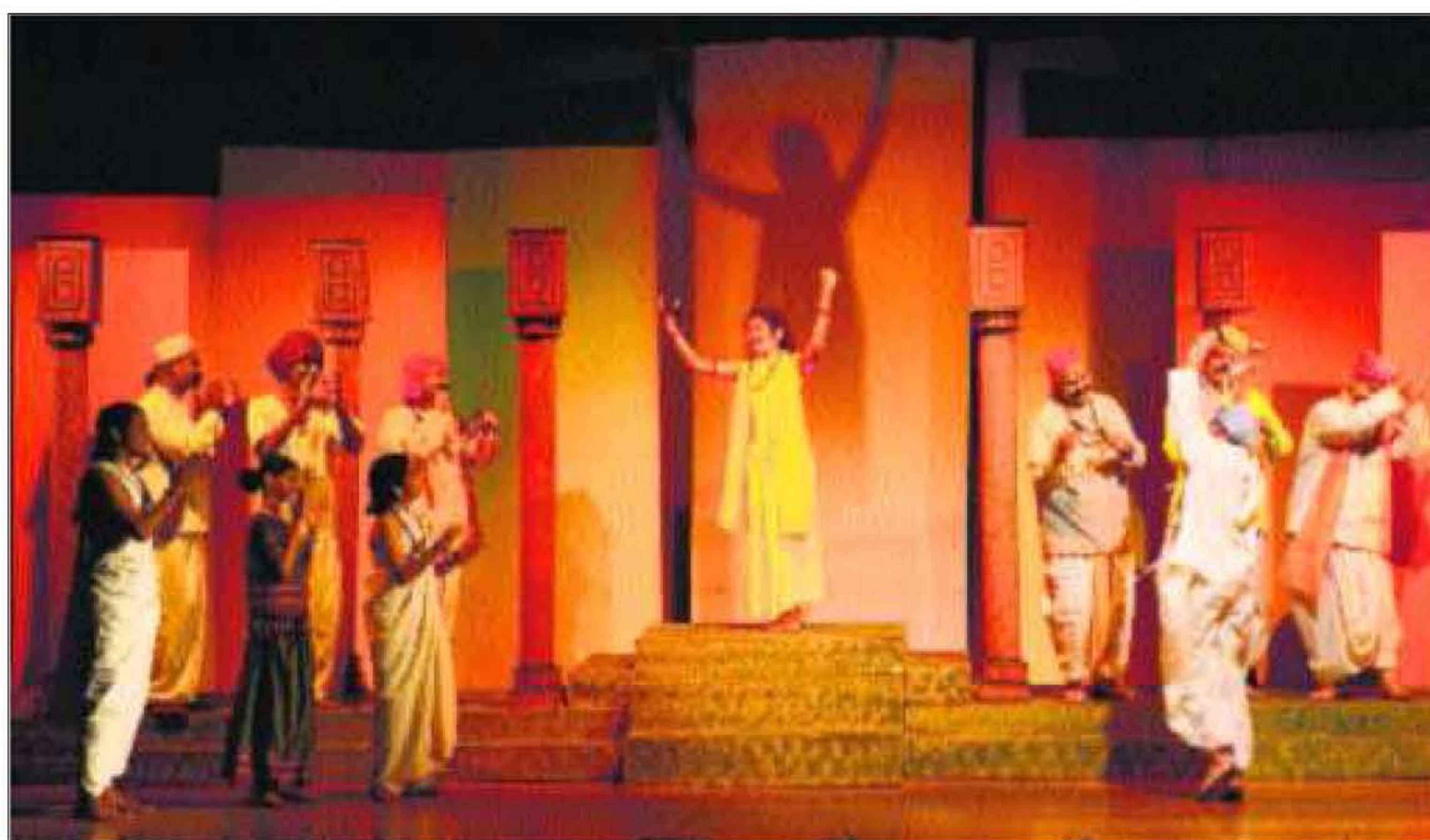


## Recreating the journey of Sant Dnyaneshwar's life

Posted On Sunday, November 15, 2009 at 05:04:39 PM



Thane: Through devotional lyrics, saints from Maharashtra have spread the message of universal peace, brotherhood and humanity. One such saint was Sant Dnyaneshwar, who founded the devotional path that teaches us not to be concerned about caste, religious rituals and adopt the Sagun-Bhakti of the lord that provides the soulful peace.



The greatness of the soul: Sant Dnyaneshwar, who took care of his siblings is believed to have performed many miracles that proved not only his yogic prowess but also his spiritual strength

Sripad Sewa Mandal, Pune, and Rigved, Thane, jointly presented Dnyanoba Maza, a play based on Sait Dnyaneshwar's life that was performed at Gadkari Rangayatan. During that time, Maharashtrian society was governed by religious authorities.

Dnyaneshwar's father Vithalpant married Rakhamabai and then deserted her to become an ascetic. When his guru came to know of this, he instructed Vithalpant to return to his native place and lead domestic life to which he agreed. The couple was blessed with four children- Nivrutti, Dnyandeo, Sopan and Muktabai.

But religious pandits denied them civic rights and expelled the family from society. Unable to bear the shame, the parents ended their lives. Nivrutti and Dnyaneshwar looked after their siblings and went to religious authorities to get justice. It's believed that he did many other miracles that proved his yogic and spiritual strength.

Gradually people accepted him and hundreds of devotees gathered around him. As Sant Dnyaneshwar united commoners and led them towards the devotional path, the Varkaris call him Mauli.

Dnyaneshwar simplified the philosophy of the Bhagvad Gita and explained it in Marathi in his volume Dnyaneshwari that adorns with seven thousand lyrical ovis (poetry). Eight centuries later, Dnyaneshwari is still regarded as one of the most sacred literary works in Marathi. The last scene of Dnyaneshwar's Sanjeevan Samadhi has become impressive and lively.

The entire cast of the play gave justice to their roles. Samel the writer-director of the play also performs a role in it. Ashwin Dhakras, Ankur Deshmukh and Rasika Jog were impressive as Nivrutti, Sopan and Muktabai. Vedashree Agashe, a Std IX student, who played Dnyaneshwar in the play, won audience's hearts with her confidence, enthusiastic spirit and expressions.

"This is Vedashree's debutant role and she is enjoying every bit of it. When theatre celebrities like Prasad Savkar, Prabhakar Panashikar saw Vedashree's performance in Dnyanoba Maza, they were highly impressed and heartily appreciated her bearing of the role. Savkar said, "I have performed Dnyaneshwar's role in the play Geeta Gati Dnyaneshwar, but today I saw the real Dnyaneshwar in Vedashree's performance."

Kirti Agashe, Vedashree's mother, says, "Recently, caste-based politics is increasing hence a play based on Dnyaneshwar's message of world peace is most welcome."

Mamasaheb Deshpande, founder of Sripad Seva Mandal is one of the senior scholars of Varkari sampraday. He wrote Chaitanya Chakravarti, a musical play based on saint Dnyaneshwar's life, 40 years back. To suit the play in modern schedule, Samel has re-written the script and also directed the play.

Pandit Vidyadhar Oak has provided melodious music to the play and singers Rahul Deshpande, Amol Bawadekar and Rujuta Agashe lend their voices for Dnyaneshwar's eternal lyrics.

Thaneite Shishir Jog, the coordinator of the play, said, "It was a challenge to present a musical play with 23 characters. Shripad Sewa Mandal has hundreds of followers and over 300 centers all over the world that propagate Dnyaneshwar's spiritual thoughts among the society. We have plans to perform this play in all these centers."