Chapter III

THE SOCIAL REALISM IN THE SELECTED PLAYS OF P. K. ATRE

Atre and Marathi Theatre:

The story of the Marathi stage is one of supreme dedication. It is the creation of writers and playwrights who were gifted with an extraordinary sense of social awareness. It arose out of a hard struggle with social realities. Ultimately it became the most dynamic force moulding the outlook of the people, both socially and politically. Drama has been used in Maharashtra in the traditional way for the spiritual uplift of the people and at the same time it has acted as the most powerful weapon against social, economic and political evils. The Marathi stage conjured up a world of different ‘rasas’, a characteristic not generally shared by the other parts of India. The dramatic portrayal of the various rasas touched the hearts of the people. The representation of intriguing situations sometimes from the Puranas and other mythological lore had the intended effect as the immediate allusions were always to the political events of the day. They still retain their influence over Marathi literature as model works of literary creation. The striking feature of the Marathi stage is its wonderful combination of the writer, actor and musician. Maharashtra was fortunate enough in having social thinkers like Agarkar, Kelkar and Savarkar and political agitators like Khadilkar and Wamanrao Joshi who turned to drama and naturally their works became powerful carriers of their ideals. Musicians like Bapurao Kolhatkar and Bal-Gandharva also devoted to drama and the theatre drew the best out of these wizards.

It is generally held that the Marathi theatre was born in 1843. There are references to drama, actors and the stage in ancient Vaishnava literature; and there is also evidence that mythological plays were staged in Goa even in the middle of the 18th century. ‘Sangeet Saubhadra’ was the song-studded mythological play by Annasaheb Kirloskar. Khadilkar’s ‘Keechak-Wadh’ was a play ostensibly dealing with the life of Pandavas. His ‘Manapman’ was based on the inequality between the classes. Mama Warerkar’s ‘Sanyasacha Sansar’ dealt with the problem of enforced conversion by Christian missionaries in India. His ‘Hach Mulacha Baap’ is satirizing the evils of the dowry system. His ‘Satteche Gulam’ introduced realistic properties after western models. His ‘Turungachya Darat’ dealt with the theme of untouchability. In 1932, a group of intellectuals started the Natyamanwantar with a production of ‘Andhalyanchi Shala’.

The first phase in Marathi drama has been considered from Kolhatkar to Ram Ganesh Gadakari. The great literary craftsmen, in Marathi drama, like Kolhatkar, Natyacharya
Khadilkar, Kirloskar, Deol, Khareshastri and Ram Ganesh Gadakari had contributed in this phase. However, Gadakari was the most efficient playwright and the leading figure of the time whose plays impressed greatly on P. K. Atre. Atre treated Gadakari as his master. Gadakari had dominated Marathi stage for a long time and his plays were heartily welcomed by the people in the contemporary society. Gadakari’s plays became successful on the stage because of his style, subject matter and expression. He had observed human mind minutely which he depicted in his plays. His popular plays- Premsanyas, Punyaprabhav, Rajsanyas, Ekach Pyala and Bhavbandhan, are dealt with chastity, culture-worshipping and the realistic picture of female life. According to V. L. Kulkarni and Dr. Mrs. Charushila Gupte, Gadakari’s humor was based on the pun and physical disability. Though Atre was impressed by his humor, Atre’s humor was different from the humor of Gadakari.

Mamasaheb Varerkar was another great contemporary Marathi dramatist of the time, who had resigned his Government service in the Post Office for the sake of the theatre. He tried to introduce some new modern techniques in Marathi drama. In his play called, ‘Sansar’ (1932) the female role, for the first time, at that time, was played by the female character. This was the greatest success of Varerkar as a dramatist. In the opinion of V. S. Khandekar, Varerkar’s drama is the mixture of realism and romanticism, whereas D. R. Gomkale finds an influence of Kolhatkar’s drama on Varerkar. Apart from this, there is a similarity in the plays of Varerkar and Henrik Ibsen, a Norwegien dramatist. In his plays Varerkar has tackled several contemporary problems like- Untouchable irradiation Movement, Traditions in the Hindu Culture, Ludicrousness in Excise, Dowry Problems in Hindu Society, Oppression of the Hindu Women, Destruction of the Family due to the Gambling etc., these and many other realistic problems prevailed in the contemporary Hindu society have been depicted by Varerkar. He was influenced and impressed by the plays of English dramatist, G. b. Shaw; therefore, Varerkar depicted hot tempered, aggressive and cantankerous women in his plays.

After the year 1920, Marathi drama was declined gradually. The old plays of Khadilkar, Gadakari and others did not make any effect on the audience. There was nothing new in their plays. In addition to this, the taste of the audience was changed. They were tired of the same subjects in the old plays. They wanted something new. These playwrights should have changed their techniques as per the time, but unfortunately they could not do it. As a consequence, the taste of the plays was deteriorated and therefore the audience stopped to see the Marathi plays. In
addition to this the Western plays had made an encroachment. The dramatic companies were
closed and the popular actors of the time, turned to the Marathi Movies. As a result, Marathi
drama was on the verge of decline. To be or not to be was the question before Marathi drama. In
fact, Marathi drama was essentially in the need of such a great dramatist, who could not only
survive the Marathi drama from the bad patch but also glorify it at the same time.
The Unsuccessful Plays on the Stage: - During 1920 to 1930 many plays of the great dramatists
were failed on the stage i.e. Mama Varerkar’s ‘Turu ngachya Darat, Kargrahan, Sansar, Sonyacha
Kalas, Sadabandiwan etc.’ There was a great influence of the Western called ‘Moliere’ on the
Marathi drama, but these Marathi dramatists could not follow the humorous technique of
Moliere, so the Marathi dramatists failed on the stage.
In the words of Shri Keshavrao Date, Marathi theatre had become orphan due to the
encroachment of the Marathi films. Even Shri Vasantrao Desai and Baburao Joshi are agreeing
with this. Great Marathi dramatic company’s like- The Gandharva Natak Mandal, Balavant
Yashavant Natak Mandal and Lalitkaladarshan Natak Mandal were closed and they turned to
the movies. Prabhat Film Company produced the pictures like ‘Ayodhecha Raja’,
‘Mayamachhindra’, ‘Raja Harishchandra’ and not only the people but the actors also ran to the
picture.
In 1930, Marathi theatre was completely collapsed and the place of the theatre was taken
by Marathi film. Several reasons such as, the encroachment of the films, lack of new techniques,
problem of the female role, internal disputes in the dramatic companies etc. were told regarding
the decline of the Marathi drama.
Women and the Theatre:- The role of the female character, at that time, was performed on the
stage by the male character. The actors like Balgandharva, Master Dinanath and Baburao
Kolhatkar were performing the female roles on the stage. But they stopped to perform the female
role as they turned to the Marathi films. If the female had been played by the female characters,
the situation of the theatre would have been different, but unfortunately it did not happen so. The
influence of Bernard Shaw and Henrik Ibsen inspired females to perform the female roles on the
stage. In this connection Shri A. V. Kulkarni quotes in his book, ‘Marathi Rangbhoomi,’ ‘the
mixture of the males with the females in such pleasure parties are not at all desirable, and
although it is not true that the females can act the parts of women better than males. The
separation of males from women on such occasion is necessary in order to improve the tone of morality in the members of the theatrical parties'.

The period from 1920 to 1945 was devoid of noteworthy changes in life and literature in Maharashtra. At best, there were some expansions. Educational programs included the lower classes and women on larger scale cities began to be industrialized social reforms were identified with the clashes between castes. The joint family system received a blow. Journalism became popular art was viewed as a means of entertainment and instruction which could be just a propaganda. Poetry was popularized by its public recitals. The college girl became the focus of poetry and fiction. A young mans love for a girl was often mixed with his love for the cause of country and both being superficial, a happy, solution was easy to manipulate. Most of the literary works in this period can be explained in terms of its milieu and age as there was hardly any great talent and in the field of drama there was none.

All the drama companies were in financial difficulties. They could not attract new talented actors nor could they get dramatists of worth to give them their new plays. The only actors of some distinction who made their career during this period were Chintamanrao Kolhatkar and Nana Pathak. Attempts were made by non professionals to form theatrical troupes. They were supported by educated middle class men and women. In 1932, there was an amateur group called the Radio stars which lasted for a year. In 1933, another troupe called the Natyamanvantar tried to present modern European realistic plays of ideas. It opened with S.V. Vartak’s ‘The School for Blinds’, in 1933, this play presents a middle class ethical problems unfolding the past of its characters but ultimately it provides a sentimental compromise.

Since drama had become only a form of entertainment, it did not exploit the special advantages of the theatrical art was not worse than drama but cheaper. It was the film, the Marathi film which gave everything that the Marathi drama gave. Spectacular settings, rich costumes and songs, but this worsened the already deteriorating condition of the Marathi theatre. During the period of 1933-34, the theatre activities were deteriorating while on the other side the films were attracting the audience with their artificial love affairs. Thus along with the films, the factors like the changes in taste, the change in social customs and traditions invaded the Marathi theatre. It was during such deteriorating condition of the Marathi theatre that P.K. Atre wrote his plays and gave a new birth to the Marathi theatre.
After World War Second, the economical condition of the people was changed prosperity was prevailed everywhere in the society. People wanted to spend time and money on entertainment, Atre recognized what the people wanted and he produced the farcical and some serious plays alternatively.

GHRABAHER

P. K. Atre wrote ‘Gharabaher’ in 1934. It appeared immediately after ‘Sastang Namaskar’. In Gharabaher Atre presents a social and moral problem which deals with a life of educated middle-class Hindu woman. It was an attempt in a new direction. The story of the play deals with Nirmala’s life. Nirmala is a modern woman. She is educated and she expects something from her husband. In the preface of ‘Jag Kay Mhanel’ Atre writes, “In ‘Gharabaher’, I have started to depict the character of a woman, who struggles for economical freedom. It was my first attempt…In ‘Udyacha Sansar’, I have painted the same painful and heart breaking picture with great courage, people liked it. But I was not satisfied. So after such a lapse of time, when I took pen in my hand, I am doing the same.”

Atre was not a philosopher but he realizes the status of Hindu women in the contemporary society. He is aware of the fact that a role of woman in the Hindu society is important as a mother and not as a wife. Hindu woman is duty bound. He considers all these facts when he writes Gharabaher. Atre presents Nirmala as a protagonist as she is the central character of this play, eventhough there is a male domination in the society. Here he presents the realistic picture of sufferings of the Indian women. He wants to attack on the man-made rules, male domination and the oppression and suppression of the ideal Hindu woman by their husbands. After ten years, Nirmala, as a typical Hindu woman, tolerates a lot and finally decides to leave her husband and son. When she does it, again she comes in difficulty and new conflict starts in her mind. Finally she accepts to join her family on the ground of love for her son. Hence Gharabaher is a representation of day- to- day Hindu life. Hence, though the title of the play is ‘Gharabaher’, the purpose of the the play is different. Here Atre maintains the concept of Hindu family and traditional Hindu woman.

The play ‘Gharabaher’ opens with the conversation between Abasaheb and Nageshwar. Abasaheb looks anxious and angry. Nageshwar speaks about Nirmala and her bad character and
objectionable behavior with Padmanabh. By this talk Nageshwar inflames Abasaheb’s anger. He makes various charges against Nirmala. Nageshwar gives free confession of his written love letters to Padmanabh. These letters are shabby and unreadable. Nageshwar requests Abasaheb politely to consider all these charges and find out whether there is any truth in it. Abasaheb, in angry mood, calls Nilkanth, his son. He comes out and Abasaheb gives him an idea of their talk in brief. Nageshwar gives a bundle of letters to Nilkanth and asks him to read them by which he would come to know about his ‘Vahini’ (sister-in-law) in details. Abasaheb orders him to burn them immediately and suggests him to destroy the evidence of Nirmala’s misconduct. He calls out Shaunak, the husband of Nirmala. He comes and asks why he was called. Abasaheb explains the content of their talk and speaks about his final decision. He explains to him that he had decided to drive Nirmala out of the house.

Shaunak becomes restless and asks Abasaheb what was the reason for taking such an unexpected decision without his consent. Abasaheb explains the cause in vague terms and says that Nirmala met Padmanabh several times and she had developed immoral relations with him by which reputation of the family is besmirched. Finally Shaunak accepts the plan decided by his father and brother. Furious Nirmala comes out and asks Shaunak to stop the nonsense. Nirmala blames him and says that he is shirking his responsibility. Because of his blindness towards her, he is not in a position to decide what is right and what is wrong.

Now Nirmala is bold. She gathers courage and tries to expose Abasaheb’s hypocrisy. Now she decides to rebel against all. Nirmala speaks boldly and says that during the previous ten years she had suffered a great deal of in that house. Though she was a daughter-in-law, still she had strength enough to protect herself. She tries to explain the situation and says that there is no proof of my misconduct and it is wrong to accuse me needlessly. Here enters Padmanabh and tries to explain the sacred and noble character of Nirmala. He tells that he had been considering her as his sister and nothing else. I have developed my relations as brother and sister then how could he behave like a devil with her as you think and charge. Here he explains the real fact of letters and the novel he has written. He makes a charge that Nageshwar and his son might have stolen the handscript of the novel. All this is in vain Shaunak too is unable to give protection to Nirmala. Now bold and furious Nirmala says that I am not a thing of pity and I will not bow my head against this evil. She becomes rebellious and plucks her Mangalsutra and throws it towards Abasaheb.
Shaunak tries to comfort Nirmala. Shaunak asks her, “Oh! Nirmala dear, where will you go? Explain where?” (Page no.40) Nirmala explains boldly, ‘Gharabaher’, (out of house.) (Page no.40)

The second act of the play describes the pitiful condition of Minakshi, a widow, who lives in the house of Bhaiyasaheb. He is a wellknown lawyer and a member of Municipality. He seems to be gentleman outwardly, but in reality, he is wicked and has evil intentions in mind about women. Minakshi tries to find some solace in the company of Nirmala. Nirmala explains her mental condition to her and her inability to decide what is to be done. Bhaiyasaheb enters and speaks with Nirmala. When they are speaking, Padmanabhb enters and asks permission to meet Nirmala. Nirmala explains her sorrowful condition to Padmanabhb. In his speech, Padmanabhb blames Hinduism and Hindu culture. He says, ‘If there is an advertisement in other country about Hindu society, it would be intended only for the betterment of Hindu males and their lives.’ He talks on present condition of the Hindu women, their slavery and the treatment given by the males to them.

At the same time he warns Nirmala not to stay with Bhaiyasaheb. He is nothing but an evil incarnation, a poisonous serpent. Nirmala does not agree with this idea. Padmanabhb then explains the cause of his arrival there to Bhaiyasaheb. He says, ‘young man, just wait. I don’t want to hurt your feelings. Only I can say that, I have protected Nirmala and provided her a shelter not to oblige her but as a matter of duty, humanity compels me to do so.’ (p.-67) Now Bhaiyasaheb starts speaking about love, man woman relationship and sympathy. When Bhaiyasaheb goes away, Nilkanth, her brother-in-law enters. Nirmala is shocked. Nilkanth requests her to pardon him or give him punishment about his past guilt. He requests her not to stay in this house. He says that he is ready to take all responsibility and ready to provide her money, shelter and protection and all sorts of help. Further he refers to the views of the people. He says that people call her as the mistress of Bhaiyasaheb. When she listens this comment, she looses her mental temper. She says him furiously, ‘go away from here, otherwise I will bite your throat and kill you’. (p.72) Nilkanth goes away. Nirmala asks Shankar to close the gate and keep watch on her.

Third act of the play opens in Bhaiyasaheb’s house. He is discussing with Nirmala. He tells her that Shaunak had come to meet her and he wanted to speak with her. At first Nirmala refuses to talk with him. Shaunak enters there. Nirmala does not utter a single word. She
demands marriage invitation card from him. Shaunak appeals her not to be so heartless. Finally he requests her to come back and join the family at least for the sake of her son. He says, ‘I know well the wrong which I have done to you but now I request you to forgive me for it’. (p.-76) Nirmala is not in a mood to forgive him. She disdains the concept of house and asks, ‘house, whose house?’, (p.-77) and gives her frank opinion about Hindu house. Shaunak assures her that he is not taking her back in the hell of his father’s house. He promises her to create a new house, he says, ‘let us create a new house, entirely ours, a heaven on the earth’. (p.-78)

Now Nirmala is in dilemma. It seems very difficult for her to join the family. She asks him, ‘what people will say, if I will be there in your house, your entire dream of happiness will shatter to pieces because of my sin.’ (p.-78) Shaunak says, ‘you are really an embodiment of piety.’ (p.-79) Nirmala explains her opinion and the philosophy of life and speaks about qualities which she expects from him and explains the details of the wrong committed by her father-in-law. When Shaunak listens about him, he is shocked. Now action of the play takes a turn. Padmanabh meets her and tells about Ashok, her son. He explains her real duty of woman especially, a mother. He says Indian woman stands as a mother first and wife afterwards. Finally she decides to return the house and re-unite with her husband and son and the rest of the family. Thus the play ends with a happy note, though the protagonist of the play suffers in her family life.

Social Realism

Atre, though generally interested in comedies and light plays, in some of his plays, he is more interested in social problems and life of women and their position in this society. The concept of Hindu family and a traditional Hindu woman and her sentiments is the centre of his problem plays. To Mi Navhech, Udyacha Sansar, Lagnachi Bedi, Jag Kay Mhanel and Gharabaher concentrate on these problems. Atre selects problems, which are serious and broad based. These are not temporary problems. The woman in present society lives in a traditional trap of religion and customs and has to face various problems. Her husband treats her as his possession or the property, and treats her always as subordinate thing. Atre considers it as the subject of his plays and tries to find out some ways for the betterment of women’s life.

Hindu woman always suffers from her age old problems. Nirmala is the type of such woman who is in a dilemma, whether to keep to the traditional ways and old values or to revolt against these and to start a new way of life. The idea of woman’s rebellion against traditional values was shocking to contemporary Hindu society. Nirmala tries to rebel against established
principles and leaves her house, husband and child and all relations. Shaunak her husband does not prove to be the man she had expected. It explains the true foundation of the Hindu marriage system and man-woman relationship.

Atre is the true product of Hindu mind and Hindu philosophy. Though he expects that husband should look upon wife as equal to him and treat her as living human being. He should consider her feelings, passions and emotions. Still he does not want to give up all morals and traditions. Hence he brings Nirmala back and reunites with her family not as a wife but as a mother. Atre makes an appeal to her motherhood. Hence, though the title of the play is 'Gharabaher', his real intention is to bring Nirmala back. Atre, as a true product of Indian society, realizes the fact that Nirmala will not come back, if there is no concrete reason. So when Atre speaks about Nirmala's emancipation and her development and about social progress, he does not violate Indian culture and motherhood. As a moralist and a social thinker, Atre wishes to solve the problem and re-unites her family and upholds the Indian culture.

Gharabaher is a modern realistic play. Nirmala is an educated woman and she expects something from her husband. She symbolizes an awakening on the part of the modern woman. Nirmala, after ten years sufferings, realizes that her husband is unable to protect her from the clutches of her father-in-law and her brother-in-law, who always try to violate her chastity. Nirmala becomes angry and refuses to stay with Shaunak, who refuses to shoulder the responsibility of her. But when she comes out of her house, she has found herself in a strange situation. People, having traditional faith and beliefs, will start criticizing her which she can’t tolerate. The characters of Nirmala, Shaunak, bhaiyaasaheb and Minakshi appear to be real throughout the play. The things that happen to them are things that happen to us.

The play 'Gharabaher' was first performed on the stage on 20th oct. 1934 by Balmohan natak Mandali at Vijayanand Theatre, Pune and its criticism by D. R. Saraswate and G. B. Nirantar was published in ‘Dnyan Prakash’, ‘The play achieved great success and popularity at Mumbai and then Pune. For the first time the people experienced the word ‘Housefull’ at the time of the performance of ‘Gharabaher’.5 The success of this play was not because of the humor consisted in it but because of the serious situation and satire depicted in it. The play created new actors and Balmohan Natak Mandali became popular in Maharashtra. Even atre admits that his plays became popular only because of Balmohan Natak Mandali. As atre wished that he should be a great Marathi dramatist, so the actors of Balmohan expected to be the great
actors. Atre sincerely thanks Mr. Bapurao Mane who played the female role in his plays and because of it his plays became popular. Atre could never forget the gratitude for Bapurao Mane. Mane made the female characters immortal in Atre’s plays. He played the role of Nirmala in *Gharabaher*, Karuna in *Udyacha Sansar* and Ulka in *Jag Kay Mhanel*. Indeed, so long as Bapurao Mane was there on the Marathi stage, there was no any necessity of a woman to play the role of female character.

Undoubtedly, the play *Gharabaher* made Atre immortal as a dramatist in the history of Marathi drama, likewise it made some characters immortal like Jadhav, Nagesh Joshi, Anant Dhumal, Shankar Apte and Hansraj Korade. Mr. Jadhav played the role of Nayana in Udyacha Sansar unforgettable. After the 100th performance of Gharabaher, the English Newspaper called, ‘Evening News’ expressed its opinion preciously in the following words: “Those responsible for the performance, are very naturally also very highly, elected over what they rightly describe as an unprecedented honor to a stage production, for it is in fact, the first instance in the long history of the Indian stage and brief history of the broadcasting, of such a compliment being paid to a dramatic performance”.6

Nirmala, the wife of Shaunak, is very virtuous lady but her husband is weak and irresponsible, who never pays his any attention to the plight of his wife, Nirmala. The brother-in-law and the father-in-law of Nirmala are, therefore, always looking forward of the opportunity to make her sexual harassment. She does not like their obscene look. When these two wolves, Abasaheb and Padmanabh, realize that they can not succeed in their efforts of making Nirmala sexually harassed, then they prepare a plan of getting Nirmala out of house by attacking on her character that she is not virtuous but she is adulterous. Till this moment she had tolerated everything, but she could not tolerate the blot on her character. Therefore, the helpless Nirmala decides to leave the house. Her weak husband was there but he could not protect his wife.

‘Nirmala’, according to D. R. Gomkale, ‘is the central figure in the play. Right from opening of the play till the end, all the actions are rotated around her. She is the spring of all actions in the play. She is totally lonely and helpless, unfortunate and miserable woman in the selfish and wicked world of Abasaheb, Bhaiyasheb, Nageshwar and Nilkanth’.7 These wicked and sexually hungry wolves always keep an eye on their victim in the society and their victim is always weak, helpless and unfortunate poor shelterless woman. The play exposes how the beast like people drag a victim in their net, inhumanly attack on it and get a devilish pleasure in it. We
are constantly aware that the grief of Nirmala in this play is boundless. Her struggle against the self centered attitude of men shines her personality, but in this struggle there is a heavy strain on her mind. In the first act, Atre has used Ibsenian dramatic technique and created the struggle in the life of Nirmala. Therefore, she wins the sympathy of the readers and the audience.

Nirmala speaks to Abasaheb in such a way as if, instead of words, it seems the fire comes out of her mouth. This is her controversial attitude makes her personality glorified like the highest peak of the mountain. But to the next moment, this furious woman becomes cool like a snail and earnestly requests to her sinful father-in-law, not as a daughter-in-law or the wife of Shaunak, but as a mother of her son, forgive her. But Abasaheb doesn’t move from his decision. Nirmala doesn’t want to depart from her lovable son. This furious Nirmala never becomes ‘Nora’ of Ibsen. Nirmala gets out of home not to avenge against the injustice done on her, neither future nor hope in life, helpless Nirmala, decides to commit suicide and finish her miserable life. Nirmala’s this grief is rightly expressed by V. S. Khandekar, “Nirmala’s path in life is full with red lanterns of the traditional chastity and economical dependence. How could she protect herself from the hungry euptic wolves who think that a helpless woman is the property of exploitation?” At this stage, Nirmala realizes suicide is the only panacea to get rid of the grief. G. B. Nirantar says, “The grief-stricken Nirmala does not think where and whose house she has come in. It means, a woman who lives with Bhaiyasaheb, is not real Nirmala, but her corpse.” In fact, in one way she has committed a suicide.

We don’t like the extra discussion of Bhaiyasaheb in the second act, because our attention from the first act is completely concentrated around the plight of Nirmala who is the central character in the play. Prof. Prabhakar Pujari says that out of utter frustration and severe grief, Nirmala behaves like a mad woman. This dejected and collapsed Nirmala meets Minakshi on the way who takes her to the house of Bhaiyasaheb.

Shaunak, weak and inefficient husband of Nirmala, is her greatest agony. He is so timid and coward that he has no courage to open his mouth in front of his father on behalf of his wife, Nirmala. Nirmala stays at home, not only for the sake of her husband, but for the sake of her darling son, Ashok. Once Shaunak tries to request his father to pardon Nirmala for her guilt, but it increases the wrath of Nirmala so much so that she cuts the sacred thread around her neck that is Mangalsutra and throws towards him. Shaunak, being timid, watches it speechlessly with open eyes the suffering of his wife and does not help her. Abasaheb and Bhaiyasaheb always talk
sarcastically about the inefficiency of Shaunak that adds in the grief of Nirmala. The support of her husband, which she had expected, was totally collapsed. Shaunak was good for nothing to her. He was only the husband for the sake of kumkum tilak. This weak and inefficient husband of Nirmala is only the cause of her suffering.

In the third act Shaunak comes to meet Nirmala at the house of Bhaiyasaheb but Nirmala does not want to see his face as he had already lost all faith as a husband. Now there was no any place in the life of Nirmala for him. Her life becomes barren and meaningless. She is orphan in her husband’s house. ‘Nirmala’s grief is limitless, her husband alone is not only responsible for it but her father-in-law, Abasaheb, is also equally responsible’, says Shriram Sapre.10 ‘Her husband Shaunak is not only weak but wicked also’, says G. B. Nirantar.11 Nirmala has observed minutely the nature of Shaunak for ten years; therefore she never speaks well for him. Nirmala’s comment about her husband in the last part of the first act is very interesting. She says, ”I don’t want to see your face, I hate you” (page - 40). It is the reaction of her chaste and honest mind. We could understand the state of her mind while saying so. She has to use such harsh words only because of his timid and coward nature. Her mind is full with sorrow. Even her fate does not allow her to express the grief by way of tears. She wanders recklessly suppressing heavy grief in her mind. She is thus the victim of our defective social system. Her struggle between life and death is only because of her inefficient husband. Her heart-rending cry makes the readers and audience introvert.

Atre has depicted a realistic picture of socially weak and oppressed Indian woman in his play ‘Gharabather’. Indian women got different vision after 1920. Indian women started coming out of the traditional concept of stove and child (chul & mul). Gradually they became aware that they had been the victim of male dominating culture. Suffering of the women was the subject of contemporary novels and stories. The dramatists in this period understood the miseries and the clashes in the life of married women, they depicted the conflicts in the lives of married women in their plays, instead of housewife, a married woman was treated as the slave by the males. In the third act, Nirmala tries to bring to the notice of her husband the reality of married woman, she says, “After all I am your wife, I have married to you in front of God.”(page- 34), but it doesn’t make any effect on her husband. Atre was well acquainted with such conditions of the contemporary married women in India, which he depicted in this play.
The difference between Ibsen’s Nora and Atre’s Nirmala is that, Nora is courageous where as Nirmala is timid and weak and being a typical Indian woman, she is trapped into the cultural restrictions, therefore, for ten years she tolerated inhuman tortures of her father-in-law and brother-in-law. She is the most stoical woman, when Nora leaves home, she cuts all the relations with her husband and children and decides not to take any help by her husband Helmer in future, but Nirmala returns home for the sake of her child, after all she is helpless mother.

Nirmala is the representative of such typical Indian women who are treated as slaves in this male dominating society, they are looked down upon the males and the males think that a woman is valueless and the subordinate thing. She is nothing but a slipper in foot. Indian woman has no place in the world of man. Atre’s Nirmala is an excellent example of such typical Indian woman who is cultural amassed.

Atre has thrown a light on the unlimited sexual lust of men in this play. There are six male characters out of them; four male characters believe strongly that the woman is the source of sexual enjoyment. Men get devilish pleasure in victimizing, exposing and mudslinging the chastity of the women. In fact, Atre has depicted this social wickedness very carefully in ‘Gharabaher’. Abasaheb, Nilkanth, Nageshwar and Bhaiyasaheb are the cruel beasts in this play. Their inhuman devilish act made them to forget humanity. Abasaheb is the live example of lusty man who tries to make sexual exploitation of his own daughter-in-law. In the third act, when Shaunak comes to the house of Bhaiyasaheb to bring home his wife, Nirmala, she tells him the evil act of his father. Nageshwar is equally wicked like Abasaheb. He always drinks heavily. He tells Abasaheb, “I have enjoyed my life in youth”. (page-15)

Both Nageshwar and Nilkanth are the part and parcel of the lusty world of men. With the help of Minakshi, Bhaiyasaheb tries to trap Nirmala into his lusty net. At the end of the second act, Nilkanth says Nirmala that she is the mistress of Bhaiyasaheb. In the beginning of the first act, we notice that, though Abasaheb is married four times and has become widower, but still he thinks to marry again. It indicates that how he is consumed with sexual lust. Even though there is no immoral relationship between Nirmala and Padmanabh, she blamed as adulterous. They all consider that a woman is the thing of sexual enjoyment.

When the play Gharabaher was first performed at Vijayanand Theatre, Pune, both Atre and Balmohan Natak Manadali got tremendous popularity. Mumbai Nabhovani had made its Radio-Session in the following words, “If you have liked me and read the advertisement column
of your newspapers, you will have noticed that our enterprising broadcasting authorities are proposing to put Marathi play *Gharabaher* or *The Deserted Wife*”. Undoubtedly, it is said that, the play completed hundred performances in succession and the hundredth performance became house full only because of its literary greatness. According to weekly,’ Nirbhid’, ‘the play becomes effective because of its language and dialogues. The pungent dialogues of Abasaheb, Nirmala and Padmanabh make the audience spellbound’. There is a literary status to the dialogues. Prof. M. K. Deshpande has appreciated Atre’s skill of language and the presentation of episodes.

The play *Gharabaher* is a character play, therefore the skill of character sketch is very important. Though the study of characters in this play is not minute, it is based on the modern psychology. The character of Nirmala is complex, therefore it makes us to think and such literature is always supposed as the high level literature. Bhaiyasaheb is also remembered as a different type of character in the world of villain. The conflict between Nirmala-Abasaheb, Nirmala-Bhaiyasaheb and Nirmala-Shaunak, creates more and more interest in the play. Nirmala faces many difficulties at the same time. The constant conflict in the mind of Nirmala is the plus point of the play.

The literary value of the play ‘*Gharabaher*’ is quite noticeable. The success of any play always depends upon its characterization. The Western consultant of drama, Mr. Greenwood says, “The essence of dramatic justice is that we must really feel the solution emerges from the facts with which we have been presented. We must not feel that it has been ‘tagged on’ or that the playwright has been keeping a card up his sleeve to bring out at the last moment or that he has been unfair to his character.” The greatness of the play ‘*Gharabaher*’ lies in the situation in which this play came into existence. The play is thus the manifestation of the passionate mind.

It is but obvious that Atre’s Nirmala can be Nora of Ibsen, though she is furious. Out of anger she cuts and throws the sacred thread of marriage that is Mangalsutra, but later on she binds around her neck. The play creates a dramatic effect on our mind that its writing is the clear image of the traditional and chastity worshipping mind. D. R. Gomkale says that ‘Atre has exposed the grief of women through the character of Nirmala, without hurting the old tradition. The end of the play, ‘*Gharabaher*’ is happy that Nirmala returns her home it adds the dramatic effect of the play’.
Mangalsutra, even Balgandharva did not like that idea, and so the Gandharva Natak Mandali refused to accept the play. The women like Gadakari’s Sindhu, who trapped into traditional society, did not like the idea of taking drastic step of cutting Mangalsutra and opposing the husband. These women were under the impression that a woman is born to tolerate the grief given by men as she is slave of men. The thing which is decayed should be broken is the law of nature and Nirmala does it. She is the embodiment of chastity and well-being.

Minakshi is the victim of the circumstance, though she is adulterous, according to the society, she is chaste by mind. She consoles and survives Nirmala from committing suicide. We don’t understand one thing that Minakshi lives with Bhaiyasahheb who is immoral person. She is honest and helpful by the nature. She says, “I like the friendship with male friend, Bhaiyasahheb, rather than my female friends”. (p.-49) It indicates that she loves him from core of heart.

**Weaknesses in Gharabaher:** Critics have detected certain weaknesses in the play. Atre creates Nirmala bold and rebellious woman, who plucks her ‘Mangalsutra’ and goes out of her house at the beginning of the play. When she recognizes the shortcomings of her husband, she decides to go out of the house. But Atre thinks that it is necessary to bring her back to house. He adds an impossible thing. The problem is that why Nirmala remained in the house under the pressure of fear? Why doesn’t she explain it to Shaunak? About this charge, Dr. D. R. Gomkale writes in his book, “Atre and Marathi Theatre”, “If we accept Nirmala as a type of Maharashtrian Hindu woman, we can’t ask why she has not revealed her humiliation by father-in-law and brother-in-law at the beginning”.16

Nirmala’s exit is of Shaunak’s weakness. Shaunak’s reaction after the disclosure of the secret is in keeping with male. Atre has created Nirmala’s character keeping certain things in his mind. Hindu culture, tradition and convictions are maintained through the praise of motherhood, so Nirmala’s utterance, “I will go in Hell to meet my child” represents the typical Hindu woman in her.” Prof. S. N. Banhatti remarks, “Gharabaher contains a social vision but it does not seem convincing.” Prof. M. K. Deshpande writes, “Atre did not take the precaution of providing a hint of Nirmala’s love of her child which is to bring her back to the house she has abandoned.”17

Through “Pratibha”, a magazine, in 1935, S. K. Khandekar and Muktabai Lele have criticized the same view.
The first performance of the play ‘Udyacha Sansar’ had been taken place on 3rd January, 1936, at Bombay Theatre, Mumbai by Balmohan Natak Mandal. This play ‘Udyacha Sansar’ throws light on several things, such as, how the family is destructed when the elders forget their duties and responsibilities of the family, how the person becomes irresponsible due to the sudden richness, how the family members suffer because of the irresponsibility of the head in the family, how the new generations follow the same path and above all how the life of the addicted husband’s wife becomes helpless and miserable- these and other several problems, especially, the problems of the women, have been depicted very realistically in the play ‘Udyacha Sansar’.

The play opens in the drawing room of Br. Vishram. It is evening. The sky is full with dark clouds, it may probably rain. Shekhar is ready for going out. He wants to meet his beloved Nayana to whom he loves. But his mother detains him telling him that it may be raining. Karuna asks him the reason for which he is going out. First he tells a lie that he wants to visit library but when Karuna shows him the love letter written for Nayana then he clears the true fact that he loves Nayana and now he wants to meet her. After his departure, Dr. Gautam, a middle aged gentleman, comes there. He is kind hearted and the well wisher of the family of Karuna. He always appreciates the tolerance of Karuna.

From the discussion of Karuna and Gautam, it is noticed that, before marriage Vishram was very poor but talented student in the class. The father of Karuna recognized the ability of Vishram and decided to make him son-in-law. Thus the marriage of Karuna and Vishram took place when Vishram was in the Matric class. As Karuna had no brother, her father made Vishram his son-in-law of house means ‘Gharjavai’ for the sake of property. When Vishram completed his B. A., Shaila was born. Now Vishram wanted to go abroad for further study of L. L. B., but his father-in-law did allow him. After two years, when Shekhar was born, out of happiness, his father-in-law gave him permission for abroad. At the time when he was departing from his wife and children for abroad, he was crying like a child. In abroad he stayed for five years. During these five years he spent money like water on drinking, gambling and on horse race etc. He was debauchery person running after young and beautiful woman. Once he was very honest and sincere person but when he went to abroad he became addicted and forgot his wife, children and his family responsibility. He was completely changed there. When he returned India, he started
to follow English manners and eticates. He was now a different man, always remaining busy in wine and woman and race.

Rasul, the butler in family of Karuna, enters and tells Karuna that the servant of Javantilal has come for the bill of his shop. As there is no money to Karuna to give him, so Dr. Gautam tries to give him 100 Rs. but at the same time Br. Vishram comes there, drinking heavily, snatches that money from the hand of Dr. Gautam and suspects regarding the relationship between Karuna and Dr. Gautam, but Dr. Gautam doesn’t like it. After the departure of Br. Vishram, Shaila comes there with her boy friend Ulhas. Ulhas is married man and children. He works as a clerk in a bank. Shaila and Ulhas are fallen in love. Dr. Gautam and Karuna don’t like the man Ulhas and his friendship with Shaila. He clears it to Shaila as well as Karuna. But Shaila is now not in the mood of listening it. Inspite of the warning of Karuna and Dr. Gautam, Shaila continues her love affair with Ulhas. After the departure of Shaila-Ulhas and Dr. Gautam, Shekhar and Nayana enter there. Shekhar is the son of Br. Vishram and Karuna. He loves a girl called Nayana. But this Nayana is the daughter of Br. Vishram from the other woman. So Shekhar and Nayana are truly brother and sister, but they don’t know their relationship. When Br. Vishram comes there, Nayana recognizes him as her father and Vishram also recognizes her as his daughter. So Vishram tells her not to marry to Shekhar as he is now her brother.

This act opens in the drawing room of Br. Vishram. It is afternoon. Shaila is talking on the telephone. Karuna shows news from the newspaper to Shaila. That news is regarding the marriage of Shaila’s college mate, Urmila Pradhan, who hated males too much but now, married to her sister’s husband. Ulhas enters, Shaila and Ulhas talk about their love and Shaila insists him for marriage but Ulhas doesn’t like the idea of marriage as he is already married person. He discards the demand of Shaila about marriage and leaves the place. Dr. Gautam appears there. Shaila tells him all that happened and requests him to help her in this matter. Now Br. Vishram returns from the court and orders Rasul to prepare a drink for him. While drinking Br. Vishram tells Dr. Gautam that he is going to deliver a lecture on two topics- one is- Sexual Harassment and the other is Breaking of Promise. Dr. Gautam doesn’t like it so he leaves the place. Now Nayana comes there who tries to insist Br. Vishram to call her his daughter only ones and then she will go far away from him. The conflict now takes place between Br. Vishram and Nayana. Br. Vishram wants to beat Nayana but Shekhar appears there who stops Vishram from doing so.
Nayana leaves the place. Karuna enters there and tries to console Shekhar who is now crying for Nayana. Shekhar decides to leave the house and goes away. Dr. Gautam comes, Karuna requests him to go and fetch Shekhar who has left the house out of madness. Dr. provides her another shocking news regarding Shaila that she is pregnant and Ulhas is not ready to marry her. Under the heavy grief, Karuna collapses completely. Now Shaila comes there crying, Karuna tries to console her. Br. Vishram, who is now in a hurry to go for his lecture, comes there Dr. Gautam tells him the fact about Shaila. Vishram becomes angry upon Shaila and tells her to leave the house for the sake of the shame of the family. Karuna tries to detain Shaila from leaving house.

It is morning. Br. Vishram is taking his breakfast. Ulhas comes there to meet Shaila. He tries to beg her pardon and decides to marry her as his wife is passed away seven days before. But Shaila is now not ready to marry him. The conflict takes place between both of them and out of anger, Shaila beats Ulhas. Ulhas now leaves the place, promising her that he will come back very soon. Shekhar enters with drinking, Shaila requests him not to drink and imitate father. But he doesn’t listen her. She weeps loudly and goes from there. Nayana comes there who tries to request Shekhar not to drink. She throws away the glass from his hand. The conflict takes place between Nayana and Shekhar and then Nayana leaves the place. Karuna tries to console Shekhar. Shaila comes with the bag in her hand thinking to leave the house. Karuna tries to stop her but she doesn’t listen and leaves the house. Vishram comes there, Karuna tells him to go and bring Shaila back to home. But he doesn’t do it. Then the conflict takes place between Karuna and Vishram.

From their conflict we come to know how recklessly and inhumanly Br. Vishram behaved with Karuna and how Karuna tolerates too much in her life. Vishram has crushed all the dreams and hopes of Karuna and her father. She tells him how she suffered in her life only because of him, now her life is good for nothing. Vishram listens very seriously every word of her and repents over his mistakes which he now decides to mend and begin a new and fresh life and begs her pardon. At this moment, Ulhas enters there with the warrant of the court regarding the seal of the house. Br. Vishram had taken a loan seven years before from the bank where Ulhas works, and still he had not repaid it. So the bank had sealed his house. Till this moment Karuna had endured everything but now she can not tolerate this calamity because it was her father’s house. Now she is totally crumbled down. As there is no any hope in life, she decides to finish her life. She goes up stairs and jumps from there on the ground and ends her tragic life.
Barrister Vishram in ‘Udyacha Sansar’, the man of flesh and blood, had met Atre in his real life in Mumbai. A woman, to whom Vishram had married, was of the different caste, this woman was Atre’s Karuna in ‘Udyacha Sansar’. She had one son who was studying in St. Zevier’s College, Mumbai. Br. Vishram had kept a mistress at Goa, who had one daughter from Vishram. She was also studying in the same college, that is St. Zeviers College, Mumbai. Both of them did not know their relationship that they were brother and sister. Unknowingly, they fell in love of one another and the girl became pregnant from that boy. When Br. Vishram realized this fact, he received a horrible blow. While coming out of ‘The London Hotel’ at the Grant Road, Mumbai, he presented the realistic picture of his reckless and irresponsible behavior in life, he insisted Mr. Atre to write a play on his real life story and make the people beware from such misdeeds. Atre, being a great writer, thought thoroughly over it and wrote a play on that real unhappy life story and that play is ‘Udyacha Sansar’.

The play ‘Udyacha Sansar’ is really the drama of Karuna’s life. The graph of her grief goes up gradually and becomes dark and it ends with her suicide.

Atre has used new dramatic technique for the plot construction of the plot of this play. Karuna’s married life has become barren before eighteen years. She is alive only, looking forward the future of her children, tolerating the insults, despises and deceptions. Her life is full only with sorrow and struggle. Her destiny plays very cruel tricks to her, it never laughs happily on her. While going to England, Br. Vishram, her husband, was wept like a child because of the separation from Karuna. For five years Karuna had preserved that heart rending incident of separation in her mind, but after five years, she was collapsed inwardly, because of the deception made by her husband to her. There in England, he was leading a luxurious life, spending money like water on drinking and on other such evil things. He had crushed all the hopes and aims of Karuna. When Karuna’s father understood that his son-in-law, Vishram had shattered all the dreams into pieces, he did not tolerate it and he breathed his last. Karuna’s grief knew no bound. She becomes helpless and sentimental.

The atmosphere in the house of drunkard, irresponsible and immoral Vishram has become polluted. Vishram accepts an invitation of the chief guest of the meeting which is called to protest a girl called Urmila who has done an immoral thing in her youth. At the same time, Dr. Gautam provides information to Vishram that the same guilt, like Urmila, has been done by his own daughter. Shekhar, the son of Vishram from his married wife Karuna, falls in the love of
a young girl called Nayana, who is, in fact, the daughter of Vishram from his beloved. Vishram is now shocked to listen this and very hurriedly Vishram breaks the marriage of Shekhar and Nayana because in reality they are brother and sister. This thing hurts too much to both Shekhar and Nayana that they decide to commit a suicide. In addition to this, Shaila, the daughter of Vishram, is deceived by a married person called Ulhas who pretends to love her. The house of Vishram is confiscated due to the debt of his drinking habit, Karuna tolerates all this for 18 years but finally when the sorrow in her mind becomes intolerable she commits suicide. In this way many pathetic incidents, one after another, take place in this play. Atre has very skillfully painted the realistic pictures of unknowing love affair of Shekhar and Nayana who are actually brother and sister and the earnest request of Shaila to a married person.

All the characters depicted in this play, have played a good role as per their own level. In fact the characters like Vishram, Karuna, Shekhar, Nayana and Shaila attract the attention of the audience. Among all the characters, the central character, that is the character of Karuna, has been very delicately and skillfully employed in the play. She is the symbol of generosity, forgiveness, tolerance and patience. She suffers and tolerates much, for 18 years she tolerates tremendous pains and grief only for the sake of her children. Her husband Vishram always drinks heavily and forgets his family responsibility and duty. This helpless woman Karuna, at the end of the play becomes courageous and tells her husband, ‘why did I stay in your family? For the sake of family love or as a part of my duty as a wife, I have died before 18 years, I am alive till this only as a mother of my children and not as a wife’. (Page no.-94) She is an ideal mother though she never gets the love of her husband. When her own daughter Shaila is trapped into a horrible incident, she says, ’Shaila, you don’t afraid, in order to protect your chastity, I won’t care my own life’. (Page no.-68) Karuna knows the value of motherhood, she says, ’motherhood is never sinful and unholy. The first duty of the society is to protect the mother, then that mother may be married or unmarried’. (Page no.-73) Very little action has been done by Karuna; the only action done by her is that, she gives shelter and protection to helpless Shaila against the will of her husband, Vishram. Importance has been given to the inner action or a conflict rather than the outer action in the play. Atre has mainly focused his attention on it. Karuna’s suffering and grief is the main action in the play. Dr. Gautam asks her about her suffering, “Karunatai, how can it be prevented? How many days it will go on?” (Page no.19) Karuna laughs gloomily and says, “Till my death!” (page-19). at the end of the play she comments about the helplessness of women, “In
order to get justice in tomorrow's family, we should break and throw away the cage which makes prisoner to the women and freedom of promiscuity to the men, but I have not that sort of courage, every part of my body is now anxious for rest.” (Page no.96) It makes very clear that her sufferings are boundless.

The character of Karuna should be involved into Marathi dramatic literature, where there are a few good female characters. The character of Nayana is a kind of heartrending elegy. As one wild creeper clings to a tree and that tree is vanished by thunderbolt, the same happens in case of Nayana when she knows that Shekhar is her brother. She becomes unhappy but at the same time she is happy as she gets her father that is Vishram. Atre has taken tremendous efforts for depicting the character of Nayana. Shaila, the real daughter of Vishram, is shown as innocent, independent, courageous and brusque. She never tells the others what is going on in her mind. She tries to involve her frustrate mind in other things but she doesn’t succeed in it. Unlike her mother, she is tolerant and determinist. When Ulhas refuses to marry her, she decides to remain unmarried till her death.

Br. Vishram is talented and active but he becomes irresponsible, impolite, unfaithful and addicted because of the sudden prosperity. He becomes heartless and hypocrite for addiction. In fact, originally he was lovable and polite but the addiction made him irresponsible. He suspects his honest and faithful wife. Finally he begs her pardon when he comes to know the reality. His wife sacrifices her whole life for the sake of her family. He becomes so sad and feels so sorry for the death of his wife. He says, “My Karuna died, my Goddess of mercy, Laxmi of my family, she left me behind.” (p.100) The dramatist has shown a poetic justice here. Wife has committed suicide, the daughter has left home and the son has condemned- in all these incidents, Br. Vishram has been trapped. He is the representative of the people who neglect their duties and responsibilities of the family.

Karuna is thirsty for the love of her husband, Br. Vishram. But Vishram never cares it. So as there is no any other alternative, she tolerates lonely all the grief. Ones she tells Gautam, “who will frighten to climb the mountain of grief, if there is a backing of love?” (p.-15). It indicates clearly that her life is loveless like a leafless tree. The only solace to her tired mind is her children- Shekhar and Shaila with whom she shares her inner grief. She is now obsessed with only one thought that she has to construct the future of her children. She always takes care of them. When Gautam provides her very shocking news about Shaila, she is shocked, though, as a
mother it is her moral duty to help and support and console Shaila, she is helpless. Shaila is trapped into great difficulty. In addition to this, the love affair of Shekhar is eclipsed because of the relationship of brother and sister. Now Karuna is totally collapsed. When Br. Vishram tells Shaila to leave the house, Karuna sternly tells him, “Shaila can not leave this home as this is my house, this is my father’s house and you have no any right to drive her out of house. You can leave this house, if you don’t want to stay here.” (p.-73). No one, even her children, for whom she tolerates all and sacrifices her life, don’t understand her mind, is the greatest tragedy of Karuna.

For the fulfillment of the addiction of her husband, her father spent forty thousand rupees, this is Karuna’s one kind of grief the other is that, and Vishram mortgages the house to the money-lender. Thus the graph of her grief gradually goes up and Karuna is crushed heavily under it. The whole story rotates around Karuna as she is the protagonist of the play. According to M. M. Altekar, A. N. Deshpande, R. S. Jog, prof. Madhukar Satarkar and Dr. D. R. Gomkale, Karuna is the central character in the play. She is main spring of action. Prof. Prabhakar Pujari rightly says that Karuna’s chastity crushed down, her motherhood is insulted, her patience is despised and her pains became useless. Her constantly insulted life can be the tragedy of a woman. Finally Vishram repents on his mistake and is ready to bring Shaila back to home, for a moment Karuna becomes happy, but to the next moment she is unhappy when she realizes his hypocrisy, she completely collapses and finishes her life by committing suicide.

There was a great effect of the World War Second on the human life. The people had become rich. There was plenty of money in their pockets. Due to the sudden prosperity, the people had cultivated the habit of enjoyment. Under the guise of independence, the new generation was running after promiscuity. Prof. Madhukar Satarkar says, ‘what kind of tomorrow sansar is would be, if the people forget their family responsibility and behave recklessly, has been very realistically presented in this play by P. K. Atre.’

The moral of the Hindu culture is fostered on sacrifice rather than enjoyment. But Karuna is crushed under the stress of enjoyment. In fact Vishram, Shekhar and Shaila are not originally enjoyment minded, but there is a great effect of the Western atmosphere on them. Lonely and helpless Karuna struggles to the situation. She remains firm and never surrenders herself to the situation. But in this struggle she is crumbled down completely. Tolerance, sacrifice and patience are always running through her blood.
The characters in *Udyacha Sansar* are self-centered and they love only themselves. All the people in the family are united together, they love and share happiness and unhappiness of each other. Correlation is always the chief factor in the family. But when this factor is vanished, then the family comes to an end. This happens in *Udyacha Sansar*. Br. Vishram, being the head of the family, is the main pillar of the family, but this pillar is collapsed therefore the whole family is ruined. The transition of Vishram is born through the feeling of enjoyment. When he goes abroad he forgets his wife, his responsibility, spends money like water on evil things, runs only after enjoyment and tries to fulfill all the needs of his body. When he returns from abroad, he is completely changed person. Before going to abroad Vishram was a good, kind hearted and family loving person. But abroad returned Vishram was different. He completely neglects his family responsibility and behaves as a happy-go-lucky man. As a husband he neither treats kindly, loves his wife neither Karuna nor he loves his children Shekhar and Shaila. He creates his own world of wine and woman. As a wife Karuna has lost her place from the life of Vishram 18 years back. He drives away his mistress, the mother of Nayana from the home. He advises his own son to keep immoral relation with his own daughter who is born out of extra-marital relation. He is ruined only because of his severe thirst of enjoyment which also ends the life of innocent Karuna having no any fault.

Shekhar is also affected by transition. His youth is shaped under the foreign manners which were brought by his father. Shaila’s life is also a self centered transition. She tries to fulfill her wish. She hates the men but later on in her youth, succumbs to the temptation of a man called Ulhas and becomes virgin mother. Sheila, Shekhar and Vishram behave with the transitional atmosphere. They never think of Karuna. In short, the Hindu family, which forgets culture, code of condect, sacrifice, tolerance, patience & responsibility, the destruction of such family is certain.

**Social Realism**

The play ‘*Udyacha Sansar*’ is not confined only to Karuna & Vishram but it exposes the contemporary social problems like the problem of the marriage of educated adult women, the problem of Virgin mother & the problem of divorce etc. In this play, Atre holds education is the responsible factor for the virgin motherhood. Vishram tells Gautam,

“It becomes very easy to destroy the chastity of
Educated girl because of their free nature” *(Act-II, Page no.52)*
In act I Gautam says to Sheila, “The future of educated adult girls like you is very difficult”. (Act-II, Page no.37) In second act Gautam says, “so long as you will not get the power of self defense, till then your idea of freedom is a kind of only mockery.” (Act-II, Page no.47) Urmila, the friend of Sheila marries her brother-in-law though her sister is alive. Deception of Sheila is a kind of poisonous fruit to her free nature & over confidence. Karuna tells Sheila, “Women are born to cry.” (Act-II, Page no.68) women are naturally week. Karuna pins the blame all this on education & she tells Vishram that today’s parents should make up the mind to face the difficult problems which will take place in the life of their unmarried adult girls in future. She say’s “How far it is possible that the men should commit sins & the women should suffer for it”. (Act-II, Page no.68) Karuna can not disloyal to her unfaithful husband, is her tragedy. Therefore she say’s “The cage of Sansar which gives ample freedom to the promiscuity of the men, should be broken & thrown away”. (Act-III, Page no.96). In short Atre has tackled several contemporary social problems like-individual freedom, adult virgin marriage, law of divorce, virgin mother & a woman should live as woman & mother as a mother. Atre wrote this play to illuminate the contemporary political & social problems in the society.

Atre might have seen some people in Mumbai running after enjoyment. Their unfulfilled lust was the unending subject, in ‘Udyacha Sansar’ Atre has emphasized on the unfulfilled lust of men. At the beginning of the play, Karuna is frightened with strange feeling. She say’s, “the sky is full with clouds & it may rain probably”.(Act-I, page-6). It indicates the inner fear hidden in her mind. She knows well that the life of her husband is full with sin. He ruined the life of Nayana’s mother & Karuna thinks that she might have cursed Vishram. Her curse works as ill omen in Karuna’s sansar. So she may never be happy in her sansar. Sheila always blames the men & tries to keep herself away from them but in reality she has great attraction of the men & becomes the victim of the lust of Ulhas. The lust of shekhar & Nayana also remains unfulfilled. Atre has shown in Udyacha Sansar that the person commits sin, has to pay the penalty for it in this life. This is the universal truth. All the people in this play are unfortunate they are victims of their fate. Their dreams & goals are shattered to pieces.

Presentation of emotionalism, sentimentality that is going away from thoughts, indulgence in a fantasy and escapamism are some of the main characteristics of the melodrama. Such drama presents the tragic side of the human life.
In the third act of this play many blows, one after the other, take place. In the first and second act we notice clearly the nature of Ulhas. At the moment of temptation he deceives Sheila and then rejects her demand of marriage. Then he makes her fun by saying, “Stop! I will come immediately by giving order of trellis for our marriage.” (Act-II, Page no.45) In this way this apportunist person Ulhas betrays Sheila very ruthlessly. He appreciates her falsely & destroys her chastity & lets her suffer. In this way he presents his beastlike nature. It creates a great & deep impact on her mind. While leaving him, she can not forget the insulting word of Ulhas. In the third act Sheila tells him ironically, “It would have been your trellis isn’t it? “(Act-II, Page no.45) These sharp words of Sheila make the readers and the audience happy.

Shekhar is frustrated in love & tells other how unhappy & unfortunate person he is. In fact he pretends it. Sixteen years old Nayana decides to commit suicide but gives up the idea & returns home & provokes the self-centered attitude of Shekhar. But the sentimental Shekhar is trapped in to the bog of grief & he never comes out of it. Frustrated by the insult of Shekhar, Nayana decides to become prostitute. Karuna is totally appalled because of the heavy grief of Shekhar, mental torture given by Vishram & leaving of home of Sheila all these things makes a great effect on mind of Karuna. She is dragged into the terbulant of grief & the climax of her grief reaches to its Zenith when her house is auctioned because of Vishram. Here she is completely crumbled down & finishes her life by committing suicide.

The contemporary News papers appreciated Atre’s Udyacha Sansar in the following words-

1) “Two specific features of Atre’s play’s – newness & the tact of making audience spellbound – are reached to its Zenith in his play Udyacha Sansar”

   (News paper “Cinema” 1936)

2) “It is unbelievable that the playwright like Atre could write such a great play like Udyacha Sansar, the most appreciable thing is that the play is well performed rather than it is well written”.

   (“Chitra”05/01/1936)

Atre was greatly influenced of the plays of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, & French playwright Briyo & Noel Coward, a British playwright. He that the techniques & thoughts of this
playwright much affected on his mined therefore he could produce the serious realistic plays in Marathi.

**Language & dialogues-**

Language & dialogues in this play used as per the nature of the character. The dialogues of Nayana-Shekhar, Sheila-Ulhas, and Karuna- Vishram are attractive & enchanting. There are a few tragic plays in Marathi. Though the play is not a tragedy like Shakespearean tragedy, but this play is one of the best tragic plays in Marathi. The play *Udyacha Sansar* conveys a universal message that the good always overcomes the evil though the good suffers because of evil. Karuna is the best example of this. At the end of the play her virtue is rewarded though it is late.

There is a little artistic humor in the play but it does not lessen the seriousness in the play.

**JAG KAY MHANEL**

The first performance of the play, ‘*Jag Kay Mhanel*’ took place at ‘Shrinand Natyagrah, Mumbai’ on 23rd March, 1943, by Balmohan Natak Mandali. After his play ‘Mi Ubha Ahe’, Atre had turned to the Marathi Film. His films ‘Dharmaveer’, ‘Premveer’ ‘Bramhachari’ and ‘Brandichi Batli’ gave tremendous success to Atre. He had written some short stories during this period. Atre’s fame was flourished because of ‘Navyug Chitrapat Ltd.’ ‘Saptahik Navyug’ and ‘Atre Pictures’ etc.

During the period 1937 to 1943, the playwrights like Atre, Ranganekar and Varerkar were turned to the Marathi Film. So the Marathi Rangbhoomi had become silent. But once again Marathi Rangbhoomi was revived by Atre with his play, ‘Jag Kay Mhanel’. Like his other two serious plays, ‘Gharabaher’ and ‘Udyacha Sansar’ this play ‘Jag Kay Mhanel’ exposes the sufferings of women. A woman is totally independent in Hindu religion. She can not get all sorts of freedom, unless she becomes economically independent. In the last century, a woman in the Western country became completely independent. But a woman in this country is struggling for freedom after the world war first. In fact the problem of woman independence in Hindu society has become complicated because in Hindu society, much importance has been given to the things like marriage, chastity and, but it creates a great hindrance in the way of woman independence. All these problems are very necessary to discuss for the sake of women. The man should stop to impose their ideas on the women. The women should behave as per their own willingness.
In his play, ‘Ekach Pyala’, Gadakari has presented the heart rending picture of a woman who is trapped into the iron clutch of traditional chastity. Atre believes that ‘Ekach Pyala’ is not a pathetic tale of the consequences caused due to the drinking habit but it is the tragic tale of the consequences of chastity. Atre has depicted the realistic picture of a woman who struggles for economical independence in his play ‘Gharabaher’. It was his first effort. So Atre was little bit afraid of it. But in his next play ‘Udyacha Sansar’ he depicted the same picture of Hindu woman with great confidence and courage and the people liked it. But he was not satisfied completely; therefore, in the present play ‘Jag Kay Mhanel’ he decided to complete his unfulfilled wish of depicting the struggle of Hindu woman for economical stability. Very honestly and sincerely he has tried his level best to paint the realistic picture of Hindu woman who struggles for all sorts of freedom. Atre thinks Sindhu, Nirmala, Karuna and Ulka are the realistic and revolutionary sketches of Hindu woman on the Marathi stage. Atre has given contemporary political touch to the tragedy of Ulka; therefore, her tragic character has been glorified. Atre has made certain changes in the words in ‘Jag Kay Mhanel’ after the Independence of India.

It is but obvious that the main characters in Gharabaher, Udyacha Sansar and Jag Kay Mhanel, had met Atre in his real life. The heroine of this play Ulka had also met Atre in his life. She told Atre the pathetic story of her life for more than three hours. Atre very carefully listen it and he decided to write a play on that miserable story. Thus the play ‘Jag Kay Mhanel’ came into being.

The play opens in the house of Diwakar Deshamukh in Hindu colony, Dadar, Mumbai. It is afternoon, one young lady called Varsha comes in the house of Ulka. She is Ulka’s friend. Ulka is not at home. She has gone to hospital as her daughter, Pushpa is ill.

Diwakar Deshamukh was previously living at Bhaikhala with a woman without marriage, but that woman was not good natured, noe day she ran with one driver, so in order to get rid of that woman, Diwakar married to Ulka and started living with her at Dadar. Ulka is the daughter of Bhai Dinanath, she is very bold and active, she was the leader of the students in her school days and had acted in the plays, she was also a kho-kho player, climbing up the trees, jumping into the well, making strike against injustice, she had received six months imprisonment in Civil Disobedient Movement, that time she met Diwakar who had participated in politics, Ulka married to him. They have one daughter Pushpa and one son Suvas. Pushpa always remains ill as she suffers from dizziness.
Ulka returns from hospital with baby. She recognizes Varsha and meets her. Ulka begins to cry and blames her fate. Ulka remembers her school days. She had performed the role of Lord Krishna in the, ‘Soubhadra’, even Varsha had played the role of Balarama. That play was performed to raise the fund for ‘Congress House’. Prakash and the doctor enter the house they request Ulka to play the role in their play which is to be performed to raise the fund for the building of Charitable Hospital for the poor children. Diwakar does not agree with their idea. He becomes angry upon them so Prakash and the doctor leave the place. Diwakar turns to Varsha and speaks lovingly but Varsha becomes angry on him and she shows all the love letters written by Diwakar to Varsha though Varsha doesn’t love him. Ulka realizes the fact and requests Varsha to leave the place. Diwakar is ashamed of his act and begins to drink. Ulka tells her decision that she will play a role in the play of Prakash. But Diwakar doesn’t allow her. She then becomes angry and tells him, “Either touch my feet and rub your nose and beg pardon or I will play a role in that play” (Act-I, page-21). When he notices that she doesn’t obey him, he tries to beat her with the stick but Shiva, a servant, stops the struggle.

Bhai Dinanath, the father of Ulka, Trilok her brother and Mr. Shaligram a socialist appear there. Dinanath becomes happy to see the happy family of his daughter. He introduces Mr. Shaligram how courageous and bold his daughter is. He requests his son-in-law Diwakar and Ulka to do something for the sake of the country. Diwakar tells a lie that he tries to force Ulka to act in the play and show her talent but she doesn’t listen him. Then they three leave the place. Diwakar goes to tell the doctor that Ulka will play a role in his play.

During three months, Ulka has become popular actress and singer. Today she has gone for her performance. Trilok comes to the house of Diwakar. Diwakar pretends to be ill and blames his fate. He says, “I am frustrated in my life and in my family and I want to finish my life under the train.” (Act-II, page-29 & 30). There is a great impact of Diwakar’s pretending talk on Trilok that it increases his wrath and decides to talk to his sister Ulka. They both begin to drink. While drinking, Diwakar tells him that Ulka has forgotten him and children for the sake of money and publicity. He also tells him that there is an immoral relationship between Ulka and Prakash. He says, “That Prakash is hero in her life and villain in my life, I want to kill both of them.” (Act-II, P.-31). Trilok tells Diwakar to give a revolver to kill Prakash, but Diwakar controls him. Mr. Shaligram arrives and tells them that their Arya Sanskruti Mandal has decided that the good cultured women must not work on the stage as it makes the degradation of the
culture, morality of women, of family and of society. He says that most of the women are expecting to imitate the path of Ulka, so their husbands are crying. He explains one incident, “in Saturday’s performance Prakash had hugged and kissed Ulka, some gentlemen had left the theatre to see it.” (Act-II, P.-35). When Ulka and Varsha arrive there, Mr. Shaligram leaves the place. Diwakar goes in his room. Ulka tells Varsha that she can not attend today’s rehearsal of the play as her daughter is ill. Varsha leaves the place with Suvas. Now the conflict takes place between Trilok and Ulka. He insists her not to work in the play because the people are not talking good about her moral character. She doesn’t listen him. He then says that he will kill Prakash. She says, “Before killing him, you should kill me first.” (Act-II, P.-43). When Trilok calls her as adulterous, Ulka doesn’t control herself and gives a blow on his face. She tells him, when he had abducted the wife of a Muslim worker in the film industry, at that time she had protected him. Prakash enters and Trilok leaves the place. Prakash enquires about the sick baby of Ulka. Then they begin the rehearsal of the remaining part of the play. When Diwakar sees that rehearsal, he leaves the house angrily. Prakash is surprised to see it and asks Ulka, “How could you tolerate this?” (Act-II, P.-48). He requests her, instead of living with this foolish person, come out of the house. But she says, “What the world will say (Jug Kay Mhanel) (Act-II, P.-49). Shiva comes there with baby who is seriously ill now. Shiva and Prakash go out to call the doctor and Varsha. Doctor comes and checks the baby and tells that the baby is dead. Ulka puts her head o the shoulder Prakash and cries loudly. At this moment Diwakar comes, drinking heavily becomes angry. But when he realizes that the baby is dead, he begins to cry. Then the conflict takes place between Diwakar and Ulka. Diwakar blames her by saying, “You and Prakash have made a conspiracy and killed my daughter with poison, now give a poison to me and my son and live happily with him, you criminal, monster, beach, devil I will not see your face.” (Act-II, P.-51). Diwakar leaves the place. Varsha comes with Shiva; they both begin to cry with Ulka.

Three days after the death of baby, Trilok comes there. Shiva tells him that Diwakar had brought one woman, drinking and enjoyed with her. Then the struggle took place between Diwakar and Ulka, Diwakar beat Ulka and left the house. Trilok doesn’t like Diwakar’s behavior. Shiva cries and says, “There is no Ram in this house, the family is completely destroyed.” (Act -III, P.-55) Diwakar comes there. Trilok tells him that Ulka is leaving house. Diwakar confesses that he has commited a sin by beating and insulting Ulka in front of that third
rate woman. He tells Trilok, “I want to repent before her, serve her, devote her but she must not leave the house.” (Act-III, P.-57). Trilok leaves the place. Ulka and Varsha enter there with Suvas. Diwakar tells that Bhai Dinanath is coming there very soon, but Ulka doesn’t pay her any attention at him. He says that he is now completely changed and wants to repent. But Ulka is not ready to pardon him. She says, “A woman can not be proud to change her husband and make him an ideal husband, it will be foolish and the end of such woman is certain.” (Act-III, P.-61). He tries to request her but in vain. She says, “Men have right to break the family and the women have to join it, only women have to make compromise always for the sake of the family, women have to change from their name to blood, where as men can not, family is not the holi of women and diwali of men.” (Act-III, P.-62). When he tells her to kill him, she says, “We want to kill husbandhood and not the husbands because husbandhood is more horrible than capitalism, women can not be independent unless they finish the dictatorship of husbands, we want economical freedom and not the freedom of promiscuity.” (Act-III, P.-65). Now the confrontation takes place between Ulka and Diwakar, Ulka decides to leave the house and to live Prakash. Regarding the grief of women, Ulka says, “We can not marry to a man whom we love, is the tragedy of Hindu woman. We can not avoide the man whom we don’t like and we can not get man whom we like, is the grief women. For this, women want economical independence and the law of divorce.” (Act-III, P.-68). Prakash comes there to bring Ulka to his house. Diwakar is angry to see Prakash. Ulka is now ready with her son to go with Prakash but Diwakar snatches Suvas from Ulka and tries to beat her with stick but Dinanath and Trilok enter there who save Ulka from the clutch of Diwakar. Dinanath tries to compromise but neither Diwakar nor Ulka listens of him. Prakash and Varsha enter there, they tell the news that they are going to marry that night. Diwakar now feels so sorry and begs the pardon of Ulka, Dinanath, Trilok, Prakash and Varsha. Dinanath doesn’t pardon him, on the contrary, he insists Ulka not to live with such a person who is wicked and suspicious, but to come out of the house to teach lesson of such husbands. He says, “Your work is finished, now the nation needs the revolutionary women like you; break the sakels of dependence for economical independence.” (Act-III, P.-76). All the people leave the house except Diwakar who is crying lonely.

After the First World War, most of the virtuous Indian women tried to come out from the heavy burden of the so called traditional culture, but the contemporary social system did not allow them to do so. Therefore the women in this country did not have any kind of freedom.
Indian social structure is male dominating and the woman is treated as subordinate. Ones again Atre has painted the picture of the suffering of the Indian woman in ‘Jag Kay Mhanel’. Helpless Nirmala in ‘Gharabaher’ suffers a lot, due to the wicked treatment given by her father-in-law and brother-in-law, as her husband is weak so she leaves her house but finally returns for the sake her child. Karuna in ‘Udyacha Sansar’ tolerates too much, but when the toleration goes out of control, she ends her life by committing suicide. But Ulka in ‘Jag Kay Mhanel’ is different from both of them. Ulka suffers a lot and leaves the house but she neither returns home again, nor does she commit a suicide. Ulka is the representative of the modern vigilant women.

Jag Kay Mhanel is mainly the play of Ulka’s life. In the present play, Atre has tackled several social problems in the contemporary society. The problem of the unlimited sexual lust of men, social wickedness coming out through the self centered attitude of happiness, the problem of the marriage of adult virgin women, wicked attitude towards the newly entering women on the stage, the role of the female characters, the new generation running after and imitating cinema culture and the changing ideas of morality- these are the certain problems in the contemporary society which Atre has discussed in the present play, Jag Kay Mhanel. However, Ulka is the backbone of this play. The very first dialogue between Ulka and Varsha in the first act helps to increase the speed of the play. The dialogues between Ulka-Prakash, Ulka-Trilok and Ulka-Diwakar are used to unfold the inner mind of Ulka. Like the plays of G. B. Shaw, smart dialogue is the special feature of this play.

In this play, we notice, how Ulka is suffered in the extreme hedonist and the subjective culture that society fostered. According to Varsha, before ten years, Ulka was the leader of the students in the class, a kho-kho player, wielding a club and was also imprisoned for six months, but now she becomes helpless mother. Greately depressed Ulka, becomes happy when her friend Varsha meets her after some years. Her mind becomes free and clear when she tells the grief in her mind to Varsha and begins to weep like a child. During seven years she tolerated too much and finally her dream is shattered into pieces.

Ulka was completely suppressed under the heavy burden of the circumstance but with the arrival of Varsha, her life becomes paradise, it is the only source of happiness in her life. Ulka has a tremendous fame in the field of drama but her husband, Diwakar does not like it. Her persecution begins ones again. She is mentally suffocated. Ulka is tired of Diwakar’s immoral
behavior. She tells him the greatness of women tells the importance of the law of divorce and leaves home for never returning.

The play ‘Jag Kay Mhanel’ is chiefly the tale of the sufferings of the life of Ulka. At the time when she leaves home, she might have thought- what the world will say (jag kay mhanal). Though she has an ability to build her future, she is confined in the house of her husband. Atre doesn’t want to describe the life of the other characters in the play; in fact he has focused his attention only on the character of Ulka. Therefore all the events in the play rotate around the character of Ulka.

**Social Realism**

*Jag Kay Mhanel* presents the realistic picture of the contemporary society. After world war second, it was supposed that the women should come out of home for earning, in fact it was the need of the time. When this play came on the stage, Atre was associated with different fields in the society like politics, social work and literature. Atre had minutely observed all these fields. The society, in which Atre lived, very closely experienced and studied the nature of the people and presented in this play. Atre makes it clear, if Ulka had not come to him with grief, he would not have been related to the stage once again.

Ulka, who met Atre in his real life, was living with her lover without marriage. But Atre omitted certain part from the real story for his play. Prakash and Diwakar is the representative of the human wickedness.

After world war second, prosperity gradually prevailed and the people liked to live a luxurious life. Like the people during the Restoration period, the people in India involved into wine and women. They became idle and spent time and money in vain. In fact, the licentiousness was the watchword of the society. Triloke and Diwakar are the representatives of this. Triloke is debauchery person who has no any moral bondage and runs like butterfly after women. He is obsessed with too much sexual lust which he tries to fulfill anyhow. He thinks that young, beautiful women are his possession. He never thinks about his sister because of his self centered attitude. He threatens Ulka to close her performance. He always remains busy in wine and woman and abducts the wife of a person in the cinema company. He says Diwakar, ‘I have no right to tell you, as my life is dirty.’ (*Act-III, p.-57*). Diwakar is an excellent example of
debauchery. Wine and race are his favourite things in which he always remains busy. Before marriage he was adulterous but it reaches to its zenith when he embraces a prostitute before his wife only a few days after his the death of his Baby. He is shameless, always beats his wife. There is much similarity between Vishram in *Udyacha Sansar* and Diwakar in *Jag Kay Mhanel*.

Ulka is a faithful wife of Diwakar. She is extremely tolerative. Diwakar is disloyal to her. He tries to keep immoral relations to Varsha in front of his wife Ulka. Ulka says, ‘The extreme tragedy of a Hindu woman is that she doesn’t avoid the person which she doesn’t like and she doesn’t get the person which she wants.’ She defenses the law of divorce.

**LAGNACHI BEDI**

The first performance of this play, *Lagnachi Bedi* took place on 22nd Oct. 1936, at Vijayanand Natyagrah, Pune by Balmohan Natak Mandal. Structure and the style of humor in this play are different from that of ‘Bhramacha Bhopala’ and ‘Sastang Namaskar’. But both these plays, ‘Bhramacha Bhopala’ and ‘Sastang Namaskar’ are dealt with humor and the ludicrousness in human nature. However, the present play, ‘Lagnachi Bedi’ has been constructed to point out the follies and the drawbacks in the marriage system prevailing in the contemporary Indian society. Marriage is an essential factor in the life of man and woman as it helps to control the excessive sexual lust, especially the debauchery of men. It also suggests that the women should maintain their youth and beauty in order to catch the attention of their husbands towards them otherwise the husbands can fly after other young and beautiful women in order to fulfill their sexual lust. The true lovers should get marry is the message given by the dramatist in this play through the characters like Aruna and Parag.

The story of this play is very short. It takes only 24 hours. Dr. Kanchan and his wife Yamini are celebrating their first marriage anniversary. So they are in a happy mood. But suddenly their happiness is shattered to pieces when they get the telegram of Rashmi’s arrival and then in a moment Rashmi herself appears there. Rashmi is extremely young and beautiful but pretentive girl. She becomes the attraction of all the male characters in the play. Dr. Kanchan, Parag, Timir and Avadhut have become mad to see the youth and beauty of Rashmi. With the arrival of Rashmi there the families of Yamini and Aruna are in great trouble because their husbands are now moving around Rashmi. But Rashmi is good, tolerative and kind hearted by
nature. However, at the end of the play, families of both Yamini and Aruna get happiness back only because of Rashmi. All the incidents in the play are correlated to one another and nowhere in the play there is improbability. All these incidents create an interest among the readers or the audience.

Yamini continuously tries her level best to maintain her beauty only to attract the attention & preserve the love of her husband, Dr. Kanchan, but inwardly she is not happy. The same happens in case of Dr. Kanchan. He loves his wife Yamini but at the same time he runs after young beautiful girl called Rashmi who is the main cause of the trouble of Yamini.

From the other characters- Gargi, very hot tempered woman, always despises her husband & keeps him under her thumb, eurotic Gokarna always wanders around his wife, Avadhoot, who is marriage sick but unfortunately doesn’t get marry, Rashmi pretends to love the men but in reality she compels the men to run after her.7

According to G.N. Gunjikar, ‘Unlimited & excessive sexual lust of men is the theme of this play. Atre has depicted how excessive sexual lust of men makes rampage in the play. The people in this play are self centered & they deceive one another. With the arrival of Rashmi the male characters become mad & they run after her. They break the codes of morality & they forget their wives, age, profession, religion & even social status & they behave like a beast’.19

Dr. Kanchan is the representative of this. He is married to Yamini before a year but this sex maniac person runs after Rashmi, a beautiful call girl like lady. He is so much involved in the love of Rashmi that he forgets his wife, Profession, Social status & even age. This perverted man becomes the victim of temptation & lust & becomes blind by the beauty & youth of Rashmi & keeps the code of morality under his feet. Promiscuous Dr. Kanchan is very eager for the intoxicating glance of Rashmi. This shameless person not only forgets his wife Yamini but he crosses the boundary of shamelessness that he blames her with adultery.

Parag & Timir are equally lusty like Dr. Kanchan. They are always in search of satisfying their sexual lust. Dr. Kanchan is after Rashmi & forgets his wife Yamini, Timir tries to take benefit of this opportunity & looks towards Yamini in sexual point of view. But Yamini is so virtuous that she recognizes his evil intention and hates him. Parag always criticizes the married women but forgets Aruna when he sees beautiful Rashmi, like Dr. Kanchan, he also becomes mad of excessive sexual lust. At the end of play Rashmi says, “men are always ready, (they wait for the permission of women) the only problem is the will of women”. (Act-III, Page no.57)
Gokarn is married five times but still he is sexually unsatisfied. When he sees a young beautiful girl, he becomes mad. He always reads the books of pornography and eats the tablets to increase the sexual energy. Previously he was frequently visiting Tilak Talav to enjoy the beauty of swimming women. This shameless person lights the cigarette in the lips of Rashmi. He shows his proclamation of debauchery to his wife.

Avadhoot tries his level best to get marry but he is not succeeding in his efforts. Therefore he is dissatisfied and frustrate. He looks towards Aruna, Gargi, Yamini and Rashmi with intense sexual lust. When Gokarn says him, “var mag” (demand of blessing) he says, “Gokarn baba, I don’t want var (bridegroom), I want vadhu (bride)”. This shows that he is, like other male characters, too much sexually hungry.

In short, all the male characters in this play are sexually lusty and in order to fulfill their sexual lust, they are running after women like butterfly. They forget relations, Oaths and trust while doing adultery. It’s a kind of perversity.

As ‘Lagnachi Bedi’ presents the realistic picture of sexually lusty men, at the same time it also presents the realistic picture of faithfulness of women to their husbands. Indian women are trapped in to the traditional Hindu culture. After marriage a woman never thinks of the other man except her husband but unfortunately it doesn’t happen in case of men. Wife remains faithful to her husband.

Yamini is faithful to her husband Dr. Kanchan. She knows well how men are lusty including her husband. She notices the evil intention of Timir. She tries to protect her husband from Rashmi but she doesn’t succeed in it. When she sees the deviation of her husband, she says him, ‘you can not make treachery and avoid your duty as a husband’ (Act-II, Page no. 48). When Dr. Kanchan brings Rashmi home, Yamini pretends to love Timir in front of Dr. Kanchan, but there is no any effect of it on Dr. Kanchan. It tortures to the mind of Yamini but the more painful thing is that she has to make a drama of love to tease her husband. It indicates that she is faithful woman.

Aruna is not different from Yamini. She always blames the men. She never leaves Parag, though he is disloyal to her. As Parag goes away from her, she goes very close to him. Though she is free by nature, she is orthodox. Gargi always thinks to keep her husband under her thumb. She is well acquainted with the debauchery of men. Therefore she suspects the deceitfulness in the conspiracy of Parag and she tries to warn Aruna about it. Gargi is very upset to see the
destruction of the family of Yamini. She tries to survive it but it is useless. She is loyal to Gokarn. In short, all the women in this play are faithful to their husbands whereas the husbands are not.

**Social Realism**

Atre has presented contemporary social problems in his serious plays like, *Gharabaher, Udyacha Sansar and Jag Kay Mhanel*. However, in ‘Lagnachi Bedi’, though it is farcical comedy, Atre has tackled serious social problem. Like the Restoration Comedy, Atre has criticized follies and drawbacks in the marriage institution. V. S. Khandekar ssays that Atre has constructed this play on the basis of the plays of Bernard Shaw, Somerset Maugham etc. Atre is in the opinion that we should change our attitude towards women. Recently it is gradually changing, but still there are some men in society like, Mallinath, Abasaheb, Nilkanth, Nagogi, Bhayasaheb, Br. Vishram, Ulhas, Parag, Gokarn, and Dr. Kanchan etc. behave like a beast to women.

The play ‘Lagnachi Bedi’ conveys a universal message that in order to control the excessive sexual lust of men, Lagnachi Bedi or the marriage institution is very necessary. Bernard Shaw expresses the importance of marriage institution in the following words, “Marriage remains practically inevitable, sooner we acknowledge this, the sooner we shall set to work to make it decent and reasonable.”

Atre’s *Lagnachi Bedi* is a comedy manner. Atre attacks the system of marriage by using various comic devices; his comedy grows out of farce by almost imperceptible gradations. The farcical elements and the resort to stimulate laughter is the spice of light comedy. Atre succeeds in creating diction, automatism, situation through characters, through physical attributes and through the words. Atre brilliantly makes use of the device of incongruity in order to create laughter in this play. Atre presents two ideas of incongruous nature in order to create laughter. As Allerdyce Nicoll writes, “It is the incongruity between two ideas that presents to us the twin qualities of wit and humor.”

In the very beginning of the play, Atre begins to create a series of ideas of the incongruous nature. From the very beginning of the play, a telegram from Rashmi to Dr. Kanchan is a thing of fun. The telegram is signed as a darling. Yamini, the wife of Dr. Kanchan suspects that it is a woman’s signature and this wants to meet Dr. Kanchan. But Dr. Kanchan’s explanation to her about the word darling is very funny. Dr. Kanchan explains her that the person
named darling has signed it. Yamini is so simple minded and innocent that she accepts Dr. Kanchan’s explanation. The ironical explanation of the word darling becomes so ludicrous that it creates laughter. When the play opens, it is seen that Yamini and Dr. Kanchan, the couple, is celebrating the first anniversary of their marriage. Yamini is very happy to celebrate this day. But her husband, Dr. Kanchan, is thinking about another woman that is Rashmi. Though he is married, he loves another girl. At the same time his wife is under the impression that her husband is faithful to her. Thus the incongruity between these two ideas presents the twin qualities of wit and humor. Then the two strange characters Aruna and Parag, who are married on friendly basis and not in usual traditional way, are the source of the laughter. They do not suppose that they are husband and wife, but they declare that they are a married couple. Another couple, Gargi and Gokarn also presents two ideas of contrasting nature. Gargi is Gokarn’s fifth wife. Though Gokarn is an old man, he used to look lustily at the beautiful girls on the street. He even forgets that he is with his wife. His wife scolds him for this but he takes it lightly. He is the very image of lechery and lust, while his wife is devoted and faithful to the husband. These two contrasting ideas create ludicrous effect on the audience. There is an interesting contrast between Gokarn and Avadhoot. Gokarn is married five times, while Avadhoot is still a bachelor. He is tired of searching girls for him. His fate does not favor him about the marriage. No one gives him a girl in marriage. His comments on the husbands and his own bachelorhood create laughter, he says, “It is found that many worthless men get married, many times as I go along the street. I get infuriated when I see a beautiful wife with a brazen-faced husband.” (Act-I, p.18)

When Rashmi enters into Dr. Kanchan’s house, Dr. Kanchan forgets that he is a married man and celebrating the first anniversary of his of his marriage. He is so infatuated with Rashmi that he embraces Rashmi before his own wife Yamini. He does not think about his status, wife or even friends who have come to attend his marriage anniversary. Thus these contrasting ideas present the twin qualities of wit and humor. Again, it is found that Atre places a set of abnormal, eccentric characters like Dr. Kanchan, Gokarn, Timir, Parag, Avadhoot, and Aruna etc. around the normal and sensible characters like Yamini, Gargi and Rashmi and this becomes the source of great laughter. A comedy full of eccentric’s type’s ceases largely to be a source of merriment. So the eccentricity of characters is contrasted with the normal behavior of Yamini and Gargi. Dr. Bhosale writes “Dr. Kanchan – Yamini, parag–Aruna, Gargi-Gokarn, Avdhoot tese are the major characters is Lagnachi Bedi. Dr.Kanchan is a physician. Yamini is his wife but he does not care
for her. He is after Rashmi Dr. Kanchan thinks nothing but only about physical attraction … Timir and Parag are also the same coins like Kanchan lecherous”.

Thus the normality of the young characters like Yamini, Gargi and Rashmi is opposed to the eccentricity of nearly all the other characters like Dr. Kanchan, Parag, Timir, Avdhoot and Gokarn. The laughter in most of its poem is directed against eccentricity of many characters and opposed to the sensible and normal behavior of other character. In this play incongruity between two ideas creates laughter.

Atre brilliantly uses this device in order to create laughter. The laughter that arise from merely physical attributes of the character in a comedy is obviously of the lowest possible kind. The principle of degradation provides for physical deformities of a laughable type. In this play the merriment arises not from the deformity as such but from the facts that the man for a moment has been made into a mere object without the control of his own senses. Atre successfully shows same characters with marital deformity, but from the sense that particular character is governed by his deformity. The character of avadhut exemplifies this. He is mentally deformed and at same into his mental deformity. He is a bachelor and every moment he thinks about marriage and girls. He is mental deformity and his strange behavior with his trumpet is the source of laughter. He takes pleasure in reading the books on pornography. He loves to watch women at swimming tank rather than to swim himself Gokarn is also mentally weak men. He is another lusty man and has married five times and still watches girls at schools. In this play Atre presetting such character he who use mentally deformed. By presents a get of such successfully creates laughter and at the same time he succeeds in giving his play a moral tone.

Atre himself writes, “Why do married men turn their attention from their wives to other women? In society many get married five times and many do not get married even once, what is the reason behind this? Instead of thinking on these questions seriously I have decided to look cut them play fully and with empty mind and in this way I intend to cities the weaknesses of or marital system … Therefore I rote Lagnachi Bedi” (trans 4)

Atre attacks the social systems the merriment is not limited to vices only; it is directed against the vulgar mental deformity, against extremes of any kind. It is applied as heartily to virtues in an exaggerated form as to vie.

Atre brilliantly explains the device of situation for the introduction of the laughter.
Allardyce Nicoll writes, “The situation, however, as forming the basic of the plot any comedy, presents to the dramatist possibly the very fullest opportunity for the introduction of the laughable. The physical person and the character are nearly always shown not is isolated, but in the midst of some other person in a situation itself of an amusing character”.  

Atre presents a situation full of amusing characters. In the play when Rashmi arrives in Kanchans house the chain of event takes place giving rise to the laughter of the highest kind.  

Prof. Dr. Charusheela Gupta writes, ‘It is said that, “the play Lagnachi Bedi is the best example of comedy of situation”. Yamini sees her husband in Rashmi’s arms Yamini becomes angry. But Kanchan is so mad after Rashmi that he threatens his wife Yamini that he would marry Rashmi and Rashmi leaves Kanchan and tries to embrace Parag but Parag runs away from her anyhow. Then both Avdhoot and Gokarn become the victims of bewitching beauty of Rashmi. Both fall in love with her. Even Avdhoot brushes his shoes with his handkerchief while Gokarn is very mad and eagerly lights her cigarette. She treats them like her put dogs. This situation of degradation creates laughter. Then Parag rescues Dr. Kanchan from the clutches of Rashmi. His idea is to pretend love for Rashmi and then prepare her for marriage. But Rashmi is such a clever and shrewd girl than Parag himself falls in her trap. He becomes the victim of bewitching beauty. He shows readiness to marry Rashmi. He declares this before Dr. Kanchan, Yamini and his so called wife Aruna. This is really a funny situation. But again the situation takes turn when Rashmi gives up her love for Parag and again joins the hands with Dr. Kanchan. In the last scene which takes place in ‘Hotel Honeymoon’ Rashmi makes fool of all the men. As everything is ready for marriage, Rashmi suddenly decides to go to Mumbai. Dr. Kanchan becomes desperate. Then she makes fool of Parag. She arranges his marriage with her self. She ties a handkerchief round his eyes before putting the garland round his neck. Than she brings Parags lover Aruna before him, He tells him to swear that he would never give up her hand and she also tells him to put the engagement ring into her finger when Parag opens his eyes, he is surprised to see Aruna before him. This situation is so funny and comic that it creates much laughter. In the same way Rashmi deceives Timir and Avadhoot so there are many situations based upon the principle of degradation.  

Atre exploit the men manners of his characters wholly derived from the modern Indian society. His play is an ironic commentary on the ways of the society of his time which creates the highest kind of laughter. The manners’ of particularly ducated middle class that Atre ridicules
is this play. Avadhoot represents this society as its worst. Dr. Kanchan represents the lust desire for other sex. There are lustful young men and women like Parag, Dr. Kanchan, Timir, Rashmi and Aruna. Dr. Kanchan, though married has love-affairs with Rashmi a cinema actress. Gokarn a man who is married fifth time is lecherous. Rashmi takes delight in being courted by young men like Dr. Kanchan, Timir, Parag and Avadhut. In the end she deceives all of them and teaches them a lesson. This love-intrigue is the main theme of this comedy of manners. Only Yamini and Gargi are different type of persons the qualities that they show affection for relation, goodness of heart and the spirit of self-sacrifice are all foreign to this artificial society. Yamini and Gargi represent the true spirit of Indian women. Thus the play is a brilliant comedy of manners. Atre’s dialogues in this play are the great sources of laughter. The comic spirit derived from the words in this play shares in point so importance a position equal to that held by character and by situation. Atre’s dialogues reveal and expose the character and his dialogues intensify the ridiculousness of a situation. In order to exploit the ridiculous situation, Atre makes use of deformed words particularly and the speeches of Avadhut, Aruna and Rashmi. His characters speak deformed language like;

Avadhut: “Then tell me what should be done to get married I am Ready to accept any kind Marriage! Love-marriage, adult marriage, mix-marriage, forced-marriage, and widow-marriage whatever I get.” (Lagnachi Bedi act I, p.17).

His dialogues are suitable and apt to the situation the dialogues reveal the peculiarities of a person. The words show a particular while a satirical treatment of the fashionable life of the modern times was the main theme the play’s another important feature is witty dialogues. The dialogue is the chief pleasure of this play the witty quality of the dialogues is undoubtedly one of its greatest excellences. The merit of entire play lies in witty dialogues which keep the audiences ever laughing. The dialogue here gives life and characters to the personages even Atre frequently does not bother to see if it is in keeping with the character of a particular personage the dialogue is written in delightful crisp and easy prose. It is written both for the eye and the ear. Even the stupid characters like Timir and Avadhut are here made witty the play has given to the Marathi theatre some of its wittiest scenes. We find Atre wit at work in the very opening scene where Dr. Kanchan and Aruna speak about Yamini, Aruna remarks that they had to get married as there was no other alternative before them. The readers are the spectator will feel greatly amused by these remarks because they represent Atre’s witty and satirical criticism of the middle-class
educated people of the society. This initial conversation strikes indeed, the key note of most of the dialogues in this comedy. V. D. Sathe says, “Atre was greatly impressed by the dramatic technique of Ibsen and he used witty and crisp dialogues in his plays”.  

The hotel Honeymoon scene is witty throughout. Rashmi shown her wit by the reasoning which she employs in order to prevail upon Dr. Kanchan to yield to her amorous advances at the same time she strikes him at the heart:

Rashmi: “Mad man; do not try to make me remember the promise of love and marriage. Do you remember your own promises given to your own wife? Where did your humanity vanish when you tried to betray her?”

(Lagnachi Bedi, act III, p.64)

The comments of Avadhut on his state of being a bachelor are very amusing. The remarks by other characters like Parag, Aruna, and Gargi are also very amusing. Gargi’s account of how her husband Gokarn used to stand on the streets and look at the beautiful girl’s is extremely amusing. Even in other scenes of the play, there is wit enough. In this connection the quarrels between Dr. Kanchan and Yamini and the incident of bell ringing when Parag tries to embrace Rashmi are indeed amusing. This bell ringing scene is so witty and full of verbal wit that the audience and the readers roar with laughter.

Human Relationship

The Status of Women in Indian Society

Human relationship is one of the most discussing factors in Indian society. In Indian society woman is treated as the subordinate thing. The women in Atre’s selected plays such as Gharabaher (Nirmala), Udyacha Sansar (Karuna), Jag Kay Mhanel (Ulka) and Lagnachi Bedi (Yamini) are treated as the subordinate things. In India Hindu society is male dominated society where importance is given to the male rather than female. A boy is supposed to be an heir of the family and the girl is the property of others.

The woman in the Indian Hindu society is always looked down upon by the men, her place in the family is not more than a dog. She is expected to tolerate everything in the family and to serve the others. Her work is never taken into consideration. Many of the times she has to tolerate the severe beatings of her drunken husband. The men in the selected plays of Atre such
as Abasaheb, Nageshwar, Nilkanth, Bhaiyasaheb in Gharabaher, Br. Vishram, Ulhas in Udyacha Sansar, Diwakar, Trilok, Gokarn and Shaligram in Jag Kay Mhanel and Dr. Kanchan, Timir, Avadhoot, Parag in Lagnachi Bedi are born only to make the harassment of women. Because of these characters the innocent and virtuous women like Nirmala, Karuna, Varsha, Ulka, Nayana, Yamini, Minakshi and Shaila suffer in their life. But there are some good men in the society such as Padmanabh, Bhai Dinanath, Prakash and Dr. Gautam who help the women.

Woman is often an object of admiration by people in Indian society. Various socio-religious customs and rituals affect the social, economical and cultural status of women in India. Yet we find a feeling among the people in India that there is something unique in her personality. Women constitute almost one half of world’s population but her social, economical and political status is lower than that of men. Her role is changed from time to time depending upon the economic conditions and political structure of the society.

For countless centuries women in India have been subordinated to men and have been socially oppressed. It is claimed that women’s position was considerably better during the Vedic Period. Manu long ago had declared that, “Where women were adored Gods frequented that place.” But it is true that during past Vedic Period women did not enjoy equal position or status with men. In ‘Manusmriti’, according to Manu, there can not be independence for women at any stage of her life. Before marriage she must have remained under the tutelage of her parents, after marriage under that of her husband and in the extent of her widowhood under that of her son. Women confined only to certain jobs.

In the pre-Aryan society, property was communal. There was no caste or class differentiation. Agriculture was then the monopoly of women. So during the early Vedic period women in India enjoyed almost an equal status with men in different spheres of life. Rigveda shows evidence that women were fully the equal of men in the absolute knowledge of Brahma.

Early marriages for girls became an established practice around 100 A. D. when child marriage had become a widespread practice. A woman had no chance to select her husband. Evidence of the beginning of dowry system is found after 200 A.D. then woman was forbidden to read the Vedas. A system of seclusion of women began with the beginning of the Christian era. The position of Indian women deteriorated further during the Medieval Period where strict limitations were imposed on widows as well. By this period the restriction of widow remarriage was strictly observerd in the upper classes. British acquired political control over India by the mid
18th century. Contacts with British people started influencing the philosophical and socio-economic aspects of the Indian society in several ways. One of the most significant outcomes of the contacts with the rise of the liberal ideology in the Indian society is the socio-economic aspect.

The outstanding event in the 18th century Europe was the French Revolution. It had far reaching consequences on the socio-economic and cultural life of European society. Mary Wollstone Craft was the first woman of England who raised her voice against the unequal and unjust treatment given to women. Rajaram Mohan Roy dealt with social reform. In the second phase education of women received greater attention. The efforts for girls’ education began to receive Government support after 1850s. Dayanand Saraswati advocated women’s education. The main aim of education was to produce good Aryan mothers and wives. Mahatma Gandhi had similar views about women. Education truly began to spread among women after the Independence of India.

The status of Indian women is somewhat different from the West. The role that modern emancipated woman plays, has been playing in India’s social, political and cultural life is quite significant but the emancipation of woman has not entirely been an unmixed blessing for her. The national movement of India helped the cause of the woman in great measure. The role of education as a catalyst or the agent or the social change has been well recognized. Education is said to determine the level of the aspirations, technology, which constitute some of the basic factors in the progress of the development.

At the beginning of the 19th century, there was hardly any provision for the formal education of girls. Even at the beginning of the present century not much progress has been made. After independence a woman has been taking interest in the upliftment of women. Indian constitution has provided equal rights for men and women in all spheres. Even then the education of women in general has made extremely tardy progress. There has been no important awakening among the common families about the necessity of education for girls.

Respect for traditions and social convictions came in the way of girls going to school. The idea of coeducation has been all along till very recent years. Moreover the girls were considered more useful at home and their activities were strictly limited to domestic chores. Even in modern times we can see a large selection of population who discourage meaningful education for their
daughters. They feel that such education limits the choice of grooms for the girls and that after all the girls whose destination is only marriage don’t need any formal education to a housewife.

We concentrate our attention on social values and traditions which do not allow women to go out of the home and to get education with boys. Poor economic conditions compel them to engage their girls in some or the other economic activities. In our male-dominated society, it is thought that a girl would be go and serve the husband’s family where she would be required for mostly household duties. Distinction between a son and a daughter also prevents the girl’s education in the Indian society.

Socio-economic needs are more social than economic and naturally more complex. Sociological needs are more subjective in nature and value-oriented. Most of our present social problems are due to certain ambiguities in our social institutions which are the basis of our social values and attitudes. Neither the man nor the woman is clear as to what should be the status of women in today’s society. There is a great deal of confusion as to whether women should be purely traditional or modern. To be modern means to be educated, efficient and relatively rational in one’s attitude.

We observe overemphasis on the status of male or role of the son as well as lack of due recognition to the duties and responsibilities of daughters particularly in families with daughter only. Too much emphasis on marriage is the end of woman’s life and existence. Equalities to be sought are another important socio-economic spheres, like equal opportunities, equal status, equal wages, economic independence, suitable terms and conditions of work, with due consideration to woman’s vital role in child bearing and child rearing in the family, due recognition to woman’s valuable contribution in all the developmental activities.

We have to take into account the status accorded to women by the society from their very birth. If the girl is born in a family, her birth is not welcomed or it is considered less desirable than that of boy’s. She would therefore be treated as inferior to boy. Different treatment is accorded to a boy and a girl, becomes somewhat more marked when we see parents views regarding the girls rights. The position of women is adversely affected by marriage which is considered as sacramental. Parents believed that a girl was liability. She was given very little choice in selecting her life partner. It was the parent’s responsibility to arrange her marriage. Dowry system has made her position still worse. A girl should marry before she attains puberty. Parents should fix the marriage of the daughter. Fixed dowry is to be given by the father of a girl;
it is called as ‘Var Daxina’. A man should have a freedom to have more than one wife. A woman should not be free to divorce her husband. There are various fixed ideas in the minds of people in connection with women.

Marriage in India is an important social institution. It is considered as the most essential part of the human life. Hindu marriage, however, is a religious sacrament in which a man and a woman are bound in permanent relationship for the physical, spiritual and social purpose of sexual pleasure. There is a strong correlation between the norms of marriage and kinship among the Hindus which regulates the position of women in the family and also in the society. It is believed that the status of women is directly attributed to the constraints placed on them by their biological functions which do not allow them to participate in the economically productive activities to the same extent as men.

The main forms of marriage in Indian Hindu society are Endogamy, Exogamy, Hypergamy, Poligamy, Polyandry, Monogamy etc. Indian social structure is essentially an interrelated system of caste family and religion. Consequently marriage, religion and family are inextricably connected with one another in the Indian situation.

The role of religion is a system of values, a kind of general guide to the individuals’ activities in society. Religion helps to promote agreement about the nature and content of social obligations by providing values that serve to channel the attitudes of a society. At the same time religious ideas and values are ultimately influenced by the social groups among whom they originate. This theoretical background of the social structure of traditional society was decisively defined by religion which in fact was the ethos of its whole civilization. Previously marriage was considered as an essentially important institution because it was the deepest and the most complex involvement of human relationship and symbolically the cornerstone of society. It was a basic structural element and part of the social system. With marriage, an individual was assigned a definite role in the family that once again brought in to focus the joint family. This particular ceremony is supposed to give ‘Punya’ for the father of bride and is considered a sacred duty. The ‘Vivah Home’ symbolizes divine witness and sanctifies the ‘Sanskara’; these important rites are of religious orientation and closely related to life.

According to Hindu religion ethics in marriage was not merely a union of two bodies but that of two souls it is a religious bond and means of fulfilling ‘Purushartha’. This particular concept was considered to be ordained by the Vedas, for it was believed that ‘Dharma’ was to be
practiced by man together with his wife. Manu considers marriage as a social institution for ‘the fulfillment of proper relations between two different sexes’.

There are considerable variations in the marital institutions of the Hindus. The ideology and methods of marriage among the matrilineal groups are somewhat different from that of partrilineal groups. In an inter-caste marriage, man and woman belong to two different casts. The inter-caste marriage existed even in ancient India. Pratiloma marriage is also a form of inter-caste marriage in which man of lower caste marries woman of superior caste. In a matrilineal society like some tribals, women are allowed greater freedom of movement.

Among various sections of the country the dowry plays an extremely important role in marriage negotiations. As a result the parents of the girl must be ready to bear the social costs of such marriage. In India some social reformers are trying to fight for more opportunities for women to be educated choice in marriage livelihood etc. with the advent of freedom, the Indian woman atleast theoretically attained a dignity and respect which probably she had never known before. The constitution of the country has given equal rights to women. She can not be deprived of any post position she is fitted merely on the ground of sex.

Man-woman relationship is an extremely complex area of study. The Hindu myths and legends present bafflingly contradictory picture of women’s place in the family and society. On the one hand she is conceived as the source of all power the embodiment of ‘Shakti’, on the other she is no more than a helpless, weak depending on man for her survival. What is, however, remarkably common in all those pictures is man’s domination over woman and secondly on less remarkable is the fact that a woman is no more than a female sex organism designed to give birth to the children.

As a child her sex must be protected by her parents as a young wife it must be wholly the property of her husband who must protect her with all his might and as a mother ceasing to be sexually attractive, she must devote herself to the rearing up of her children and if she has a grown up son she must live under his control in addition to the control of her husband. A good Hindu woman never acquires her own likes and dislikes. She learns from observing other woman around her to accept the likes and dislikes determined for her first by her father and later by her husband. She learns indeed to believe that her father’s or husband’s dislikes are her own and is happy and satisfied.
An educated Hindu woman perhaps has sometimes read about things like individuality, love feelings but even she can never really imbibe them and feel the need to realize them in her own life she prides on being under male’s domination that is one reason why a Hindu woman regards remaining single as nothing short of course. While man has other faculties such as intelligence, reasoning and so on and has to comprehend and control the processors of nature and the functioning of the society a woman is remarkably deficient in mental faculties and enormously rich in sexual passions. Their functions are limited to be married to have a sexual intercourse with their husbands to give birth to children and to look after the household. All these functions have their codes of conduct which the Hindu women are made to imbibe from their very childhood. The idea that she is no more than a sex symbol to man is drilled into the depth of her mind from birth by her mother, sister and other women relatives. As a result of this man-woman relationship either before or after marriage is never accompanied by woman’s feelings or a desire to understand each other. They can not look upon each other except as creatures of sex and motivated by nothing except an urge for sexual intercourse.

Illiteracy is the major problem of the Indian women. Women are backward because they are illiterate. They are unable to decide what is good and what is bad for them. Women can’t solve their own economic problems and those of their family problems. They find it difficult to manage their household affairs and can’t participate freely in public activities. Social customs like dowry, male domination, her secondary role the family, social bindings for widow remarriages, sati, rape, abortion, family planning, divorce, socio-economic needs are some of their major problems.

Household duties and responsibilities are shouldered mainly by woman. It is therefore pertinent to know their role in the decision making process. But women have yet to win the right to take decisions regarding household expenditure. Women in their tasks as mothers who bear and rear children they play a very vital role in the development of community. Healthy children both physically and mentally are a pre-requisite for the healthy development of a community. Secondly the mother plays an important role in the child’s socialization. Hence certain minimum education formal or informal is essential in order to train the children to be responsible members of a community. Thirdly the women share the economic burden of the family in no small measure. Hence training and improving the skills and intelligence of woman would go on long way in the improvement of the social and economic base.
In his plays selected for the study, Atre has focused the sufferings of Indian women caused by the men. In Gharabaher the women like Nirmala and Minakshi are the victims of the male domination. They are sexually harassed by the men. Nirmala, a virtuous woman and the wife of Shaunak, always remains in constant fear because her father-in-law and brother-in-law make her sexual harassment. In order to escape from their clutch she leaves her home. She shows that the Indian women are virtuous. In Udyacha Sansar Karuna, Shaila and Nayana are the victims of male dominating society. Karuna’s husband is libertine who always runs after other women. Shaila becomes pregnant before her marriage by her married lover Ulhas who deceives her and leaves. Nayana loves Shekhar but she becomes frustrate when she comes to know that she the daughter of Shekhar’s father, Br. Vishram by another woman. In Jag Kay Mhanel Ulka suffers because of her husband but she is the only revolutionary woman in Atre’s play who leaves her home and husband never to return. Nirmala returns home for the sake of her child. Yamini and Rashmi in Lagnachi Bedi are exploited by the male characters such as Dr. Kanchan, Timir, Gokarn and Parag. The male characters in Atre’s plays dominate the female characters. They are oppressed by the men in the society as the women are secondary or the subordinate.

Techniques

Plot

While constructing the plots of his plays selected for the study, Atre has mainly focused on the social realism as the main topic of his satirical plays. Like his farcical plays, Atre has used social realism in his satirical plays like Gharabaher, Udyacha Sansar, Jag Kay Mhanel and Lagnachi Bedi. In the play Gharabaher Nirmala’s exploitation is made by her father-in-law, Abasaheb and Nilkanth, Nageshwar and Bhaiyasaheb. The plot leads ahead and Nirmala becomes rebellious and cuts her Mangalsutra around her neck and throws it at her coward husband, Shaunak and her father-in-law, Abasaheb and leaves the home but at the end of the play she returns home on the request of Padmanabh only for the sake of her child. The plot of Udyacha Sansar is constructed on three episodes, they are- first Karuna-Vishram episode, second Shaila-Ulhas episode and the third Shekhar-Nayana episode. These three episodes are intermingled together in the development of the story of the play. In Jag Kay Mhanel the conflict between Ulka and her husband Diwakar leads the plot ahead. In Lagnachi Bedi the plot rests on
two episodes, Yamini-Dr. Kanchan episode and Rashmi-Dr. Kanchan episode. Both the episodes are woven together in the plot.

**Action**

In the play *Gharabaher*, Atre presents Nirmala as the central character of the play and the entire actions move around her. Throughout the play she suffers because of other characters and she leaves her home but in the end she returns only for the sake of her child. Even the relationship between Bhaiyasaheb and Minakshi lead the action in the play ahead. The role of other characters such as Nilkanth, Nageshwar, Padmanabh and Shaunak is quite significant in the action of the play. The action in *Udyacha Sansar* moves around Karuna and Dr. Kanchan. Dr. Kanchan is the cause of the sufferings of Karuna. The action moves ahead in the play and the two events add in to the action, the Shekhar-Nayana affair and Shaila-Ulhas affair. It creates the tragic flaw of the action. The climax of the action takes place when Karuna commits suicide. The role of Dr. Gautam is significant in the action of the play. *In Jag Kay Mhanel* the action moves around Ulka, the protagonist of the play suffers because of her husband, Diwakar. The climax of the action takes place when revolutionary Ulka leaves her husband and home forever.

**Dialogues**

Atre has written dialogues in his plays selected for the study very skillfully. They are ordinary conversations but they are interesting and lead to the development of the plot and character. They are witty, terse and crisp. Good dialogue is character marshaled so as to continue to stimulate interest or excitement. From start to finish good dialogue is handmade, like good lace, clear of finetexture, furthering with each thread, the harmony and strength of a design to which it must be subordinated. Atre has practiced austerity in writing of their dialogues. His characters do not deliver long speeches or soliloquies they create an illusion of life on the stage by making his characters talk in a natural manner. His dialogues are homely, brilliant and informative. A good quality of their dialogues is the complete harmony of the characters with the dialogue. Atre’s dialogues reveal and expose the character and his dialogues intensify the ridiculousness of a situation. In order to exploit the ridiculous situation, Atre makes use of deformed words.
**Language**

Atre has used different dialects of languages in order to show the different social problems and difference in social classes from which these characters come. P. K. Atre writes his plays in Marathi as his mother tongue is Marathi. He uses the simple and straightforward language in his plays. His language is prosaic. He used the language in an unambiguous way.

**Characters**

Atre is very careful about his character delineation in his plays because he regards character as the most important element of his dramatic technique. Atre draws his characters from his observation of persons around him. His characters are therefore living human beings of flesh and blood. They are all men and women having the common human virtues and frailties. He has only transferred living men and women from the home, the office, factory, the law court and the street of his stage. Characters in the selected plays of Atre are ordinary human beings. The characters like Dr. Kanchan, Br. Vishram, Abasaheb, Gokarn, Parag, Nilkanth Nageshwar, Diwakar, and Bhaiyasaheb are very lusty whereas the characters like Padmanabh, Dr. Gautam, and Prakash, Trilok are the good characters. Female characters in his plays suffer throughout their life. Nirmala, Karuna, Yamini and Ulka are the victims of lusty men.

**Conflict**

Atre has depicted conflict in his plays. In Atre’s *Gharabaher* there is conflict between Nirmala and her father-in-law, Abasaheb who always looks at her in sexual point of view. There is conflict between Nirmala and Nilkanth and Nageshwar. In *Jag Kay Mhanel* the conflict between Ulka and her husband Diwakar. In *Udyacha Sansar* there is a conflict between Br. Vishram and Karuna on the one hand and the conflict between Shekhar-Nayana and Shaila-Ulhas on the other. In *Lagnachi Bedi* the conflict is between Yamini and Dr. Kanchan.
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6. Evening News (1934) Ref. from Atre and Marathi Theatre, Parchure Publication, Mumbai.(p.-65)


12. Radio Session of Mumbai Nabhovani (1934)

13. ‘Nirbhid’ (weekly), 1934


16. Ibid (p. 81)

17. Ibid (p. 83)

22. Ibid (p. 172)
25. Atre P. K., (1934) Gharabaher, Parchure prakashan, Mumbai. (text)