

A STUDY OF SOCIAL METAMORPHOSIS IN MAHESH DATTANI'S SELECT PLAYS**Dr. V. N. Manjula**

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Abstract

Mahesh Dattani is an icon in Indian English drama, a versatile playwright, niche his career as director, actor, dancer and film maker. His dramas remarkably unveil the society's virgin lands. Human's world has been changing; Dattani has dramatized its changing values. His concentration lies on Indian family, their inter-personal relationships, trauma and the triumph caused by social conventions and prejudice, wherever the individual could not escape inevitably. This paper throws light on metamorphic changes of social values in the select plays of Mahesh Dattani.

Keywords : Indian Family, Social convention, Prejudice, Social values, metamorphosis.

Mahesh Dattani an icon in the Indian English drama, niche his career with multicolor, as a successful playwright, actor, director and entrepreneur. He and his 'Playpen' (Dramatic theatre) has come a long way, he has become a successful playwright and his dramas are most staged plays in India and worldwide. His dramas echo the contemporary Indian society and laden with fragment pieces of contemporary life of Indian middle class society. The society is dynamic and its customs, beliefs and conventions are changing abruptly. Many components of societal

UNDERSTANDING LITERATURE IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY THEORIES- INDIAN AND WESTERN PERSPECTIVES

architecture bound with change but few conventions and customs are deeply rooted and become a scar or disruption under the time current and disturb the flow of change. Indian society is in the position as struck between devil and deep blue sky; neither can't leave its old custom and belief nor can't follow the modernity. Dattani a remarkable playwright captured the society with his magnifying lens. Many critics have highlighted Dattani's presentation of maladies of Indian urban middleclass society. His plays not only bring the maladies of life but also the social metamorphism, the happiness of relationships, self realization, love, trust, partnership and the virtue of self sacrifice are deliberately shown in his plays.

In 'seven steps around the fire' Dattani brings out the plight of the third sex who is being under the negligence by the main stream people. Uma Rao a representative from the main stream helped a eunuch in her crisis. The society has crushed them to the corner and kept them under pressure for very long years. A hijira or eunuch is seen as an unwanted weed of society or filthy being who are not treated as a human was made as her sister by Uma. This scene shows us a positive change in the society. The pain, agony, maltreatment and longing for identity are all shown in the play.

UMA. One day you will understand. Anarkali, I would love to be your sister, if you will be mine.

ANARKALI. Oh! You are only being kind. Don't hurt my heart.

Uma. No, I mean it.

ANARKALI. Look at me. (pause.) Oh! My sister! You are my sister, no?

UMA. Yes.

ANARKALI. Get me out of here.

(pause.) Oh my sister! You are my sister, No?

UMA. Yes.

ANARKALI. Get me out of here.

(Pause.) Sister, I didn't kill Kamala. You believe me, no?

(Pause.) You doubt your own sister? (C.P. 13)

In 'Bravely Fought the Queen' the playwright draw lights on the theme 'family'. Dramatist uses family as the common theme in his plays. It is the microcosm of the society; Family built the complete man to the society. The 'joint family' is the pride of Indian heritage and culture. Now the pride is diminishing due to individualism, self centered thought and ego

clash inside the family members and a silent gap formed between the members of the family. The imitation of western culture and longing for the privacy deteriorate the old valued customs of Indian society. Dattani's heroes and heroines are the representative of rejected communities from main streams or the people under subjugation who have multiple mindsets. The inevitable change has changed all the walks of society but some calamities are still unaccepted by the Indian society, for instance, the equality for women, gender relationships and identity of subjugated people.

'Bravely Fought the Queen' revolves around Trivedi family, blood brothers married blood sisters. They live in a house adjoined to each other but their relationship is wide apart. Both the sisters were subjected to the subjugations and the patriarchal community has forced them to be silent, kept away from the society. Dattani used Lalitha as a medium to help the sisters to identify what they are and what they want. Lalitha is depicted as a representative of Dattani's women. The women in the play are the victims of patriarchy who are under the strong hold of men and social conventions. Dattani brings his women brave and fought their foes as like queen. Dramatist has filled the play with patriarchal autocracy, conventional pressure, conjugal crumbling, business strategy and emotional climax which forces the audience to conclude various ending. Dattani brings colour to women through the Lalitha's answers to Alka.

LALITHA. Oh, I keep myself occupied. I do a bit of writing. Freelance. I write an occasional woman's column for the Times. Sometimes I review cultural events. I am into meditation. And, oh yes, I grow bonsai plants – I've been growing them for years. I do a bit of creative writing as well. You know, poetry and stuff like that. Nothing great but . . .(C.P. 243)

Sridhar warns his boss and fights with him for talking rough with sridhar's wife. The time has changed; men give respect, space to breath and listen to women. This mark of change has began in the society.

LALITHA. Yes, please. It's getting late and...

JITEN. (to Lalitha). Just shut up !

SRIDHAR. That's no way to talk to a lady(CP 303)

It is no harm caused by the same gender relationships (both gay and lesbian) though there is ample evidence in the scripture and texts, the society have grin face toward the third sex. History repeats itself; the respect for third gender is slowly redeeming it array. The dramas of Dattani become a window to the people of plight and subjugation.. It is no doubt that the Indian society has come a long way and met many major and minor changes. Dattani highlights the changes in his plays. Erin Mee a successful theatre director said,

Mahesh Dattani frequently takes the subjects that complicate dynamic of the modern, urban family. His characters struggle to get freedom and happiness under the weight of tradition, cultural construction of gender and repressed desire (C.p.324).

Dattani not like other playwrights didn't bring any imaginative conclusion. The viewers/readers of the plays of Mahesh Dattani felt like watching their own life or fragments of life of their familiar people. His characters through some medium realize the facts rather to lament to it. Dattani intensely endeavored to uncover the effects of the western culture. He likewise brings up the social change that has influenced the amazing and essential regions of society like marriage, restrictions with respect to sexual characters, good and moral qualities.

The social changes happening in urban India are side-effects of fast urbanization and industrialization. 'On a Muggy Night in Mumbai' brings up genuine moral issues with regards to in the case of stifling one's genuine sexual personality could make dependable social prosperity and joy and whether it would not be smarter to come out straightforwardly once for all than to make lives hopeless. The contention as far as regulating hetero conduct and elective sexuality shapes the significant worry here. Male and female are the main sexual classes which have made sure about social presence and society's endorsement. Individuals who don't fit in these two classes either continue attempting to fit into the trench and endure for the duration of their lives. With a fine delineation of characters like Ed, Bunny, Sharad and Kamlesh in an enthusiastic and clever way, Dattani draws out the mental weights and fears of social ostracize that gays need to live with.

Dattani states most people in the main stream are brought into 'forced harmony' out of no choice and position of convalescence. The homos gathered in Kamalesh flat suffocate due to the social customs and conventions. These people pick up space and grapple with their own character rather than the social standards.

Conclusion

Social changes play a significant role in assessing the human evolution. Mahesh Dattani, a prolific Indian dramatist explores the social changes in his plays. The themes that his plays deal with unfold the harmonial changes in contemporary Indian society. His characters nail the cultural collisions and identity crisis that prevails in colonized countries. The dramatist makes a meticulous effort in unveiling the postcolonial effects in India. The impact of western ideas mars the eastern values in his plays.

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