

Theatre of the Oppressed: An interactive session with Mahua Tripps

A Skill Development Programme

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK

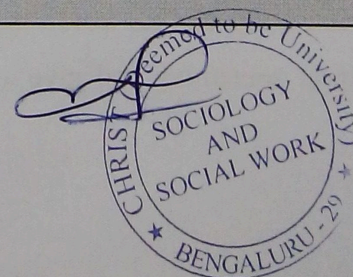
THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED: AN INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH MAHUA TRIPPS

JULY 8, 2016 - I MA APPLIED SOCIOLOGY CLASS

Workshop & Interactive session by
theatre artists
Arundathi and Shobha

- Screening of Movie 'Journey to Niyamgiri'
- Q & A session
- Discussion

Mahua Tripps is a team of two women artists, Arundathi and Shobha, trained in human rights perspectives and forms of theatre, such as playback and forum theatre. They use art to facilitate discussions on issues relating to sustainable development paradigms, expression of freedom of speech and respect for dignity of life. They are passionate about popularising forms of artistic expressions and are especially inspired from adivasi and forest dwelling communities who live at peace with nature.



Report

Mahua Tripps, a team of two social activists and artists- Arundati and Shobha visited the MA Applied Sociology students on July 8, 2016 to conduct a workshop and interactive session regarding tribal life and society. This was based on their experience from February last year when they had got an opportunity to visit the Niyamgiri hills in Orissa. They focused particularly on the Kondh tribe, the inhabitants of the Niyamgiri Hills and their fight against Vedanta, a multinational mining company and the Orissa Mining Corporation.

They began the session by playing a short video they had created while in the hills during a festival that happens annually in the month of February to celebrate the movement of the people against Vedanta and Orissa Mining Corp. The movie, called 'Journey to Niyamgiri' was a moving set of visuals that transported the class to the hills in Orissa with the music, the songs and the words spoken, so strong. After the screening, the class was told about the facts surrounding the problem; the tribal people who would be displaced, the \$2 million worth of Bauxite that was being planned to be mined, the rights of the tribal people and how drastically their lives would change if the mine were to be set up in their hills.

A question round was held for 10 minutes where many students asked Arundati and Shobha about their experience with the tribal people, the first time they met versus the time when they left, the daily functioning of the villages, how the presence of Vedanta affected them, the movement itself, psychological effects of the intimidation and dangers that they face, occupation, International and Indian Media attention, formal education and cultural education. The question session soon turned into an open discussion with many people voicing out opinions and also, understanding a different kind of reality than their own. Next, a list was made on the problems the class thought the people in the hills faced. The list had a variety of problems that one could easily point out and others that took a little more of time, namely Marginalization, Loss of home/safe space, loss of trust in the 'outsider', Cultural hegemony, 'democracy?', Cultural Imperialism, Identity Crisis, Lack of security, constant threats, the idea of development, repression, human rights, lack of media coverage.

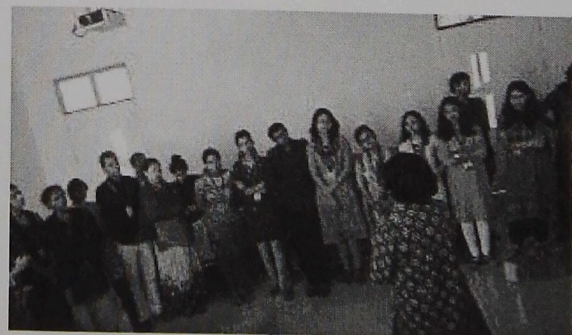
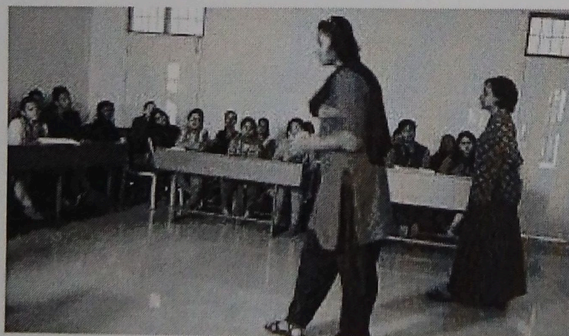
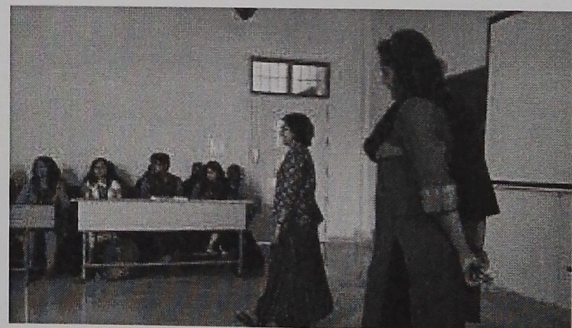
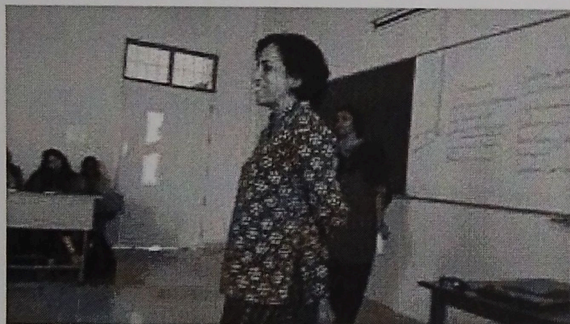
The duo had planned a set of activities for the class and the first activity had a lot to do with interpretation and imagery. In this activity, all the students were asked to form a circle, with each one coming ahead and forming an image in quick succession. All this with just the use of one's body, and no words spoken. The idea of the activity was to understand how people interpret something and give a response, and also to understand that language is no real

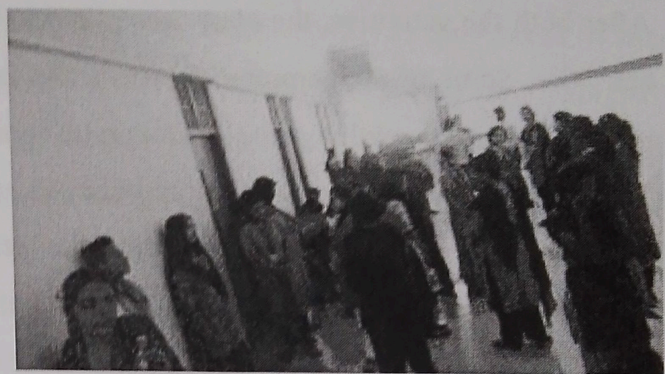
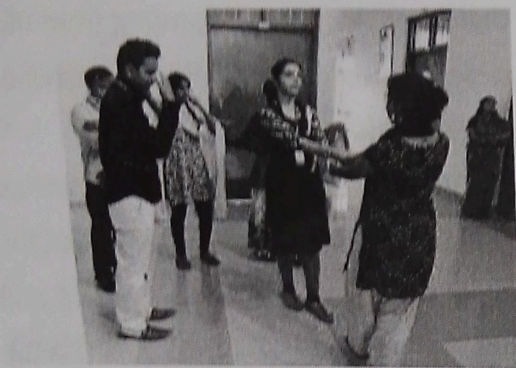
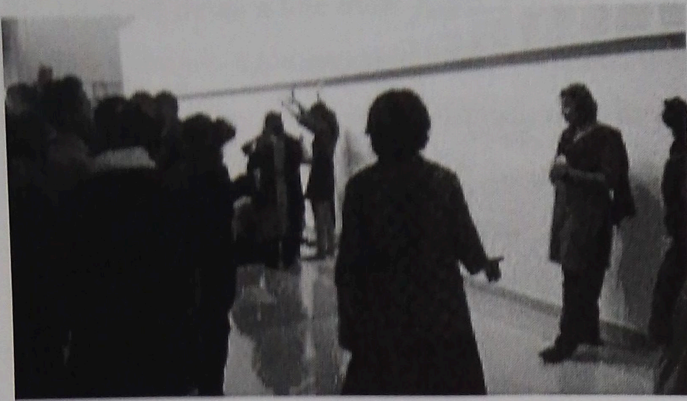
barrier. The students also realized where their comfort zones were and a small peak into the bystander attitude when no one stepped up to respond to an image created by another student. In the second activity, the class was divided into groups of six and every time Arundati announced a word, all groups had to form an image together but without directing one another, and without speaking. The words that Arundati used were 'Culture', 'government' and 'marginalization'. The images that were made by the groups were interesting and diverse, with each group representing the ideas and beliefs that they held personally, coming out to be a part of the image.

After both the activities, the class was asked to share their experiences and learning from the activities. Some of the common phrases and words that were spoken were – different aspects of one concept, the willingness to cooperate, consensus and creativity.

To conclude the session, Arundati and Shobha, who are both performers and theater artists as well performed a song of the Kondh tribe, the lyrics of which they displayed on the screen for the rest of the class to follow. The class was awake, this Friday morning, in music and learning.

Their work can be found on <https://mahuatripps.wordpress.com/>





Details of resource persons

Mahua Tripps is a team of two women artists, Arundathi and Shobha, trained in human rights perspectives and forms of theatre, such as playback and forum theatre. They use art to facilitate discussions on issues relating to sustainable development paradigms, expression of freedom of speech and respect for dignity of life. Both of them are passionate about popularising forms of artistic expressions and are especially inspired from adivasi and forest dwelling communities who live at peace with nature.

Arundathi has worked in the sector of social work and human rights for over 10 years now. She co-founded Mahua Tripps, an informal artists collective with Shobha in 2016. Arundathi is a certified Theatre of the Oppressed facilitator and is currently a member of the Federation of Theatre of the Oppressed. Shobha is a human rights activist working on issues of social justice and human rights issues for more than 16 years. She has a postgraduate degree in Social work and is a certified Theatre of the Oppressed facilitator. She has been using interactive theatre from the past few years to work with people to create democratic platforms that allow for creative and free expressions.

Attendance Sheet and Number of participants

Sl. No.	Register Number	Name
1	1637601	Aman Cheriyan Yohannan
2	1637602	Dani Domo
3	1637603	Dheeraj Banerjea
4	1637604	Hemanth L N
5	1637606	Raman Deep Singh Sengar
6	1637607	Aastha Jain
7	1637608	Aishwarya Gangtkar
8	1637609	Angel Paul
9	1637610	Angela Cicily Joseph
10	1637611	Ankita Chakraborty
11	1637612	Aparna Dutta
12	1637613	Chaitrika Das
13	1637614	Dipshi Calip Kandulna
14	1637615	Dsouza Liza Richard
15	1637616	Gargi Sehrawat
16	1637617	Imsuren Aier
17	1637618	Induja Aravind
18	1637619	Lunthula Quinker
19	1637620	Megha Mohan
20	1637621	Pallavi Choubey
21	1637622	Pallavi R
22	1637623	Rhythm
23	1637624	Sampriti Ghosal
24	1637625	Sayahna Chanda
25	1637626	Sayanti Dutta
26	1637627	Shwetashri Sarkar

27	1637628	Surupa Das
28	1637630	Hongen Thangty Chang
29	1637632	Pooja Krishnakumar
30	1637633	Fathimath Nowrin P
31	1637634	Clinton P

