

SUSTAINABILITY OF MOBILE THEATRE ESTABLISHMENT OF ASSAM AS A FORM OF CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Art plays an important role in man's life. Many important inventions appeared in the field of Art. Special attention may be made of dancing, music, painting & drawing, sculpturing which belong to the category of Performing Art. The cultural agent who perform entrepreneurial activity focusing on Performing Art may be called as Cultural Entrepreneurs. Socially it builds positive self esteem and identity within communities. Culturally it inspires creativity. It perceived as an opportunity to build confidence and preserve culture for some communities. They are the cultural agent who perform entrepreneurial activity focusing on performing art.

Theatres are the most vibrant cultural product of India. Theatre as it exists in India today is a complex art form which combines in it the virtues of music, literature and drama and is the product of various cultural influences. Theatre has very strong links with indigenous performing traditions namely the Jatra Parties, Aankiya Naats & Bhaonas - which are performed at local level in Assam. Theatres are termed as Mobile Theatres or Bhramyaman Theatres in Assam because of its roving nature. The mobile theatre units use different theatrical methods in their cinematic presentation in their attempt to entertain the viewers with romantic, historical, mythological, social and fantastic themes.

A mobile theatre unit is a professional and organised group of people which travels different places to perform drama and other cultural activities with combination of technological innovation.

As per the **Assam Mobile Theatre (Regulation & Artists' Welfare Fund) Act 2010**, "Mobile Theatre means a theatre group engaged in the business of live dramatic and other cultural performances in the State of Assam in consideration of monetary payment to them, performing such activities in different places on a temporary basis, having at least two stages with light and sound system erected temporarily, inside a temporary pandal with sitting arrangement for audience in front of the stages, having adequate number of artists and other staff, both technical and non technical, either casual or regular, in its pay roll and having fixed land and property for the use by the Mobile Theatre in the name of the Mobile Theatre or the producer as the case may be, and the words "Mobile Theatre Groups" shall be construed accordingly.

Theatres are termed as traditional live entertainment under the category of performing art along with circus and musical theatre. Theatres can be categorized as entertainment industry as the **Dictionary meaning of entertainment Industry (noun) means those involved in providing entertainment : radio, television and films and theatre.**

II. NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MOBILE THEATRE UNITS IN ASSAM

The mobile theatre units in Assam have the following characteristics:

1. The theatre units are mobile in nature. Most of the theatre units tour almost all the districts of Brahmaputra Valley and some parts of Barak Valley of Assam in a time period of 9 months (mid July to mid April) for their theatrical extravaganza. During the 9 months journey, the mobile theatre units halt at a place for 2-3 days and then move on to another place to present their performance. In most of the cases the theatre units covers 79 pendals for shows in a season.
2. The peculiar aspect of mobile theatre units in Assam, is the nature of their work. They carry with them the whole stage (2 sets of stage), (2 sets of tent), chairs, tables, dresses, make up items, kitchen utensils and so also the employees (120 - 150 nos).
3. The theatre units can be categorized as - A class, B class and C class theatres. Although this class categorization is not recognized by the Government but is a known fact.
4. The size of the stage, tent and its seat capacities, lighting arrangement, amount of initial capital investment, amount of working capital, number of employees engaged are different for A Class, B Class and C Class theatre units.
5. Mobile Theatre units may be termed as cultural entrepreneurship as it primarily deals with performing arts. The mobile theatre units possess the following entrepreneurial characteristics:
 - 5.1 Innovator in the field of performing art.
 - 5.2 Job giver to practitioners of different cultural activity.
 - 5.3 Cultural resource utiliser e.g cultural instruments, indigenous dress materials, local costumes, masks etc.
 - 5.4 Risk taker and uncertainty bearer.
 - 5.5 The cultural entrepreneurs present before its viewers each time a new product either in the form of a new composition or dance or dramatic presentation or cinematic presentation. As the product they offer is very unique and new with every new presentation, the risk and uncertainty factor is very high.

The drama is the chief ingredient of a mobile theatre unit. Moreover, artist, technician and non technician employees spectators, inviting committees, stage, pendal, music and light arrangements, costumes and make up, technologically sound presentation, dance - drama presentation(optional) etc are also invaluable elements of the mobile theatre units. The theatre units of Assam are also instrumental in preserving Assamese art and culture as they use indigenous artefacts, musical instruments, personal ornaments, traditional dresses in their theatrical presentation. The uses of these cultural products help the local people by providing indirect employment benefit.

For over a century, Assamese mobile theatre has been telling tales of the people to the people. This industry, very unique to Assam has been focusing on the trials, tribulations, triumphs of the human being for generation becoming in course of time, the most enduring entertainment industry in this part of the world.

6. The stage where the mobile theatre units performs their shows is Poseneuium in nature. Nowadays, the theatre units perform a drama in two stages. Once a given scene is over, they move on to the other adjacent stage to perform. As stated earlier, the theatre units have two sets of stage and tent. As the main theatre unit performs at a given place, the other party make necessary arrangement at a nearby place for the next show, so that there may not have any gap in their schedule.

However, the growth of mobile theatre in Assam actually took place in the post independence period. These mobile theatre were actually evolved out of Jatra Parties popular in lower Assam. As early as in Nov18th, 1930 ,Brajanath Sarma paved the way for mobile theatre with his Kohinoor opera. The theatre group introduced co-acting on the stage in the year 1933 which was a revolutionary step in the field of mobile theatre. Another mile-stone was set by Achyut Lahkar, the father of mobile theatre of Assam who established Nataraj Theatre in the year 1963 in purely commercial lines. *Achyut Lahkar may be rightly named as the first generation cultural entrepreneurs of Assam.*

At present the mobile theatre in Assam has earned the status of an entertainment industry although it is not yet recognised as an industry by Government of Assam. In Assam, there are an estimated 60 numbers of theatre units with an annual turnover of over Rs 10 crs. The theatre units launch their annual stage from mid August to 13th April each year.

III. Significance of the study:

The mobile theatre of Assam is a very popular means of entertainment among the rural and urban masses. The mobile theatre has a socio-economic importance also. An estimated ten thousand people are directly employed with the theatre units. In Kohinoor Theatre, one of the oldest and largest theatre unit, 120 persons are directly employed. Similarly in theatre Bhgyadevi, 145 persons are directly engaged. The mobile theatre units also directly contribute to the state economy by giving indirect monetary gain, utilising local resources, local instrument. Local food suppliers, tent houses, accommodators, transport operators, technician, artists, stage decorators, dress designers all have their share of business which flourish along with the theatre industry. The mobile theatre has a tremendous growth prospect also in the current economic scenario. It contribute to the state exchequer through sales taxes, professional taxes, income taxes etc. The mobile theatre also work for social upliftment. Most of the theatre units also contribute their part of income for construction of shool building, renovation of play ground etc.

The prospect of the mobile theatre units is very essential for socio-economic interest the state. So, the study on sustainability of the mobile theatre unit as a cultural entrepreneur is very relevant.

IV. Objective of the study:

The researcher has the following objectives of the study:-
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- To study the evolution and growth of mobile theatre in Assam and also to study their locational base.
- To study the existing govt. policy and regulation related to mobile theatre.
- To study the organizational structure and human resource management aspect of mobile theatre.
- To study the various aspects of cost and revenue management.
- To study the asset structure of mobile theatre units.

V. Methodology of the study:

- The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of information
- The primary data have been collected from the owners cum management personnel, the employees and the various functionaries of the inviting committees to get pinch of their opinion
- The secondary data has been collected from the statements of accounts, copies of organizational manual and the practices followed by each, Govt. of Assam’s proposed Act on Mobile theatre units, literature published by the individual theatre units, articles of various authors and certain unpublished and published research works
- Beside theses, the service agreements with the artist and the Deed of stipulation with the inviting committees has provide to draw various inferences of the study objective.

Limitation of the study:

- The study is only confined to 5 select mobile theatre units in Assam.
- The study covers only 5 years period from 2007-2012 .
- The Researcher has visited only 10 pandels arranged in different areas of Assam.

VI. The study is presented as follows:**A. Evolution and growth of mobile theatres in Assam:****a) Historical Background of Theatres in India :**

The existence of theatres in India dates back to ancient times of Vedas and Upanishads where mythological stories as well as stories of social issues were presented to entertain the masses by the Jatra parties, Nautankies, Ramlila (as locally known). The Indian Theatre scenario has two dimensions viz folk theatre and urban theatre. The folk theatre in India are largely religious and performed in specific ritual contexts. The other form i.e. Urban theatre is an antecedents of Indian Cinemas which dates back to 19th century. During the colonial period, the urban theatres were largely influenced by the Western Theatres. The British Amateur Dramatic Societies and Touring Theatre Company's brought many of the features of Western Theatres to India including commercial features such as advertising and ticketing.

b) Historical Background of Theatres in Assam :

Renowned litterateur and scholar Dr Dimbeswar Neog in his writing "New Light On History on Assamese Literature" stated that, "The history of Assamese drama is very long and old indeed older surely than the drama of any Indian modern language & older than even the regular English Dramas, atleast by a century. The first Assamese drama is certainly Chinhajatra (literally a play with painted scenes) and the first theatre is the performance of it in 1468. As a matter of fact, neither introduction of scenes nor regular drama in Europe in general can be ascribed to a period earlier than the 17th century & in England in particular.Regular Dramatic work really began in the later part of the 16th century with such predecessors of Shakespeare as Merlowe and the Globe theatre which Shakespeare had immortalised was actually established in 1599".

Other successors of Shankardev who contributed to Assamese drama and Ankiya Nat are Madhabdev, Gopaldev, Ramcharan Thakuria etc. The Ahom kings and nobles found the plays a welcome means of entertainment and began to invite Mahantas from Vasihnava Satras to perform plays. The plays of Sankardev, Madhabdev and their followers popularly known as bhaonas continued to be performed and enjoyed with enthusiasm as a major source of entertainment and education till the middle of the 19th century when the socio-political life of the people came under great strain on account of repeated Burmese invasions and subsequent British rule which affected the drama and theatre.

c) Inception and growth of Mobile theatre in Assam :

Mobile theatre or bhramyaman theatre in local language was evolved from jatra parties of West Bengal.Jatra Parties concept was evolved during 1860-80 in lower Assam and was a very popular means of entertainment among the Bengali people of lower Assam .Gradually to suit the requirement of Assamese viewers particularly of rural parts of lower Assam ,Bengali Yatra plays were translated into Assamese language and were performed in those areas.In that juncture Achyut Lahkar a very promising Yatra organizer of Pathsala along with his energetic brother Sada Lahkar organized their theatre troupe purely on commercial lines by converting their yatra troupe Nataraj Opera.During their visits to various places with their troupe they noticed peoples' interest for better theatre mounted on modern lines instead of the old fashioned Yatras.The Lahkar brothers also felt that small theatre halls of small towns and semi urban areas could not satisfy the growing demand of theatre enthusiasm of the people areas. They planned to enact plays under big tents pitched in wide spaces and Nataraj Theatre in the year 1963 in purely commercial lines and made several innovation for its further development.

But the concept of mobile theatre was developed by Braja Nath Sarma about three decades prior to the formation of Nataraj Theatre.Braja Nath Sarma formed a Theatre party in the name of "Dakhin Kanakgari opera Party" in the year 1924 at Sarbhog , barpeta District and the party performed till 1929.After 1929, Braja Natn Sarma formed "Assam Kohinoor Theatre Party" with the help of Bipin Chandra Baruah of Puranigudam,Nagaon with a new idea. In the year 1933, Braja Sarma introduced the concept of Co-acting, revolutionising Assamese Theatre which drew much criticism from Assamese Orthodox Society. Prior to that , women part/role were performed by handsome male actors.In the month of Novembor,1933 the theatre party perfomed its first play "Moran Jiori"with women artist at Doomdooma. The courageous actresses belonged to Puranigudam,Nagaon(three),Jorhat(two) and Nazira and they were Golapi Das, Sarbeswari Das,Phuleswari Das,Labanyas Das, Sailabala Devi and Binoda Gogoi.The other noteable dramas based on co-acting concept of that period were- Kalapahar,Hindubir,Bijoy Basanta,Sibaji.

By following the footsteps of Nataraj Theatre, a lot of theatre units have been established in Assam. The names of such of the Theatre units are:

Sl.no	Name of the Theatre Units	Place of Establishment
1.	Nataraj Theatre	Pathsala
2.	Kohinoor Theatre	Pathsala
3.	Awahan Theatre	Pathsala
4.	Anirban Theatre	Pathsala
5.	Pallabi Theatre	Pathsala
6.	Aradhana Theatre	Pathsala
7.	Jai Jawan Jai Kishan Theatre	Pathsala
8.	Biswarupa Theatre	Pathsala
9.	Parihareswar Theatre	Pathsala
10.	Biswajyoti Theatre	Pathsala
11.	Kalpataru Theatre	Pathsala
12.	Assam Star Theatre	Guwahati
13.	Indradhanu Theatre	Guwahati
14.	Pragjyotish Theatre	Guwahati
15.	Rupraj Theatre	Mirza, Guwahati
16.	Karengghar Theatre	Guwahati
17.	Aashirbad Theatre	Guwahati
18.	Rajashree Theatre	Guwahati
19.	Raj Tilak Theatre	Guwahati
20.	Raj Mahal Theatre	Guwahati
21.	Itihas Theatre	Guwahati
22.	Aarunudoj Theatre	Guwahati
23.	Joymoti Theatre	Guwahati(Dharapur)
24.	Brindaban Theatre	Chandrapur, Guwahati
25.	Ramdhenu Theatre	Guwahati,Barihat
26.	Amarabati Theatre	Guwahati,Mirza
27.	Suradevi Theatre	Nalbari,Samota
28.	Bhgyadevi Theatre	Nalbari,Marua
29.	Moon Theatre	Nalbari
30.	Purbanchal Theatre	Nalbari
31.	Bordoichila Theatre	Nalbari
32.	Chitralekha Theatre	Nalbari
33.	Debraj Theatre	Nalbari
34.	Rangdhali Theatre	Nalbari
35.	Assamjyoti Theatre	Nalbari(Aarikuchi)
36.	Manchajyoti Theatre	Nalbari,Borbhag
37.	Himalaya Theatre	Nalbari
38.	Nataguru Theatre	Nalbari
39.	Jyotirupa Theatre	Sibsagarh,Nitaipukhuri
40.	Srimanta Sankardev Theatre	Sibsagarh,Hahsara
41.	Diamond Theatre	Sibsagarh
42.	Suruj Theatre	Sibsagarh
43.	Gadapani Theatre	Sibsagarh
44.	Charaideo Theatre	Sibsagarh
45.	Natasurjya Theatre	Sibsagarh
46.	Sahajatri Theatre	Sibsagarh
47.	Parijat Theatre	Sibsagarh
48.	Panchanan Theatre	Sibsagarh
49.	Saraighat Theatre	Nagaon,Jajori
50.	Manchatirtha Theatre	Nagaon
51.	Brahmaputra Theatre	Nagaon
52.	Dipjyoti Theatre	Nagaon
53.	Sanjibani Theatre	Nagaon
54.	Damudardev Theatre	Nagaon
55.	Sreeguru Theatre	Nagaon
56.	Mahabahu Theatre	Nagaon
57.	Saptarshi Theatre	Nagaon
58.	Nabarun Theatre	Nagaon
59.	Akashiganga Theatre	Golaghat

60.	Aanirudhadev Theatre	Golaghat
61.	Dayamai Theatre	Golaghat
62.	Turangam Theatre	Golaghat
63.	Aaruhan Theatre	Golaghat
64.	Kalpana Theatre	Golaghat
65.	Urbashi Theatre	Golaghat
66.	Maa Lakhimi Theatre	Golaghat
67.	Sawgatam Theatre	Golaghat
68.	Hengul Theatre	Jorhat,Moriani
69.	Purbadhani Theatre	Jorhat,Moriani
70.	Pratidhwani Theatre	Jorhat,Moriani
71.	Uddipana Theatre	Jorhat,Titabor
72.	Meghdoot Theatre	Dibrugarh,Tingkhong
73.	Kanchanjanga Theatre	Dibrugarh
74.	Rangghar Theatre	Dibrugarh
75.	Sutradhar Theatre	Dibrugarh,Sasoni
76.	Srimanta Theatre	Dibrugarh,Sasoni
77.	Himalay Theatre	Dibrugarh
78.	Panchajanya Theatre	Dibrugarh
79.	Maa Junaki Theatre	Dibrugarh
80.	Samannai Theatre	Dibrugarh,Sahariakota
81.	Maharathi Theatre	Dibrugarh,Naharkotia
82.	Bhadoi Theatre	Tinsukia
83.	Turangam Theatre	Tinsukia
84.	Uddgiran Theatre	Tinsukia
85.	Sewali Theatre	Tinsukia
86.	Samarjyoti Theatre	Lakhimpur
87.	Rajhanogsa Theatre	Dhakuwakhana
88.	Manikut Theatre	Sonitpur,Hawajan
89.	Manikanchan Theatre	Sonitpur(Kwaimari)
90.	Sankar Madhav Theatre	Sonitpur(Gahpur)
91.	Prithvviraj Theatre	Sonitpur(Biswanath)
92.	Sonit Kunwar Theatre	Sonitpur(Biswanath)
93.	Borluit Theatre	Sonitpur(Biswanath)
94.	Dibyapani Theatre	Sonitpur(Dubia)
95.	Dhansiri Theatre	Sonitpur
96.	Dharitri Theatre	Sonitpur
97.	Kaziranga Theatre	Darang(hapamara)
98.	Sreekrishna Theatre	Darang(Dhansirighat)
99.	Abhijan Theatre	Darang(Mangaldoi)
100.	Purbarag Theatre	Darang
101.	Agnigarh	Dhakuwakhana
102.	Jayatu Asomi Theatre	Sarupeta
103.	Barnali Theatre	Lanka(Nagaon)
104.	Eagle Theatre	Dergaon(Golaghat)
105.	Surashree Theatre	Dergaon(Golaghat)
106.	Trinayan Theatre	Bokakhat
107.	NavSuruj Theatre	Bokakhat
108.	Giriraj Theatre	Tihu
109.	DhrubataraTheatre	Guwahati(Mirza)
110.	Mandakini Theatre	Kolaigaon
111.	Rangdhali Theatre	Goreswar
112.	Rupalim Theatre	Abhayapuri
113.	Lakhimi Theatre	Goalpara,Lakhipur
114.	Bandhab Theatre	Goalpara
115.	Meghali Theatre	Goalpara,Mendipathar
116.	Samrat Theatre	Sibsagarh
117.	Sreemati Theatre	Changsari
118.	Purbajyoti Theatre	Hajo
119.	Aruna Theatre	Baihata Chariali
120.	Udayan Theatre	Baihata Chariali
121.	Jagaran heater	Durakohora(Kamrup)
122.	Aainitam Theatre	Belsore

123.	Rupanjali Theatre	Barpeta
124.	Debodasi Theatre	Sarbhog
125.	Monalisa Theatre	Sualkuchi
126.	Radhikadevi Theatre	Dakhin Singora, Kamalpur
127.	Nandini Theatre	Dakhin Singora, Kamalpur
128.	Aalakananda Theatre	Koniha, Rangiya
129.	Rupayan Theatre	Monahkusi, Hajo
130.	Jawaharjyoti Theatre	Khudradimu, Rangiya
131.	Aanuragmovie Theatre	Belsore
132.	Bhagyashree Theatre	Haldha, Darang
133.	Madhabdev Theatre	Balitara, Nalbari
134.	Mukunda Theatre	Makhibaha
135.	Anuradha Theatre	Amrikhuwa
136.	Nabarupa Theatre	Amrikhuwa, Sarthebari
137.	Binapani Theatre	Baniakuchi, Sarthebari
138.	Sradhanjali Theatre	Baniakuchi Sarthebari
139.	Rupashree Theatre	Bartala, Nalbari
140.	Indrani theatre	Patacharkuchi
141.	Brahmaputra Theatre	Mukalmua
142.	Aapsara Theatre	Chamata
143.	Natasurjya Bishnujyoti Theatre	Pathsala
144.	Nayantara Theatre	Anchali, Jalah
145.	Mancharupa Theatre	Pathsala
146.	Indrajit Theatre	Pathsala
147.	Biswajyoti Theatre	Dergaon

Nepali Language Theatre

▪ Laliguras Theatre Nikasi, Baksa

Bodo Language Theatre

- Barlamba Theatre Baksa
- Chande Baudia Theatre Baksa
- Bardoisikhola Theatre Baksa
- Surangmanju Theatre Baksa

Aadibasi Language Theatre

- Aamaltara Theatre
- Binondini Theatre
- Noya San Theatre
- Nayantara Theatre

Bengali Language Theatre

- Taj Mahal Theatre Barpeta
- Sandhyatara Theatre Barpeta

N.B : With every coming year new mobile theatre units are being established. It is very sad to stat that most of the theatre units cannot even survive 2-3 theatrical season.

d) Locational base of the theatre units:

The study revealed that out of 147 numbers of theatres established at different times, 57% are situated in Lower Assam districts and 42.85% were localised in Upper Assam. It is seen that about 30% of theatre units were concentrate near Pathsala, known as the Hollywood of Assam. The prime cause of their concentration near Pathsala to earn locational advantage viz. availability of skilled manpower, inputs of production, marketing benefits etc. Apart from this, emotional attachment of the people of this locality for the industry is another important reason of its establishment near the place. Guwahati being the most populous city of Assam, about 17% of the theatre units are concentrate near the capital city.

In Assam the mobile theatre has earned the status of an entertainment industry although it is not yet recognised as an industry by Government of Assam. At present, there are an estimated 60 numbers of theatre units with an annual turnover of over Rs 10 Cr.

VII. The existing Govt. policy and regulation related to mobile theatre.

1. To regulate the activities of mobile theatre Govt. of Assam passed the Assam Mobile Theatre (Regulation & Artists' Welfare Fund) Act 2010. The Act was passed by the Assam Legislative Assembly and received the assent of the Governor on 31st Aug 2010. The Act aims to provide for a better regulation of mobile theatre and to check haphazard growth of mobile theatre. The Act also aims to constitute a Artist Welfare fund for the welfare of the Artist of mobile theatres in the state of Assam including the Hills districts and matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

2. **Sec 6 of the Act** prescribes the requirements for registration of Mobile Theatre units and its renewal there after. The requirements as stated in the Act are:

a. The theatre group shall possess at least two stages and adequate light and sound system;

b. It shall have at least one hundred artists and other staff both technical and non-technical as may be specified by the Government by notification from time to time;

c. It shall have fixed land and property in the name of the producer or the Mobile Theatre as the case may be, which are exclusively used for the Mobile Theatre group;

d. It shall possess requisite infrastructure and equipments for fire fighting arrangements including equipments for firefighting;

e. It shall engage adequate number of security personnel of its own as may be considered necessary;

f. It shall produce the latest Income Tax clearance certificate for entire funds by which the theatre would be promoted;

g. It shall possess such other things, items, facilities and maintain such standards as may be prescribed in the rules.

h. It is observed that some of the Theatre units namely Kohinoor, Aawahan, Theatre Bhagyadevi, Hengul have registered their establishments voluntarily with the Directorate of Cultural Affairs. As registration is not compulsory till date, many of the Theatre units are yet to register their names.

But the provisions of the Act is yet to be implemented due to delay in procedural measures of the Cultural Dept. of Govt. of Assam and Directorate of Cultural Affairs, Govt. of Assam.

3. Artist Pension Scheme:

To recognize their distinguished contribution in the field of art and culture, the Govt. of Assam has initiated Artistes' Pension Scheme in two categories, viz. Life time pension at a time.

Accordingly, for the year 2014, 20 artistes' are selected for Life time pension from different parts of Assam namely, Nalbari, Guwahati, Darrang, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Dhubri, Dhemaji, Kokrajhar, Karbi Anglong and Sonitpur. The pension will be effective from August 15, 2014 and each of them will receive a monthly pension of Rs 4,000.

4. State Awards :

Natasurjya Phani Sarma Award- To felicitate the works of the renowned artistes, the State Govt. has introduced this Award in the year 2004. The Award comprises of a momentous and a cash reward of Rs. One lakhs. This year the 11th Natasurjya Phani Sarma award is awarded to renowned cine-artist Nipon Goswami. The first recipient of the award was Late Tulsi Das. The other recipients are Ratna Oja, Late Dharanidhar Choudhury, Gyanada Bora, Mahananda Sarma, Bidya Rao Nayar, Late O P Nayar, Indra Baniya, Hassan Sarif Ahmed, Bishnu Kharghariya and Udai Sankar Saikia.

VIII. The entrepreneurial activity taken-up by mobile theatre units for augmenting their business:

From very inception as professional theatre groups, the mobile theatre units have made different innovations to entertain viewers in the different branches of performing arts whether in script, light and sound technology, set designing or in direction. The study revealed the following innovations made by different theatre units over the years:

First in Mobile Theatre:

First Mobile Theatre group

Nataraj Theatr (Pathsala), 1963.

First Dama on stage

Jerangar Sati, Haidar Ali, Bhogjara and Ranjit Singh –

First Producer	Nataraj Theatre
First Dramatist	Achyut Lahkar and Sada Lahkar-Nataraj Theatre
First female actors	Uttam Baruah and Natasurjya Phani Sarma
	Anupama Bhattacharjya, Jyosna Ghosh, Swarna Bora-Nataraj Theatre.
First female dancer	Pabitra Borkakoti, Bina Borthakur, Bani Borthakur and Moon Devi.
First cine stars in mobile theatre	Natasurjya Phani Sarma, Anupama Bhattacharjya and Brajen Baruah-Nataraj Theatre and Purbajyoti Theatre
First dance director	Jatin Goswami
First international play	Dramatic presentation of "Cleopetra" by Padma Borkotoky (Kahinor Theatre)
Dramatic presentation of first Epic	Mahabharat (Kohinor Theatre)
Dramatic presentation of first Assamese novel	Miri Jiyori (mancha konwar) and Asimat jar heral sima (Kohinor Theatre)
First Assamese social-realistic play	Shaku written by Prafulla Bora (Purbajyoti Theatre)
Award winning drama at all India level	Prithibir Prem (Aaradhona Theatre)
First theatre group invited outside Assam	Nataraj Theatre
Presenting simultaneously in two stage	Mancharupa Theatre with the contribution of Mahananda Sarma and Bhaben Baruah
Using of three stage	Suradevi Theatre, producer-Dharani Barman
First music cassette	Hits of Awahan
First graduate in mobile Theatre field	Netrakamal Baruah.
First P.G in Mobile Theatre field	Ratan Lahkar-Actor and producer of Kohinor Theatre, M.A in History.
First Glamour Artist	Prasanta Hazarika and Ila Kakoti-Kohinor Theatre, 1976
First female dance director	Garima Hazarika, Madhabi Baruah
First Female producer	Abala Barman-Moon Theatre
Highest presentation of a drama	Titanic (Kohinnor Theatre)

Contribution of Nataraj Theatre -the first mobile theatre of Assam in the Mobile Theatre Field :

- It is the first theatre party introduced electric equipments in a Mobile Theatre.
- For the 1st time it performed both classical and traditional Assamese dances on stage
- With the local music instruments it first used western musical instruments like electric guitar, organ etc.
- For the first time it performed social drama on stage viz Bengali Social Play by Utpal Dutta 1965-66, Bandita - Assamese social drama.
- It is the first and only mobile theatre of Assam to perform successful shows in Bihar and Nepal.
- For the first time it introduced colourful moving stage in mobile theatre unit.
- It is the first theatre to introduce theatre scope & projector in mobile theatre in the year 1966-67
- In the year 1968-1969, it is the first theatre unit to start Cine-Theatre system In Theatre setting another milestone in the theatre field.
- In the year 1970-71, Nataraj Theatre used three stages in their theatrical performance.
- It is the first theatre to perform Novel Assamese plays in mobile theatre.
- It is the first & only mobile theatre of Assam to perform plays in three different languages - Hindi, Bengali & Assamese in one session. In the session 1978-79, and 1979-80, Nataraj Theatre performed Bangla plays in Cachar and North Bengal.
- It is the first to introduce revolving stage in mobile theatre.
- It was the first theatre to perform plays only for adult.

Some of the very popular plays of Nataraj Theatre are-Aarina, Blackmoney, Beula, Jerengar Saati, and many more to be mentioned.

IX. The operational aspects of mobile theatre establishment:

The theatre units launch their annual stage shows from mid August to 13th April i.e. before Rongali Bihu (the fun fiesta of Assamese people) every year. This time schedule was first introduced by Achyut Lahkar, the founder of Nataraj Theatre and the innovator of mobile theatre concept of Assam. Subsequently this time schedule was adopted by producers of other Theatre units in their operation. Before their annual stage shows, rehearsals are done from 2nd or 3rd week of June to earlier part of August followed by 2-3 days of break before the Grand shows. Repairing and renewals are done during the gap period. Prior to the

rehearsals and stage shows the leading artist and other artist are recruited by signing an eleven months contract. The other staff i.e. technicians, spot boys, stage decorators, skill labour etc are also employed on contractual basis. Employees like manager, cook, helpers are employed on regular basis. However, the recruitment and selection process may vary for different theatre units. During this 8-9 months time all the employees (both contractual and regular) and the producer camp together as a team which build a team spirit among them. The producers of the theatre units also provide free accommodation and food to all their staff.

The main inputs of production of a theatre unit:

a) **Plays:** Plays act as a guide to the production concept. Once the text is available, a variety of production concept emerges. It is seen that the theatre units very carefully select the themes of their plays. The themes are mostly social, -realistic (**Bhul nubujiba Bhupen Da, Saragurir Saporir, Matir Manuh, Hiyat apahi golap**), mythological (**Mahabharat, Ramayana, Sakunir Pratisudh**), fictional (**clieopetra, Iliyad –Oddysi**), Sci-fi (**Titanic**) etc. The theatre units finalise their plays for the next year production during the months of Sep-Oct of the ensuing year.

b) **Actors:** It goes without saying that actors are the primary ingredient of the theatre. The artist whole heartedly participate with the production process and some times put their suggestions in matters relating to direction & presentation during rehearsals. It is interesting to note that the performance of the artist along with the play is the significant factor for the success of a theatre unit. In order To make commercially popularise their plays, the producers of the theatre units try to bring the glamour factor i.e. the artist from cinemas or VCDs in their shows. also The *glamour* artist are earning a hefty amount (30 lakhs-55 lakhs) as remuneration for a period of 9 months whereas the general actors are earning comparatively a lesser amount (5 lakh-15 lakh) for the same period. The glamour artist demand the remuneration for their popularity as most of them are popular artiste from films or V.C.Ds.

A list of approx employees in a mobile theatre unit:

Producer	01
Chief Manager	01
Managers	03
Aesthetic thinkers	03
Secretary	01
Chief Publicity Secretary	01
Asst. Publicity Secretary	10
Chief Organisers	01
Lyricist	03
Souvenir Editor	01
Group Manager	01
Music	02
Prompter	02
Lady-in-charge	01
Instrumentalist	10
Singer	04
Art Director	01
Choreographer	01
Sound Engineer	06
Setting Master	05
Make-up master	02
Costume Director	02
Male & Female Actors	20
Dance Artist	14
Light Director	10
Stage & Hall Makers	20
Still photographer	01
Transportation	05
Cook and marketing officer	05
Gate keepers	02
Others	04

TOTAL **150**

The total number of employees employed in different categories may vary from A class, B Class and C Class theatres. In A class theatre itself some theatre units may employ 120-135 numbers of employees. Whereas in B class theatres the total strength of the employees may vary from 80-100. Moreover, very few of the employees like kitchen staff, driver, helper are employed on regular basis by some theatre units and rest of the staff are employed on contractual basis for a period of 9 months.

An estimated 2400 numbers of persons are directly employed in theatre unit. Most of the theatre units are formed on sole – proprietary basis. The sons or brothers or wives or cousins of the concerned theatre units voluntarily offer their services in the capacity as manager or dress designer or director or dance director in their home production.

X. Management Aspects

Human Resource Planning: It is done in a continuous manner .Because after every 9 month, majority of the existing staff leave the present organisation and join competitors which create new vacancies.

Recruitment ,Selection , Training & placement: Recruitment is made both from internal sources and external sources. Internal sources is mostly done in case of both managerial level employees (e.g promotion of secretaries as managers), technical employees(e.g. spot boys, light men as sound engineer), artist (e.g. promotion of dancers as actors).

But hiring from external sources is most popular and common for recruitment of Artist(directors, actors, dancers, singers etc.).The manager look for renowned and popular singers , dancers or actors from drama schools or performers at college or school level of a particular region to fill up the vacancies. This is done through the local contact /agent of that area.

The newly recruited employees are offered on- the-job training mostly by his/her senior or director as the case may be. The technical employees mostly learn by actually performing the job. While the artist mostly learn during rehearsals .

Compensation: The employees are given remuneration for their services according to their contract/agreement as most of the employees are employed on contractual arrangement for a period of 9 month. The remuneration may vary from Rs.1500/ -p.m. to Rs. 75 lakhs for 9 months depending on the nature of job. Apart from the salaries the employees are not given any other benefit like medical benefit, bonus, over-time allowance etc.

Welfare and Social Security Measures: The owners offer free food and accommodation facilities to all the employees during rehearsal period as well as during shows. However, the owners are very strict and rigid in giving leave even in case of injury ,illness, family compulsion or during emergencies. They vehemently believe on the proverb **“The show must go on”**. In short, although the mobile theatre units have a paternalistic attitude towards their employees, but they are often criticised for their rigidity in giving leave.

The mobile theatre activity, if run on a professional manner is a very promising business venture. Firstly because it has low gestation period (mostly 3-5 years), secondly one time investment in fixed asset , and thirdly because working capital cycle is also very fast. Because, the working capital requirement can be met out of revenue generation and from money collected from inviting committees for pandel booking of next year given in advance during the month of Oct-Nov of the ensuing year.

The theatre units have to incur expenditure on the following heads to perform their business:

Sl.No	Name of the Item	Approx. Expenditures (INR) in the Year 2008 ('000)	Approx. Expenditures (INR) in the Year 2013 ('000)	Percentage Increase
1	Tent(1900 meters)	225	500	122.22%
2	Chairs	275	585	112.73%
3	Sound system	350	600	71.43%
4	Musical Instruments	325	800	146.15%
5	Food	800	965	20.63%
6	Generator	200	425	112.50%
7	Light	125	400	220.00%
8	Stage and Gallery	500	700	40.00%
9	Transportation	800	1200	50.00%
10	Poster and publication	300	500	66.67%
11	Playwright and Directors	400	1200	200.00%
12	Dress and Make-up	325	600	84.62%
13	Setting	350	800	128.57%
14	Bamboo	300	450	50.00%
15	Salary of the staff	8500	10000	17.65%
16	Repairing	40	60	50.00%
17	Others	75	200	166.67%

	Total	13890	19985	
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The theatre units have to incur expenditure on the following heading

(One crore thirty eight lakhs ninety thousand only) (One crore ninety lakhs eighty five thousand only)

Usually a theatre party perform shows for 237 days. If 7 days are deducted for unexpected natural or man made calamities , total performing days will be 230. Now a theatre party earn Rs. 75,000/-Rs85,000/ as per the bargaining power.

i.e. $230 \times 80,000 = \text{Rs. } 184,00,000$ (One crore eighty four lakhs) (approx). Again, theatre parties perform second show or matinee show (as per demand). That income is Rs. 30,00,000 (thirty lakhs) (approx). From this it becomes clear that a mobile theatre can earn income of Rs 2,14,00,000 (Two crores fourteen lakhs) (approx).

i.e.	Income	=	Rs.2,14,00,000/-
	Expenditure	=	Rs.1,99,85,000/-
	Revenue	=	Rs.14,15,000/-

(Fourteen Lakhs Fifteen Thousand)

Conclusion:

It was to concluded from the study that the entrepreneurial activity has to face criticism like deteriorating value and standard in performance, lack of professionalism, shortage of fund etc. Apart from this, some people with good monetary strength enter in to the field to earn easy money without any passion for art and culture. Another class of people enter in this field simply to earn name and fame as generally people engage in cultural field easily draws attention of the society whereas they do not have any social or moral obligation for this unique form of performing art. This all bring bad name for this popular means of entertainment . So, it is suggested that a well defined standard of performance should be designed by the concerned people or bodies namely Bhramyaman Theatres Producers Association, Bhramyaman Theatre Surakhsya Samiti. The main reason of incurring loss for most of the theatre units is the payment of hefty amount of salary to the so called **Glamour Artist**. So in the year 20012-13, the Bhramyaman Theatre Surakhsya Samiti which is a committee formed to protect the rights and interest of both the employer and employees of the theatre units ,reached to a consensus to offer a common salary to the **Glamour Artist** by all the Theatre Units . But this can not be implemented for the reason best known to them .So, it is suggested for their greater interest , the theatre units must come out from this vicious cycle and succeed in their venture

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