minutes for crowds to assemble around the troupe. On the surface the show is entertainment, humorous and light-hearted. The audience laughs at themselves. They laugh at the drunkard, at the villain who insists on dowry, at the fellow who eats dirty food and suffers from diarrhoea. But beneath the slapstick comedy are messages aimed to make the audience view their lives in a different perspective. The actors are one of the members of the audience, dressed like them; but for the grease paint. The comic situations are theirs and so are the tragedies. And with all this identification, communication becomes almost complete.

This is Jagran's subtle process of awareness building. The end of a show is the end of a beginning somewhereand Jagran moves on to the next village — the next slum — the next show.

THE POLITICIAN



A LIST OF JAGRANS MIME PLAYS

No	ITEM	CONCERN	DURATION	No	ITEM	CONCERN	DURATION
1	Bus ride Prod. 1968	Population problem depicted in the travel hazards of a large family	15 mts	7	Anti-dowry Prod. 1977	Evils of dowry system	15 mts
2	Monster of malnutrition Prod. 1978	Balanced diet	20 mts	8	Bio-gas	Building awareness on use of indigenous energy sources	20 mts
3	Deprived child Prod. 1979	Total neglect by society and the authorities towards poor children	25 mts	9	Community water tap (Nalka) Prod. 1974	Protection of community water taps from Vandals	15 mts
4	Blackmarketeer Prod. 1980	Poor people raise their voice against blackmarketeering in their slum colony	25 mts	10	Riksha puller Prod. 1974	Bank loans to poor people to stand on their own feet.	13 mts
5	Alcoholism Prod. 1983	Large family, low income and bad habits	20 mts	11	Self Reliance (Atma Nirbharta)	Responsibility and Social consciousness.	10 mts
6	Wrestling (kushti)	Health hazards of eating exposed food	10 mts	12	Two brothers (Do bhai)	Money savings and its proper circulation	10 mts
				13	Creditor Prod. 1976	A large sized family that cannot meet its everyday needs.	12 mts

A LIST OF JAGRANS MIME PLAYS

No	ITEM	CONCERN	DURATION			
14	Drunkard Prod. 1976	Disadvantages of large families and bad habits (Alcoholism)	15 mts	19	Co-operation Prod. 1977	Mutual help between two farmers 15 mts
15	Feast Prod. 1968	In a small living area of 25 Sq. yds. it is practically impossible to accomodate large number of guests.	20 mts	20	Vocation	Importance of Vocational Education 18 mts
16	Harijan Prod. 76/77	Equal rights — based on the atrocities on Harijans.	20 mts	21	Women's Education Prod. 1977	Social and economic reliance of educating women. 20 mts
17	Character Prod. 1976/77	Evils of immoral behaviour	12 mts	22	Social worker (Do-Gooder)	A hypocritical social worker exploiting poor slum dwellers 16 mts
18	Girghit (Chamalson) Prod. 1977	Understanding one's voting rights	25 mts	23	Anti - inflation Prod. 1979	Rise on prices of commodities. 20 mts
				24	Lallu & Panju Prod. 1975	Dealing with health practices and habits of children. 45 mts
				25	Drinking water	Drinking water facilities for all 20 mts

THE BLACKMARKETEER



PRESS REVIEWS

"Seeing the group in action, one is struck by the fantastic acting talent of this haphazardly picked up assortment of young men. Their faces have fluidity that instantaneously draw their audience into the vortex of whatever social issue they are presenting. Their bodies have a springlike elasticity and manoeuvrability that takes leaps, spins and jumps."

— *THE SUNDAY TRIBUNE* — SHANTA SERBJEET SINGH
Date: 21-12-1980

"Jagran makes us laugh until our stomach hurt and we go home in a happy mood besides gaining some knowledge at the same time."

— *Reports a youth to Sophie Baker in Guardian.*
Date: 21-5-1979.

"The shows are universally popular both for entertainment value and the education they provide, and people seem willing to close up their shops and brave the extremely hot weather to watch them."

— *GUARDIAN THIRD WORLD REVIEW* — SOPHIE BAKER
Date: 21-5-1979

"The Theatre of the Oppressed, is the only theatre company that produces consciousness arousing street pantomime on a broad range of social problems."

"Although the theatre receives some financial assistance from a family planning department of the Indian Government, officials have treated it warily. Police have harassed performers from time to time, claiming an illegal assembly."

— *THE WASHINGTON POST* — WILLIAM CLAIBORNE
Date: 5-6-1983.

"Apart from cockfights, this is the first entertainment seen in this resettlement area outside New Delhi in months. The crowd registers curiously tinged with suspicion, but by the end of the two hour performance their identification with the players is complete."

"The stories presented in an afternoon's entertainment touch extremes of tragedy and comedy, integrating such themes as family planning, health, finance and traditions."

— MARGOT ANDERSEN — *ACTION*
Date: Summer, 1977

"Roy turned to pantomime, an age-old technique that appeals to young and old alike while totally doing away with language barriers."

— SHYMALA SHIVESWARKAR — *THE OVERSEAS HINDUSTAN TIMES*
Date: 8-2-1979

"Silent, but full of lively expressions of happiness and woe, joy and sorrow, the programmes brought a new kind of education to bear on the masses through the inimitable gestures and expressions."

"If the participation of illiterate rural masses in the efforts of the Government to control the population growth is to be enlisted, the programmes of Jagran appears to be the only way that can make a real impact on the minds of the people."

— *THE DECCAN CHRONICLE* — P.A. RAMA RAO
Date: 18-2-1972

THE MONSTER OF MALNUTRITION

PRESS REVIEWS

"They (Jagran) couldn't hope to learn half the local dialects but they found that the timeworn gestures of mime could communicate to everyone on the street."

—BOTHER — JULY, 1976

"The reason why village and slum audience take to this art form is due to the fact that it overcomes the language barrier. There are short sequences of silent mime, supported by a narrator. No props, no sets."

— PROMILLA KALHAN IN MORNING ECHO

Date : 28-2-1976

"An effective and entertaining way of creating civic consciousness."

— INDIRA GANDHI, PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

Date : 1979



ALoke ROY

Aloke Roy is the Director of JAGRAN. Primarily a painter he found the confines of the canvas a constriction and hence looked for a larger canvas, which came through by exploiting and discovering vast communication within the human body.

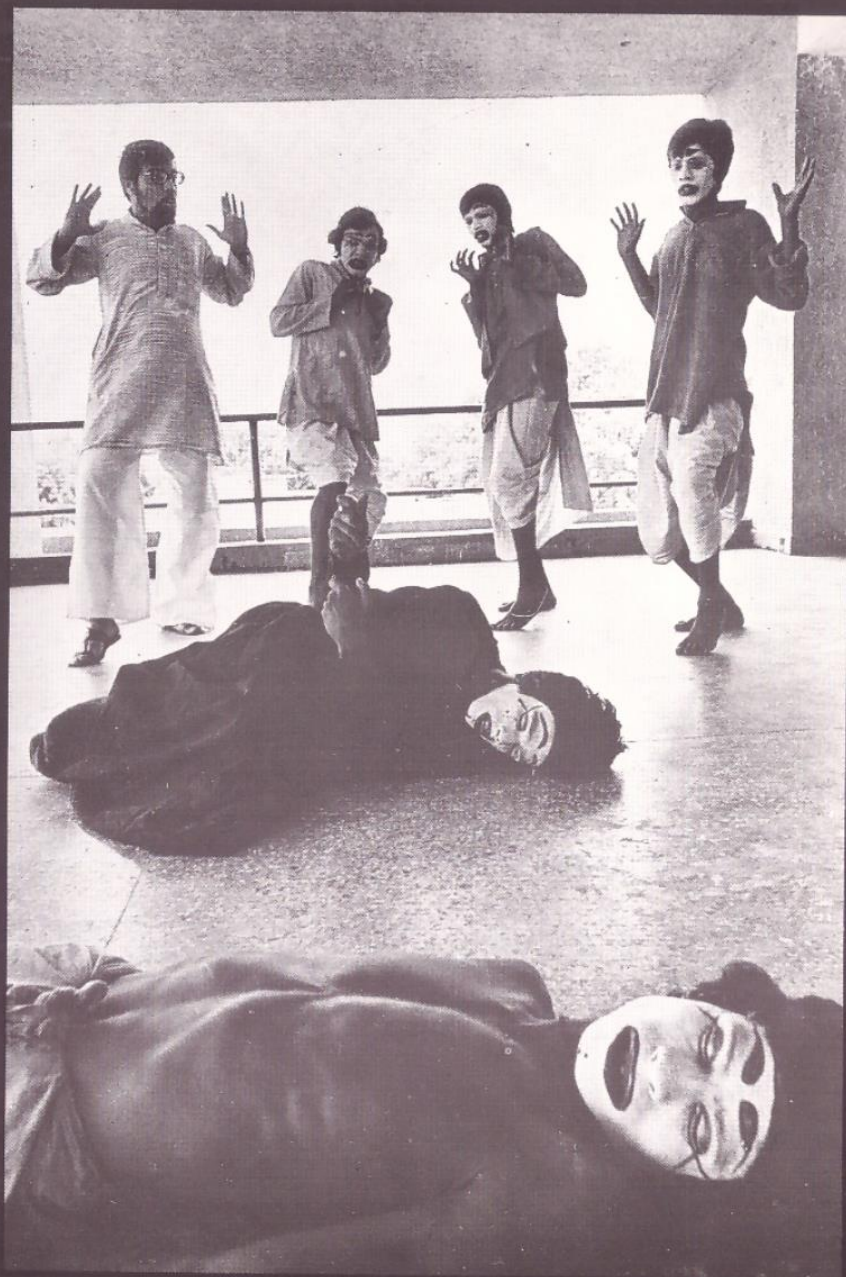
Ever since Aloke founded Jagran in 1968, it has been his continuous effort to train and involve young men and women to project human emotions, movements and gestures to convey not merely the fun and frivolity of drama but to make the medium of mime an important vehicle for communication for social action.

The entire repertory including Aloke, belong to the class of people who have not touched University or Drama School. They take their inspiration from the masses in whom Aloke finds the identity of the common Indian moving towards a process of change in bettering his or her life. The standard of Jagran's work confidently matches the work of any professional group who have had the advantage of formal training in the field of drama. Jagran's repertory presently has fourteen performers comprising of three women and eleven men.

Aloke's experimentation with the medium of mime has developed into a strong and effective media which has been given wide publicity in international newspapers and television. One example is BBC 2's programme "Politics of Compassion-Aid and Development" which was telecast in May 1980.

In 1981, the Institute of Development Education through the Arts, Ottawa, Canada, sponsored Aloke to participate in a workshop with Sistren — A theatre troupe from Kingston. At the same time he was invited by the Drama Dept., Alberta University, Edmonton, Canada, to lecture on his experiments with pantomime Theatre.

ROY DIRECTING AT THE STUDIO



Jagran

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