

Participatory Theatre and the Conflict Transformation in Sri Lanka

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The post war situation in Sri Lanka is more complicated and despairing than the situation of the war, in terms of the mental state of the war affected people. The conflict situation of the post war environment in Sri Lanka can be viewed in 3 levels. Those are: 1) Ethnic Conflict, 2) Structural Conflict (Socio, Economic and Political Structures) and the 3) Post-War Conflicts. Among these 3 levels of conflicts, the Post War Conflicts needs immediate consideration. In fact, without transforming the post war conflicts, it is very hard to bring positive changes and the constructive outcomes among the post war societies of Sri Lanka, because, the post war societies are suffering from illness. In this background, it is very crucial to find out the right 'Process', which should deal with 'urgent conflicts' of the post-war situation as well as handle the long-term conflict issues in Sri Lanka. And also it is very important to find the right 'Strategy' to implement the process. This study explores the possibilities to employ the Participatory Theatre as an effective tool for the Conflict Transformation in the post war situation of Sri Lanka. Conflict is "the product of attitude, behaviour and contradiction/incompatible goals". By applying Empathy, Non-Violence and Creativity in the places of Attitude, Behaviour and Contradiction respectively the conflict can be transcended. In this respect, this study adopts Empathy, Non-Violence and Creativity as the approach for the conflict transformation and the Dialogue is the Tool for Conflict Transformation.

Using applied observation as the main methodology this study, proves the compatibilities between the Conflict Transformation approach and the Participatory Theatre practice and finds that the participatory theatre is the most suitable strategy for conflict transformation in the situation of the post war societies in Sri Lanka.

Key words: *Conflict; Conflict Transformation; Participatory Theatre; Post-War Sri Lanka; Spect-Actors; Transcendence.*