Stitch in Time Saves Nine (Repairing the Hearts and Minds of The Garment Workers Through Applied Theatre)

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Garment industries comprised of skilled and unskilled labour were established in many parts of the country. Workers are under a lot of stress, and their lives are pretty routine. The majority of these employees are absent from and far from their families. Since they cannot take time off, they neglect their social commitments and grow socially isolated. Most of the time, Sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence occur in this surrounding. Regular Absenteeism, lethargy, negligence and labour conflicts continue to happen due to unsatisfying conditions in the work environment. This research aims to assess how workforce advancements in the apparel industry affect employees' psycho-physical behaviours, deepening our understanding of this relationship. Employing the Auto-Ethnography method, the study explores garment workers' experiences to elucidate their cultural contexts, beliefs, daily lives, and work practices. Utilising the 'Corporate theatre' genre, the research conducted eight months of weekend drama workshops to empower marginalised individuals, culminating in a forum theatre production. This production facilitated dialogue among workers, employers, and the audience, resulting in notable shifts in awareness, attitudes, and behaviours, contributing to a transformative process. The five distinguishing characteristics of the applied theatre techniques, such as Participation, Outreach, Service, Intention and Transformation of their lives, are explained through the method of this research is based on a qualitative study where the data were gathered from group discussions, individual feedback of participants, video recording of each workshop sessions, diary notes, feedbacks of trainers and observer's opinions during the six months workshop process. By bringing out their so-called 'frustrations, anxieties and worries, we could teach a positive attitude to the work, build self-confidence, improve interpersonal relations, and enhance synergy among the workers. We argue that solving their day-to-day problem is a must, and as the mandate says, a stitch in time saves nine.

Keywords: corporate theatre, auto-ethnography, participation, transformation

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