Chapter VI

Conclusions

The basic tenet of drama as a literary form is its performance. The social realism is considered as the most important literary value in the study of selected plays of the two playwrights, P. K. Atre and John Galsworthy. The study is the comparison of the dramatic works of these two playwrights. The English plays of John Galsworthy and the Marathi plays of P. K. Atre are compared here. John Galsworthy belonged to England and his mother tongue is English, he wrote his plays in English whereas Atre born in Maharashtra and as his mother tongue is Marathi, he wrote his plays in Marathi. These playwrights are the symbols of the new resurgence in their own areas and have made bold innovations, fruitful experiments and have given a new direction, which goes in the history of English and Indian drama as a significant mark of achievement. The plays of these writers are not entertaining but they are thought provoking. They share contemporary social and national life.

There are some similarities and some differences in them. Atre shows lust, greed and sufferings of women in the lives of the contemporary people by using the contemporary setting and language. John Galsworthy uses the injustice and caste prejudice and welds it with the contemporary reality. Both the playwrights are prolific writers because they have produced novels, short stories, adaptions, essays and plays. Both have made a significant contribution to the English and Marathi drama. Their plays are not based on the value of entertainment but they provoke the audience to think. They are contemporary writers and both of them share the contemporary social and national concerns of their own nations.

After peeping deep into the plays of Atre and Galsworthy, it is found that Atre’s plays focus the sufferings of women, their suppression and exploitation made by the men and the plays of Galsworthy focus the injustice, caste prejudice, conflicts and sufferings of the underdogs.

P. K. Atre and John Galsworthy have tackled the current social problems of their contemporary society in their plays. Both Atre and Galsworthy were realists and they exposed social realism through their plays, yet there are slight differences between them in handling the theme of social realism. Atre often indulged in gross exaggeration whereas Galsworthy never did so to achieve the very purpose of realism. Atre allowed his own personality to intrude in presenting the sides of a case, on the contrary Galsworthy presented both the sides of a case with rigid impartiality and insight, he never intruded himself though he was with the downtrodden in
mind, as doing so would destroy the very purpose of awakening the conscience in the mind of the masses to abolish social problems. While portraying social realism, Atre almost invariably attempted at mocking and scoffing at the weaknesses of human nature and society but Galsworthy never attempted to do so. Atre was a blatant propagandist for the intellectual enlightenment of the people, but Galsworthy was never a propagandist as he believed in detachment and objectivity while dealing with a social problem, to Atre drama was a means of social reformation not preaching whereas Galsworthy was a preacher not a reformer.

P. K. Atre, who was greatly influenced by the plays of Ibsen, Shaw, Wells and Noel Coward, has depicted different social problems in his plays especially he has mainly focused his attention on the burning problems of the women during his period. In his plays he depicted the problems like the problem of man-woman relationship, the problem of the marriage of educated women, the problems of unmarried mothers, and the place of a woman in the society and the sufferings of Indian women in general etc. The sufferings of both educated and the uneducated women were boundless.

A woman was treated as a subordinate thing in a male dominating society.she was treated as a slave, she was expected to work hard and her work was countless and also valuless. Her duty was to serve and to take care of all the members in the family. They had no any right or the freedom to enjoy their life independently. They were always bound inside the house. On the contrary the men had every sort of freedom. They could enjoy their life as they like. There was no any kind of restriction on their freedom. They had a license to drink and beat their wives and treat them recklessly. They could behave with their wives not less than the beasts. They could fly like a butterfly after any woman they like in order to satisfy their limitless sexual lust. They could never think of their families, wives and the children. Many of the times they became the cause of the destruction of their families.

A woman is always supposed as the weaker section in the society so she tolerates the exploitation and the inhuman treatment given by the men during their whole life but they never oppose their husbands. A woman is the symbol of toleration and the Indian women are recognized for it. They always obey the principles of the great Hindu Culture so they tolerate everything to save their family. But the unfortunate thing is that the men never think and pay their attention at it. That is the tragedy of Indian women.
P. K. Atre, an eminent dramatist of the age, paid his heed at these social problems and the sufferings of the women during his period and he depicted it in his some plays. In his play, ‘Gharabaher’ he has presented the realistic picture of the sufferings of an Indian woman, Nirmala who faces many calamities in her life only because of her husband, Shaunak, who is weak, timid and inefficient. If her husband had been a strong and courageous person to protect her then the tragedy of her life would not have taken place. Her father-in-law, Abasaheb who is at the age of her father but but never treats her like a daughter on the contrary he always tortures her to satisfy his beastlike sexual lust. Her brother-in-law, Nilkanth is the lustiest and wicked fellow always tries to seduce her and when she opposes to their evil intention they make a blot of adultery upon her character for which she helplessly leaves the house. Even Bhayasaheb is also the same type of man who pretends to be a kind person but in reality he is devil in the guise of human being.

Some characters like Padmanabh are good but such good characters suffer because of the evil characters. What actually happens in the society, Atre has employed in his plays. In his play, ‘Udyacha Sansar’ Karuna becomes the victim of the man like Br. Vishram, her husband. His sexual lust and addiction makes the life of Karuna very miserable. He forgets his family responsibility. As a consequence the whole family is disturbed and destroyed. His carelessness spoils his children when he realizes his mistake and tries to repent over it, but it is too late, that his wife Karuna leaves him and the world. Karuna is thus the victim of the male dominant society where she is crushed under heavy grief and agony.

Atre’s ‘Jag Kay Mhanel’ is an excellent comment on the debauchery nature of the men. Deewakar, the husband of Ulka, is a debauchery person, suspects his faithful and chaste wife and therefore the family is destroyed. Ulka suffers a lot due to the evil treatment given to her by her husband, she tolerates to a certain extent but finally she breaks the relationship of husband and wife and decides to leave her husband for sake of the social work. Atre’s ‘Lagnachi Bedi’, though it is a comedy, it presents the social problems realistically. The educated people like Dr. Kanchan forget their responsibility and run after young lady like Rashmi to fulfil his sexual lust. Most of the male characters in the play are full with sexual lust so they forget their family responsibilities and the families are destroyed and the female characters suffer too much. Thus in all his plays, selected for the research study, Atre has depicted the social realism very vividly and realistically.
Like Atre, Galsworthy occupies a conspicuous place as a writer of realistic plays in modern English drama. His plays deal with the problems of contemporary life in a realistic manner. To a large extent his plays deal with the problems of contemporary social life. He deftly combines the realism of a social reformer with the missionary outlook of an idealist. Galsworthy maintains complete impartiality and objectivity in the presentation of social reality. He aims at the representation of contemporary life in its familiar everyday aspects. His presentation and criticism of social questions earned for him the reputation of a powerful social realist in English drama.

John Galsworthy was a social reformer and a philanthropist by temperament. Like P. K. Atre, John Galsworthy also depicted various social problems realistically from his contemporary society in his plays. But his problems are slightly different from the problems depicted by Atre in his plays. Galsworthy was a dramatist of social life and concentrated his attention on the problems in his society. He found his material and inspiration in the world of every day life and affairs. He maintained a realistic attitude in his dramas consistently. He treated the social problems in relation to the individual or the family. He depicted the problems of marriage, sex relationship, labour disputes, administration of law, class or the caste prejudice etc.

Galsworthy’s first play, ‘The Silver Box’ deals with the contemporary crucial problem regarding the administration of law, one law for the rich and another for the poor. The play throws light on how the law can be purchased by the power of wealth and the rich, though commits a crime, sets free whereas, the poor having no any guilt, is punished. This partiality of the contemporary law has been reflected in The Silver Box. The success of this play is that the British Govt. made necessary changes in the administration of law. His, ‘Strife’ is a beautiful indictment of the present industrial society. It presents the strife between capital and the labour and advocates better understanding between these two great forces of industrial life. The play conveys a universal message that any kind of struggle is not good. It leads to the heavy loss and causes great destruction and tremendous sufferings of poor, innocent people and sometimes nothing good comes out of it.

The unnecessary strikes and lock-outs hamper the progress of industrial life and retard the production. Galsworthy has brought to the notice of the world this realistic social problem through his social play- ‘Strife’. His other play ‘Justice’ is a social tragedy. It is a play that deals with the problems of the criminal and the treatment of the society towards such criminals.
Galsworthy shows that a man who commits some theft under very straitend circumstances like Falder should be subjected to the course of law, because it is the society that is mainly responsible for the turning of innocent people into sinners. The judge should have also taken into consideration Falder’s help to a helpless woman in humanitarian point of view. Galsworthy criticizes the contemporary justice in this play. Galsworthy’s ‘Loyalties’ is a play in which the dramatist deals with the subject of caste prejudice or the caste feelings. It is the cry against racial prejudice shown by the Christians to a Jew. The dramatist has employed different kinds of the loyalties in this play such as the loyalty of race, loyalty to friendship, professional loyalty and the loyalty to the married life etc. John Galsworthy’s these four plays that are selected for the study are dealt with the theme of social realism.

The aim of the present research work is to compare and contrast the social ideas and problems depicted in their plays by the Marathi dramatist, P. K. Atre, a Maharashtrian dramatist and John Galsworthy, English dramatist from England. Though, both the dramatists belonged to different countries and the different periods, their aim was same that to present different crucial social problems during their contemporary society.

Atre and Galsworthy, these two dramatists from the realist tradition, focused in their plays on the types of contemporary social problems and their incredible repercussions on the society.

The study aims at clarifying the position of Atre and Galsworthy in the battle of reestablishing better human society on the earth in the midst of snarled social conventions. The purpose is to analyse the dramatic products of Atre and Galsworthy and to find out the causes and natures of human suffering, especially the suffering of the underdog, the downtrodden, the poor, the workers, the women, the suppressed and the oppressed etc. Both Atre and Galsworthy were uncompromising realists who exposed various manifestations of social malevolence in their plays. They kept in mind detachment and objectivity in dealing with social problems. They were not conscious of any desire to solve those those problems in their plays or to effect great reforms. Their only ambition in drama, as in other works, was to present truthfully realistic problems in their contemporary society.

Undoubtedly Atre was the greatest dramatist of his own age. P. K. Atre’s dramatic career was sensational. When he arrived on the Marathi stage, at that time, Marathi stage was on the verge of declining. But it was Atre who created liveliness and gave new direction to the Marathi
drama. It was really the rebirth of Marathi drama after Kirloskar, Kolhatkar and R. G. Gadkari. Marathi drama flourished and became popular all over the world only because of the innumerable efforts made by Atre.

When Atre started writing drama, he faced several problems that the great actors of the time like Balgandharv and others had stopped to play their roles in Marathi drama as they were acting in Marathi Movies, even the taste of the audience was changed so much so that they were also attracted to the Marathi Movies and the popular actors were not ready to play the female role on the stage, these and many other problems were created but despite these problems, Atre continued writing drama and he succeeded in his efforts. When the theatre-goers and the Managers realized the greatness of his plays that Atre has employed and criticized various social problems in the contemporary society, the theatres became housefull with audience. Balmohan Natak Mandal of Puna took painstaking efforts to popularize the plays of Atre. Very honestly Atre gave the whole credit of the success of his plays to Balmohan Natak Mandali and it is the greatness of Atre as a dramatist and his plays.

At the time when Atre was writing plays, the people in the society were not well educated and well civilized and they believed in superstitions and blind faiths, even the educated people were also behaving like uneducated or the savage people and it led to create several problems.

Women of the time were facing several problems they had no any kind of freedom, they were treated as the toys or the slaves. They had to do a lot of work in and outside the home but their work were not counted because woman was a subordinate thing. The society was dominated by the men. In his plays Atre has mainly focused his attention on the problems and the sufferings of the women. Women were exploited and treated harshly by the men. The sufferings of the women were endless. Their place in the home was not better than the dog. In fact, because of the heavy stress and inhuman treatment, they were either leaving home or committed suicide to end the sufferings. The women at the time were under heavy stress and terror. Their mental condition was so horrible.

In his four plays that selected for this research study- Udyacha Sansar, Gharabher, and Jag Kay Mhanel & Lagnachi Bedi, Atre has tackled the realistic social problem especially the problem of the women in his contemporary society. These four plays of Atre are regarded as the serious plays. These plays are related to the domestic problems and social traditions. When Ate wrote these plays, he was deeply influenced by the plays of Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen.
and the British dramatists G. B. Shaw and Noel Coward. These plays make a critical examination of the different problems of women. Traditional domination of husbands over their wives, the painful situations and sufferings of women under the man-made rules is the subject of these plays. Atre presented serious themes in a comic manner. Exaggerated facts and witty dialogues were the strongest weapons of Atre. His plays are life like. Episodes, incidents and stories are common and they are selected from middle class families. In few plays he has used flash back technique which had been developed by Ibsen. Effective dialogues and modern technique was strength of his plays.

Another dramatist selected for this research study is John Galsworthy from England. He was basically a social reformer. Like Atre, Galsworthy too employed burning social problems in his society but his problems were different from that of Atre. Galsworthy presented the problems like injustice, class and caste discrimination, the problems of the workers, the disputes between employer and employee the struggle between Jews and Christians etc. he depicted the familiar aspects of every day life in a natural manner. He exposed the dramatic possibilities of the common place. He minutely observed life around him and tried to create in his plays an atmosphere of absolute truth. He endeavoured to depict the realistic picture of society and its problems. But he did not hold any view on social or moral progress of mankind. He analysed problems and institutions, particularly English ones, from the point of view of a liberal compassionate, upper middle-class man. His civilized social criticism reflects the virtues of such a mind. He observed complete impartiality in the treatment of social realism, an incorruptible lover of truth, he attempted to shape all his plots and problems with the gretest impartiality, allowing both sides of their opinions and throwing light on their ideas in all possible way. All his plays exhibit the same features- the omnipresence of a fundamental social problems expressed in a severely natural manner, without straining of situations or exaggeration of final issues, a corresponding realism of dialogue, leading at times to an apperent ordinariness, a native kindliness of heart added to the sternness of the true tragic artist and a complete absence of sentimentalism even when pitiful scenes are introduced. He tried to draw the attention of the people in the society to the problems through his plays like- Strife, The Silver Box, Justice and Loyalties.

As a writer of realistic plays, Galsworthy very skillfully reproduced of absolute reality. His plays are solid and honest with no ornamentation, no claptrap. His plays are treated as the
problem plays as he raises the problems in his plays and leaves them audience to answer. In ‘Strife’ Galsworthy draws attention to the wrongs done to the labor community by depicting its sorrows and sufferings and taking the strife in the limits of the workers capacity to endure. The play shows the conflict between the forces of capital and the labor, in the clash between these two forces, each led by extremists, thousands of families or poor labourers suffer untold hardships. The Silver Box presents the helplessness of the poor which leads to their victimization that cause great trouble and distress to them and the law and its ministers are of little use to them. In this play one can imagine what suffering awaits Mrs. Jones and her poor children after the play is over. The play reveals the truth of the old adage that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. The society with its ominous invisible presence decides that the rich shall be preferred to the poor. Justice presents the evils of prison life especially the evils of solitary confinement, in this play there is not a single evil character, but once the spirit of the law has been invoked, the wheels of the machine of justice grind Falder to bits. In this play Galsworthy shows the cruelty of the English judicial system and the heartless destruction of innocent lives that causes without presenting a single villain. It deals with the situation of a weak willed young man who forges a cheque in order to get money to help his unhappy married lover to find a new life. In this play, Galsworthy vividly exposes the inefficiency of the administration of justice and the evils in jail administration. It is conceived as an ecstasy of rage against human oppression. The play Loyalties shows the clashing loyalties of various characters—loyalty to one’s race, to one’s friends, to one’s family and to one’s profession. In this play Galsworthy succeeded in expounding the very idea of social realism. The play deals with anti-jewish feeling and discrimination against racial minority.

Atre and Galsworthy were witty realists who loved to present people with the absurdity of their conventional way of thinking. Their satires range widely over such real subjects as heroism in war, physicians and their power over life and death, religion, the battle of the sexes, education, justice, class prejudices and labour problems. In their plays they have combined realistic moral problems with ironic tone and paradoxes. Discussions and intellectual acrobatics are the basis of their drama. Although Atre and Galsworthy’s plays focus on real life ideas and issues, they are vital and absorbing, enlivened by memorable characterizations, a brilliant command over language and dazzling wit. They were successful in recasting the realist tradition in drama.
Both Atre and Galsworthy have drawn their characters from their observations of persons around them. Their characters are, therefore, living human beings of flesh and blood. They are all Indian and English men and women having the common human virtues and frailties. They have only transferred living men and women from the home, the office, the factory, the law court and the street to their stage. They both have created a large number of living characters in their plays. They know how to tell the good story and create dramatic situations. Their dialogues are crisp and witty and contribute to the development of plot and character. They know how to create suspense and a proper atmosphere in a play. They have clear-cut theory of drama and they have faithfully followed it in their plays. All this makes them the most polished dramatic craftsmen of their age.

Both Atre and Galsworthy were the realists. Their plays are based on the real life situations that they saw around them in India and in England. Their characters, their themes and their dialogues are based on the life that they have seen around them. They were so truthful to the contemporary life in India and England that it can be rightly said that their plays can be taken to be the social chronicles of India and England of their time.

Both Atre and Galsworthy were obsessed with the thought of social reformation, both were social reformers so their inner mind did allow them to keep quite and watch the sufferings, misery, helplessness, squeezing and the exploitation of the downtrodden, poor workers and women. Both have presented the realistic social problems in their society. Though the problems were different their aim was same that to throw light on these social problems and bring them to the notice of the people. They succeeded in their efforts and certainly the people in their society might have learnt something good from these plays.

Both Atre and Galsworthy were greatly impressed and influenced by the plays of Henrik Ibsen, a Norwegian dramatist. Both have tackled the burning social problems in their own society, they have given new direction to the realistic drama in their own countries and tried to show a good path to people in their society. This research study examines the concept of love, sex, women’s status, workers problems as an independent human being in a given social and family order and their right for self development, the institution of marriage, the distinction between Indian and Western cultures, the problems of educated unmarried adult women, the problems of workers, legal system, poverty, sufferings of poor, social injustice, conflict and the concept of family in India and Europe with reference to the domination of male over the female.
Both P. K. Atre and John Galsworthy have very faithfully portrayed Indian and British life in their plays. They do invent but they have only recorded what they saw around them in their own societies. They do not make their world beautiful or strange, their world is familiar and real world. So, from the plays of both the dramatists- P. K. Atre and John Galsworthy, one can truthfully reconstruct the Indian and British life as it was in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

The purpose and the function of Chapter No. 1 is to discuss briefly the hypothesis, significance and the scope and limitations of the present study, to define clearly the objectives of the study, review of literature, to have a brief survey of the development of the form of drama in India as well as in England and to have a brief introduction to the lives and works of P. K. Atre and John Galsworthy.

The purpose and the function of the second chapter, is to discuss briefly the method to be used in the present study. This chapter as far as possible defines clearly the specific method to be used to carryout the proposed study. Thus the first two chapters provide the necessary critical background and the theoretical framework to the present study.

The main objective and the purpose of the present study are to analyse and interprete the social realism of the selected plays of the two selected playwrights: P. K. Atre and John Galsworthy. A sincere attempt is made to achieve these objectives in the Chapter No. 3 and 4, in which the four selected plays of P. K. Atre in Marathi and four selected plays of John Galsworthy in English are discussed respectively.

Another significant objective of the present study is to have a comparative perspective of the eight selected plays by the two selected playwrights with reference to the social realism of the plays. A sincere attempt is made to achieve these objectives in Chapter No. 5.

Chapter No. 6, the present one, is an attempt to have a sort of conclusion of the present study, though broadly speaking it is an epilogue rather than conclusion because in literature there is always scope for further studies. Great literary works are like Gold mines, the more you dig, the more you get and hence Chapter No. 6 may be regarded as the epilogue of the present study.

In this context following observations are made:

First there are certain common techniques used by P. K. Atre and John Galsworthy in their plays selected for the study, especially the use of plot, action, conflict, character, dialogue and
language. However, they are used basically to interpret the modern realities of human life. A detailed comparative view of their techniques is already discussed in Chapter No. 5.

In the context of the social realism of the selected plays of Atre and Galsworthy, as discussed above in the present chapter, we find suppression and oppression of women in the plays of Atre and social injustice, caste prejudice and conflict in the plays of Galsworthy are the dominant themes tackled by the playwrights.

In the first chapter Introduction, three possibilities were mentioned while discussing the hypothesis of the study:

1. The two playwrights have entirely different views of human life or human predicament.
2. The two playwrights have something common and they share to a limited extent a partial view of human predicament.
3. The vision of life or the concept of human predicament of both the playwrights is mostly identical and they have almost the same view of the human life. Obviously enough, the present study reveals that the first hypothesis is entirely wrong and the second hypothesis is also partial. The study reveals that the third hypothesis is very significant and relevant. In this context P. K. Atre and John Galsworthy have penetrated deeply into the human life past and present. Their perception of human life reveals in their selected plays.