

Regarding restoration of Repertory-Grants to Theatre Groups in West Bengal

SHRI PARTHA BHOWMICK (BARRACKPUR): Thank you, Chairperson. I wish to bring to the kind attention of the hon. Minister of Culture, Government of India a very important issue.(*Interruptions*)

Sir, the repertory grants given to many theatre groups in West Bengal have been stopped without assigning any satisfactory reason.(*Interruptions*) These groups are doing excellent work in the field of theatre on a regular basis.(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Chairperson Sir, once Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa Dev had said, "Theatre is the education for the masses". Listening to hundred speeches might not be able to achieve what one great theatre performance can do. It will be etched in the mind. Through you, I want to convey something to the hon. Minister. Meghnad Bhattacharya is a reputed actor and thespian working on the stage for the past the fifty years with his theatre group "Sayak". His grant has been discontinued without assigning any reasons to it. Through you, I want to bring this to the notice of hon. Minister that the salary grants have been decreased for the theatre groups of Rudraprasad Sengupta, Bibhas Chakraborty, and Bohurupee, which carries the legacy of its great pioneer Shambhu Mitra. This is a massive blow on Bengal's culture. It is my request to the hon. Minister that he should reconsider this move, at the same time he should not get provoked by anyone and should publish the original list in order to rectify this. Otherwise, the people of Bengal will be bound to draw parallels between this move and the deprivation of Bengal in MGNREGA and Awas Yogana. They will think that the Central Government is trying to commit an ethnocide by taking active steps to destroy Bengal's culture. I am repeatedly requesting the hon. Minister to at least once have a discourse with the Members of his party, who regularly watch theatre and reconsider your decision.