Chapter 1

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Mankind has travelled from cave to cafe. In the course of time, human being has tried to solve the mysteries of nature, universe and human existence through variety of modes. The human tendency of inquiry is more or less has remained essential for all the discoveries today. Literature as a form of arts has always represented such human tendencies wonderfully in the diverse means of literary communication like Drama, Poetry, Story, Novel etc. Literature is considered as a faithful mirror of society which plays the key role in the formation of human culture. In other words, the history of literature is the history of mankind. The work of literature aims to entertain, preach and give aesthetic pleasure to its reader. Different forms of literary expression like Drama, Novel, Poetry, Short Story, etc. have their own styles and techniques which lead to aesthetic delight. The art of storytelling is as ancient as human life that can be seen in the earlier tradition of oral literature. These ancient stories pass values, morals, realities, truth, wisdom, experiences, ethics and moods. Hence, within the frame work of culture the notion of myth originated to heighten the effect. From one to other generation, Myth has remained significant tool to pass on the cultural heritage of society. Through the close investigation of history, one can see that the dramatists of classic to modern time have shown deep interest in Myth. In fact, the drama form is quite suitable medium for myth, as it is popular amongst folk.
The relationship between drama and myth is very unique in which the one supports to the other.

Among all the forms of literature, drama is considered as the most powerful and effective genres of ancient art. It is one of the oldest forms of literature that also suits to describe modern and postmodern society respectively. Alike literature, the chief goal of the drama is not only to please the audience but also to make them aware of realities of life and teach them indirectly. In the modern drama myth plays an important role which bridges present with the past.

The History of Dramaturgy

In the country like India, the tradition of writing drama has long and rich history. The root of Indian drama lies in the tradition of Sanskrit literature of the Vedic Period. In the classical Sanskrit age, dramas were performed in the front of people. In the ancient India, the art of performance accompanied by music and songs was important part of the rituals and religious festivals. These dramas were simple in style and based on theme or episode from *Mahabharata*, the *Bhagavat Gita* and the *Ramayana*. Hence, during those days, drama was considered as the significant means of communication and closely connected with the routines of people. This rich tradition of drama was preserved and flourished in the hands of some of the well-known dramatists like Bhasa, Kalidasa, Ashvaghosh, Bhavabhuti, Bhattnarayan etc. These dramatists have contributed to the treasure of Sanskrit literature. During 3rd Century AD, Bhasa, a prominent Sanskrit dramatist enriched
the tradition with the contribution of thirteen plays. Later on, Kalidasa who is widely regarded as the greatest dramatist of all times leads Sanskrit drama to its glorious age. Bhasa’s *Malvikagnimitra, Urubhanga, Swapnavasavadattam*, Kalidas’s *Abhigyanshankutala*, Bhavabhuti’s *Uttararamacharit* and *Malatimadhava* are some of the well-known plays written during that period. These plays are considered as the treasure of world literature and show the glorious and rich tradition of Sanskrit classical dramas. As the time passes, different forms of entertainment like folk drama, dance, shadow puppet etc came into existence during the 7th century.

**Bharat Muni’s *Natyasastra***

The discussion about ancient Indian drama is incomplete without the mention of *Natyasastra*, the oldest text and significant treatise on the theory of drama. Bharat Muni’s *Natyasastra* is a celebrated work on Indian dance & drama tradition. It mainly deals with all the major aspects of drama namely stage setting, music, plot construction, characterization, dialogue and acting. In fact, *Natyasastra* is the first major treatise on the art of performance which depicts the entire framework of drama so minutely.

*Natyasastra* contains around 6,000 sutras or verse stanzas includes in 36 chapters. There is no fix date which clearly justify when it was written but it is believed that the text may be written between 200 BC and 200 AD. According to some scholars, it may have been written by various authors at different periods. However, a scholar like Kapila Vatsyayana argued that the unity of structure and
its coherence suggests that it is written by the single person. At the end of the text, the verse appears "Since he alone is the leader of the performance, taking on many roles, he is called Bharata" (35.91), indicates its author. The following chapters of Natyasastra show that it minutely discusses everything which is related to performing arts, drama.

1. Origin of drama
2. Description of the playhouse
3. Puja (offering) to the Gods of the stage
4. Description of the karana dance
5. Preliminaries of a play
6. Sentiments (rasa)
7. Emotional and other states
8. Gestures of minor limbs
9. Gestures of hands
10. Gestures of other limbs
11. Cari movements
12. Different gaits
13. Zones and local usages
14. Rules of prosody
15. Metrical patterns
16. Diction of a play
17. Rules on the use of languages
18. Modes of address and intonation
19. Ten kinds of play
20. Limbs of the segments
21. Styles
22. Costumes and make-up
23. Harmonious performance
24. Dealings with curtains
25. Varied performances
26. Success in dramatic performances
27. Instrumental music
28. Stringed instruments
29. Time measure
30. Dhruva songs
31. Covered instruments
32. Types of character
33. Distribution of roles
34. Descent of drama on the Earth
35. Roles
36. The Theatre Myth

The influence of Bhartmuni’s *Natyasastra* can be clearly seen in the works of major Sanskrit dramatists since ancient time to modern time. In short, Bharat
Muni’s *Natyasastra* is a complete, systematic book on the art of drama that goes deep and discusses every aspect of drama. Drama is a performing art. It is a mimetic presentation of human being with all activities on the stage. Shruti Das comprehensively describes the importance of *Natyasastra* in following words:

> It is unanimously accepted that the *Natyasastra*, the ancient treatise of Indian Dramaturgy, has provided a sustainable foundation and framework for development of theory and practice of performing arts in India. Just as Panini standardized the classical form of Sanskrit, Bharata’s *Natyasastra* has standardized the classical form of drama. (Das 140)

Critic has praised the milestone work of Bharat Muni and compared it with equally great work of Panini Muni, a treatise of Sanskrit grammar. In *Natyasastra* Bharat Muni describes the origin of drama and discusses each element of drama and dramaturgy in detail. There is a myth rooted in the origin of *Natyasastra* itself. As per that myth laymen were fascinated towards the material pleasures and lust in ancient time. So to maintain the social decorum and divert the entertainment needy folk, drama as a medium is derived by God Brahma on request of Lord Indra. One can say that objective was to provide people, gods, demons, yakshas etc. with a form of delight and which can teach art of living. Drama has fulfilled the need of visual art as a form of entertainment in that transformative phase.
The entire idea of Natya was given by Brahma after a long meditation. Brahma pulled out the text from Rig Veda, songs from Sama Veda, the art of acting from the Yajur Veda and Rasa (aesthetic experience) from the Atharva Veda and combined them into a fifth Veda “Natya Veda” and thus gave birth to the art of drama. He handed it over to his son, Lord Indra, the God of the skies. In a way, Natyasastra provides not only the story of birth of drama but also establishes standards and methodology to perform the drama. Dialectical, regional and national literature of Indian subcontinent is highly influenced by this treatise and majority a time it has been followed in the dramas of respective age and language.

**Brief History of Gujarati Drama Tradition:**

The form of Drama in Gujarati language developed in modern age. While other forms of literature had already established themselves in Gujarati language; the form of drama was comparatively late to find its place. Though the Gujarati drama tradition is having short history, it is rich. The regional, modern and post drama in Gujarati has dynamic history. Lalita dukhdarshak, natak is first Gujarati drama published in 1866 and earned tremendous popularity. It has furnished moral influence on the Gujarati society of that time and sustained the same impact for a long time. Besides the play already mentioned, Ranchhodbhai wrote eight other plays, including translations of Kalidasa’s Vikramovashi (1868) and
Malvikagnimitra (1876) among his more lasting contributions in his treatise on the art and science of drama, *Natya Prakash* (1890).

While plays of Dalpatram (1820-1898), Narmad (1833-1886), Ranchhodbhai (1837-1923), and to a certain extent, Govardhanram’s (1855-1907) *Saraswatichandra* (1887) (the play based on his novel by this name), Manilal Dwivedi’s (1858-1898) *Kant* and Ramanbhai Neelkanth’s (1868-1928) *Raino Parvat* (1914) as also Nanalal’s (1877-1946) *Jaya Jayant* (1914) somehow maintained a link between literary plays and the commercial stage. The tie was all but snapped by about 1914, with the result that the drama split into ‘dhrishya’ and ‘shravya’. This link was revived when Ramanlal V. Desai (1892-1954) attempted a sort of synthesis between the literary play and the amateur stage play with his *Shankit hridaya* (1925) and which continued for the next twenty five years till K. M. Munshi’s (1887-1971) *Chhichhie thik* (1946) and *Vah re men vah* (1949) were published. The plays of this period (1924-1949) notably those by K. M. Munshi, Ramanlal V. Desai, C. C. Mehta, Pranjivan V. Pathak (1898-1975), Batubhai Umarvadia (1899-1950), Yashvant Pandya (1905-1955) and others were printed and published and most of them were performed. By 1950, however, with the virtual disappearance of the professional stage and the amateur theatre coming into its own, the ‘original’ and the published play made its exit from the stage and the translations’ adaptations (seldom published) established their firm foothold on the ‘new’ stage—a trend which continues till this day.

Before a few years, the Gujarat Government’s Sangeet Nritya Natya Academy published Dahyabhai Dholshaji’s plays in three volumes—the first in 1964, the
second in 1966 and the third in 1969. Sastun Sahitya Vardhak Karyalaya published Harilal M. Mulani’s (1868-1957) *Saubhagya sundari* and *Krishna charitra*, and the Forbes Gujarati Sabha published in 1979, on the occasion of the celebrations of the 125th anniversary of the Gujarati stage, Raghunath Brambhatt’s *Buddhadeva* which was first staged in 1914. It may be observed that Dalpatram’s *Mithyabhiman*, published in 1871, was first staged only in 1946 by Ahmedabad’s Natamandaland Raghunath’s *Buddhadeva*, first performed in 1914, was published in a book form only in 1979. Between these two ends, publication and performance and vice versa, lies one of the most tragic chapter of the history of the Gujarati drama. The current position in so far as the full-length plays are ever gets performed and what is performed is rarely published, the ‘dhrishya-shravya’ separation being almost total.

The first 25 years of the 20th century saw the rise of such grand masters of the dramatic art as Nanalal, Munshi, Ramanlal and Chandravadan. Nanalal (1877-1946) who entered the scene with publication of *Indukumar* in 1909, and *Jaya Jayant* in 1914, wrote about a dozen plays subsequently including the historical *Jehangir Nurjahan* (1928) and *Akbarshah* (1930). He described his plays as ‘lyrical dramas’ of the type of Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound*. These dramas have provoked extreme views and seemingly endless controversy with regard to their form, style, content, expression, etc. Attempts to stage *Jaya Jayant* did not meet with success, though *Shringi rishi* based on it proved immensely popular. Chandravadan Mehta considers soliloquies in *Akbarshah* to be of world class and has demonstrated their theatrical potency. Nanalal himself did not accept any restraints to make his dramas fit for the
stage and assigned them to a class all of his own. It cannot be gainsaid that while his plays are difficult to perform and none too easy to read, they have, by their individuality, attracted attention and enriched the dramatic literature.

The two other major playwrights have most influenced drama by their total departure from the traditional norms, are K. M. Munshi and C. C. Mehta. The two deviated from the then prevalent format and developed their independent technique in regard to the subject matter, style, language, etc. Having drunk deeply at the fount of the western literature, both of them gave a vigorous shake-up to the Gujarati drama in their hands began to pulsate with a new life. They discarded songs and gave their plays a realistic touch. Not for them any disjointed humour in a play; instead they wrote full-length comedies and in the process gave them a pleasant habitation, an identifiable shape and a name.

K. M. Munshi with his ‘pauranik’ (mythological) and ‘samajik’ (social) play brought about an unprecedented unity of shravya and drishyai.e. audio - visual in a play and took both the readers and the viewers to an altogether new world of enchantment and entertainment. In the range of their characters, epic grandeur of subject matter, live delineation of emotions, humour, powerful dialogues and captivating and interest-sustaining plots, Munshi’s plays scaled hitherto unattempted and unattained heights of literary craftsmanship and became trend-setters in the dramatic field.

C. C. Mehta wrote Akko (1972), a character play, and scaled new heights of stark realism in his Aag-gadi (1933) a play depicting the grim and tragic world of the
railways. Another character play of his is *Narmat* (1937) *Naga Bawa* (1937), a play on the world of beggars, *Hoholika* (1957), a burlesque and a number of other outstanding, humorous and vigorous plays were also written by him.

For the first time K. M. Munshi’s and C. C. Mehta’s plays discarded completely the pattern of the Sanskrit drama and followed the artistic form of the play as evolved in the West. The plays have, thus, been truly described as landmarks. Both for Munshi and Mehta it was a happy circumstance that most of their plays were read and performed. While Munshi, a versatile genius roamed forever to fresh fields and pastures and he stopped writing plays during the last two decades of his life. C. C. Mehta continues till this day to provide proof that the play and the stage for him are the very essence of his being. The advent of Munshi and Mehta also marked as the beginning of the decline of the professional stage which slowly started disintegrating in the late forties and almost became extinct by the time the stage celebrated its centenary in 1952. From then on, a new amateur stage firmly adopted itself to the commercial stage to an almost total exclusion of the old forms of the stage.

Amongst the other playwrights of the twenties, Ramanlal V. Desai (1892-1954) and Pragji Dossa are the notable ones who started writing stage-plays around 1924 and 1929 respectively. They tried to build a bridge between the old and the new, combining their happier aspects, thought Pragjibhai was almost wholly influenced by the old. One cannot say whether their efforts met with success. On the other hand, some of the Pragjibhai’s plays like *Mangal mandir* (1955), *Gharno divo* (1952)
Chhoru kachhoru (1956), when performed by the non-professionals, achieved noteworthy success, bagging prizes in the state drama competition.

Of the large number of other playwrights, who published their full-length plays and quite a few of which, when performed, met with varying degrees of success, the following are important: Rasiklal C. Parikh, Jasodhar Mehta, Vajubhai Tank (1915-1980), Nandkumar Pathak, Shivkumar Joshi (b. 1916), Chunilal Madia (1922-1968), Labhshankar Thaker (b. 1935), Raghuvir Chaudhari (b. 1938), Gunvantray Acharya, Gulabdas Broker, Ramjibhai Vania, Vinayak purohit, Sitanshu Yashashchadra (b. 1914) Chinu Modi (b. 1939) and Madhu Rye (b. 1942).

This is almost an era of the full-length plays, that is, the years during which the old commercial stage plays almost vanished and new amateur stage turned to neo-professionalism. This period is also marked by the near disappearance of writers who wrote for the stage and their being replaced by those who strove to keep it alive through translations and adaptations.

It may be stated that the three decades, 1952-1982, belong mostly to the one-act plays. These one-act plays are a product of the last decades, reared and sustained by the Parsi stage enthusiasts, though they reached artistic perfection and wide acceptability as an independent literary form around 1925. During the last sixty years, a number of eminent play-wrights, essayists and novelists have taken a lot of pains to cultivate and popularize the one-act play which passed through many vicissitudes. There was a time when the ‘absurd’ attracted quite a few votaries and practitioners. The ‘absurd’ however could not take roots in the native soil and seems
to have withered away. There are still the ‘experimental’ plays with us which delight by their novelty and the radio offers a wide scope to this genre of the play. The inter-collegiate drama competitions have provided a number of authors with a welcome opportunity and the publishers, too, otherwise shy of taking up plays, have come forward to risk bringing out collections of quite a few one-act plays. In 1973 alone there were as many as seven such publications.

Here too, Chandravadan Mehta (1901) pioneered what has been termed as Radio Feature or Radio Rupaka and has successfully experimented with a variety of such plays – documentary, biographical, mythological, musical, historical, etc. He published a number of collection of such plays and has shown their immense possibilities both for the radio and the stage. He, thus, gives the one-act play a new dimension and a big boost, demonstrating the rich variety to which it is amenable.

Quite a few leading figures of literature, attracted by this form, have enriched it with their art and creativity. To mention a few of them: Pranjivan Pathak (1898-1975), Batubhai Umarvadia (1899-1950), Yashvant Pandya (1905-1955), Indulal Gandhi (b. 1905), Jayantilal Dalal (1909-1970), Yashodhar Mehta (b. 1909), Rambhaben Gandhi (b. 1911), Krishnalal Shridharani (1911-1960), Pannalal Patel (b. 1912), Nandkumar Pathak (b. 1915), Shivkumar Joshi (b. 1916), Jyoti Vaidhya, Kirit Vaidhya (b. 1917), Barkat Virani (b. 1925), Prabodh Joshi (b. 1926), Labhshankar Thaker (b. 1935), Raghubir Chaudhari (b. 1938), Chinu Modi (b. 1939), Madhu Rye (b. 1942). Besides these, the other one-act playwrights are Mahesh Dave, Chandrakant Sheth, Adil Mansuri, Vibhuti Shah, Mukund Parikh, Subhash Shah,
Ramesh Shah, Indu Puvar who have kept alive the one-act plays both in printed form and also as radio and stage productions.

It is an undeniable fact that very few full-length plays are written and fewer still performed. Under the circumstances, the drama lives in random and rare publications, in constant and regular enactment of translations and adaptations and qualitatively and quantitatively rich traditional and experimental one-act plays. Drama in Gujarati is satisfying from the spectators’ point of view. Talented directors have shown what could be done with really satisfying and absorbing original scripts, with ancient and folk plays and also with revivals of well edited old plays and last but not the least, with dramatization of some of the outstanding original works like novels etc. Difficulties of production notwithstanding, a painstaking director can show that wholesome entertainment could be had even from difficult mythological plays. To the credit of the new stage it may also be stated that it has tackled quite a few interesting but complicated western plays, totally disregarding the ‘box-office’.

**Brief History of Kannada Drama Tradition:**

Every region, society and culture has its own peculiar tradition of literature and Arts in general. Kannada literature is no exception in it. Kannada also has an exclusive position for its various arts. The drama tradition of Kannada has remained rich in its nature which signifies the state of Arts in Kannada language and literature. The history of Kannada drama can be traced since the twelfth century.
Along with several other arts, drama or theatrical art came into existence. Folk theatre not only has remained in its roots but also remained present throughout the development process and contributed Kannada drama tradition with its contributions. Along with Yakshagana, Sannata, Talamaddale, and Puppetry were the important forms which have contributed to Kannada theatre respectively. Folklore is also the significant element; one has to take into the consideration. The History of Kannada drama tradition is rooted in folk theatre/drama of Karnataka. Alike Sanskrit drama tradition, Kannada drama is also started with the primary objective to spread the awareness of religion and religious rituals amongst folk. Some historians find traces of a few devotional narratives in this tradition with the specific sacred sects. In the end of 17th century, court play is written by Mitravinda Govind. It indicates tradition of court play in Kannada. Nataka Shale is also an essential part of the Kannada drama tradition, traced in the 17th century itself which was artistically decorated platform for the enactment of dramas. As time passes along with the influence of time and technology, printing and publishing houses were came into existence which helped Kannada dramas to flourish more. Kannada Renaissance held between, 1880 to 1920 brought closet drama in Kannada tradition. Many literary figures of Kannada tried their pen on this form. It has given a new perspective to the drama form. Srikantiah, a famous dramatist also known as B M Shree (1884-1946), has experimented tragedy form of west in Kannada. Later on Kuvempu known as K. V. Puttappa has revised epic plots in his works. Srinivasa known as Masti Venkatesa Iyengar has composed historical - social plays and epics. His characterization art
brought newness in the subject matters and presentation dramas. Modern Kannada Drama in comparison to ancient drama is quite rich and receptive. *MithravindaGovinda* (1696) is one and rare example of simple translation of Sanskrit poet Harsh’s *Ratnavali*.

Modern Kannada Drama has relied upon translations. This reception was highly influenced by Sanskrit drama tradition. In 19th Century the first Modern Kannada Drama (1887) was published from Bombay. *Iggappa Hegde Vivaha Prahasana* has remained important in this journey which deals with the subject of caste system. It is not only mere experiment in matter of form but also proved potential by using the European social realist dramatic form and its language. Publication of this drama is one more example of a drama brought by a rural immigrant to Bombay with the purpose of reformation. Further, one has to mention T. P. Kailasam, a geology student who was interested in Contemporary British Drama have has experimented with dramatization techniques, language and form and could contribute a lot. His writings indicate the influence of British Drama yet creative in its nature. His dramas have given a new direction to Kannada theatre as they were unconventional and carefree. He did not keep himself limited to company theatre nor he simply copied British Theatre but he tried to explore new possibilities and extend the scope of company theatre. Another potential name in this drama tradition is Sri Ranga. He has published his first drama in the year of 1930. Being a Sanskrit Scholar, he dived deep in to the Sanskrit drama tradition and his understanding of *Natyasastra* and
contemporary tradition earned his dramas unique place in Kannada drama tradition. B. M. Srikantiah is also one of the notable dramatists in Kannada. His vision towards drama was unique. Through the Greek forms, he has developed a new perspective to look at ancient dramas and drama tradition. It has benefitted the rich tradition to move with pace.

The trendsetter, versatile dramatist Girish Karnad with the publication of Tughlaq (1964) entered into this tradition and the trend of Kannada Drama is changed. In a way, Kannada Drama has long dramatic tradition which continued in the modern days also with the rise of new writers and their contribution.

**Brief History of Indian English Drama**

With the industrial revolution and urban development, the modern Indian English drama evolved during 18th and 19th century under the British Empire. During the British Government, Indian Drama stood apart as the weapon of protest against the Britishers. The contemporaneousness of the varied facets of English drama in India presents the reality of daily life such as poverty, suffering and agony of the common people. Indian English drama was introduced in the later part of the 17th century, with the establishment of East India Company. Thus, British Colonialism then did play a major role in Indian dramaturgy. The famous Parsi Theatre was established in Bombay (Now Mumbai) in 1852-3 which has greatly influenced all the parts of country. Apart from Bombay other cities of India like, Chennai (Madras in that time) and Calcutta were the epicenters for theatre in that
time. The influence of British dramatis and their theatrical models helped the Modern Indian theatre to attract the audience. The drama of this period based on popular myths and historical events which were performed by the trained actors. Gradually, the new stage techniques, songs, dance, music etc incorporated in the drama to create lively atmosphere in the mind of audience.

In the pre-independence India under the British Empire, English language became an important medium of communication in all the sectors. Many writers and thinker were influenced by the English language and literature. In the beginning, Indians reacted with the suspicious mentality towards English language. However, people realized the need to accept English language to use as a weapon against the British Empire. Gradually, English language was well received by Indian writers and thinkers. They started writing in English through which Indian spirit was revealed. At the result, the term Indo-Anglian came into existence which is used to refer literary creation in the English language by Indians or Indian authors. In 1833, a book was published in Calcutta, with the writings of native students under the title Indo-Anglian literature. Later on this term has been popularized by K. R. Srinivas Iyengar by adopting it in his work named, Indo-Anglian Literature, a work on history of Indian writing in English. It was his first book, published in 1943. It is said that, with the publication of this book, a new era in Indian literature has started. C. R. Reddy, who in his foreword to Srinivas Iyengar's work Indo-Anglian Literature says:
Indo-Anglian literature is not essentially different in kind from Indian literature. It is a part of it, a modern facet of that glory which commencing from the Vedas, has continued to spread its mellow light now with greater and now with lesser brilliance under the inexorable vicissitudes of time and history ever increasingly upon the present time of Tagore, Iqbal and Aurobindo Ghosh, and bids fair to expand with ours, as well as humanity’s expanding future. (Reddy Introduction Indo – Anglian 3)

In the modern time, Indian English drama could not flourish properly as per the expectation. Initially, it is observed that English dramas were performed to entertain British rulers and therefore it took time to spread in the county. On the other hand, inadequate language competence as well as influence of vernacular languages affected English drama to attract the folk. Majority Indians feel comfortable to express themselves in regional language. India, a nation of many states has its roots in regional literature. From the actors to the audience, vernacular expression matters a lot. They could not properly connect with English language. Therefore, Indian English drama could not grow in India. Dr. P. V. Prasad’s article titled, The Sense of History and Tradition in Girish Karnad’s Hayavadana throws light on the arguments in following words:

Indian English drama has not been so fortunate as poetry and fiction in Indian English because drama requires specialized skill and talent in selecting a theme which is
presentable on the stage and in picking up a technique
which appeals to the audience. (Prasad The Sense 2)

Many critics like Prasad have observed the rise of new tradition in
the history of Indian English Drama tradition. Majority of them observed
Karnad’s valuable and path making contribution towards Indian drama
and Indian theatre. One more critic, K R S Iyenger writes:

Indo-Anglian Drama: isn’t it like talking about 'Snakes in
Iceland?' Not quite, but the problem is there, for while
poetry, novels, and non-fiction prose can be read in the
silence of one’s study. Drama can come to life only in the
theatre. (54)

In the same way, it is importance to note that many dramatists who are
considered as the founding figures of Indian English drama have translated
their plays from their regional language to English.

Indian drama in English... emerges against the backdrop of a rich
heritage of classical Sanskrit drama and about two centuries’
culture of Shakespeare, for a people who have always been
interested in the dramatics of a Ramleela, a Nautanki or a Yatra
even in the mild half light of a taper in villages miles away from
the city and the electricity, from amenity and modernity. (Yadav
12)

It shows that how the Indian English drama developed not completely in
English but in the translation from regional language. C. L. Khatri in his article,

Introduction to Indian Drama in English represents this fact by giving detailed
description:
Indian Drama in English is still toddling in the race striving to walk straight at its own strength. It is a regrettable fact that it has not achieved the position that Indian fiction or poetry in English enjoys in the realm of commonwealth literature. It still relies heavily on the translation of regional plays into English. For example, from Kannada Girish Karnad’s *Tughlaq, Hayavadana*, and other plays from Bengali Badal Sircar’s *Pagla Ghora, Bakilthas, Juloos* and the plays of Rabindranath Tagore, from Marathi Vijay Tendulkar’s *Khamosh, Sakharam Binder, Ghasi Ram Kotwal, Kanyadan* etc. from Hindi the plays of Mohan Rakesh, Dharmvir Bharti and of others have been translated into English to enrich the corpus of Indian drama in English. Surprisingly its reputation is more based on these translations than on original plays in English. (Khatri *Introduction* 3)

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) won the prestigious Noble Prize for *Gitanjali*, a collection of poetry. He wrote his major plays in Bengali and then translated into English. His plays appeared in *Collected Poems and Plays* (1936). Tagore’s English plays are remarkable for precision and well-knit plot, which is not found in Bengali originals. The famous plays of Tagore include *The Post Office* and *The King of the Dark Chamber* was translated respectively by Devabrata Mukharjee and C. K. Sen. Tagore’s plays have been failures upon the stage because they are extremely symbolic and poetic plays. In the original, they have great musical qualities but even these qualities have been lost in their English transcription.
Tagore has tried to impart new values and symbolic significance to ancient Hindu myths and legends. Whatever may be the value of such plays, they are not successful stage plays. However, plays like *Sacrifice* have been very much successful on the stage also. Tagore set out to unify Indian and European traditions creating plays which have been described as mixture of Bengali folk drama and Western medieval mystery plays.

Sri Aurobindo is another Indian English playwright who successfully wrote in the fashion of Elizabethan blank verse drama. His plays reveal verity of themes and characters. His plays deal with the different cultures and countries in different epochs, which differentiate him from the other playwrights. *Persuas the Deliverer* (1944) is stranded in the Greek myth of Persues. *Vasavadutta* (1987) is rooted in romantic tales of ancient India, *Rodogune* (1959) is a Syrian romance and *Viziers of Bassora* (1959) take us to Persia and then *the Deliverer* (1944). All his plays were published posthumously. The story of *Vasavadutta* (1987), in its main outlines, can be traced in Somadeva’s *Kathasaritsagara* and there is also the dramatic version of the same story by Bhasa in his *Swapna Vasavadutta*.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya also contributed to the Indian English Drama and has always been noted for his fecundity and versatility. He made his name as he was the first to impart realism to drama and made it a vehicle for social protest and emergence of a significant working class. Chattopadhyaya’s *Five Plays* is published in 1937, which was written in prose. Dramatist has a socialist bent which
is quite conspicuous and unique. His plays are full with realism and have a didactic approach. The plays are constructed with a purpose and realism as mentioned which makes his plays unique. His dramas have earned him the fame of being milestone in the history of Indian English drama. Srinivas Iyengar says:

Five Plays...contain some of his characteristic works as a playwright, revealing his social consciousness, flair for realism and like his prose writing [His] social plays are realistic and symbolic. They expose artificial ways of life, morality; suffering of the poor in a capitalistic economic order...these plays are indeed manifestoes of the new realism. (Iyengar 234)

T. P. Kailasam (1885-1946) is another worth considering dramatist who contributed in the field of Indian English drama. His writing is deeply steeped in Indian culture, Hindu religious thoughts and myths. He took material from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and presented with the modern sensibility. His English plays show influence of puranic i.e. ancient themes, though he interprets them in the intellectual language of today and shows how prose can be used as a fit medium for the expression of tragic emotions. In this context, Iyer says, “His rendering of puranic characters like Bharata, Krishna, Karna...has a touch of iconoclasm, but in actuality the idealism is deeper than the iconoclasm.” (Iyer 5)

His plays are The Burden (1933), Fulfillment (1983), A Monologue (1933), The Purpose (1944) and The Curse of Karna (1946).
In the post-Independence era, Indian English Drama has had to continue the struggle for survival but the scene in post-Independence era is far better than the pre-Independence period. It did not flourish well because of the lack of regular theatre. Although some institutions like National School of Drama was established in Delhi; National Drama Festival was started in Delhi by the Sangeet Natak Academy, but all this led to the growth of drama in regional languages. However, some theatre groups in Mumbai, Calcutta and New Delhi successfully staged plays of Pratap Sharma, Gieve Patel, Asif Currimbhoy, Gurucharan Das, Shiv K. Kumar, Girish Karnad, Mahesh Dattani and others. All of them used different techniques and methods to enrich Indian English Drama. One thing is clear that Girish Karnad, Mahesh Dattani and Uma Pareswaran have proved more successful than others because of their attachment with theatre and their acting in TV serials.

One of the most creative Indian English dramatists of post-Independence period is Asif Currimbhoy who wrote several plays in a time span of seventeen years. He wrote on a wide range and variety of subject-matters such as history and contemporary political, social and economic problems, the East-West encounter, religion, philosophy and art. His plays like The Capitives (1963), Goa (1964), Inquilab (1970) and The Refugee (1971) deal with the socio-political and historical concerns. Farce, comedy, melodrama, tragedy, history and fantasy: Currimbhoy handles them all with commendable ease. He got the international reputation as his plays have been staged abroad also. He can contrive interesting situations, his dialogues
are arresting and he has a sense of atmosphere and his plays are suitable for stage. In this context, Iyer says, —Distinguished by careful craftsmanship and sensitive theatrical instinct, the plays of Asif Currimbhoy admirably illustrate the sophisticated artistry of contemporary Indian drama in English. His dramatic output bears testimony to the fact that he has a message to deliver and a vision to fulfill. Being aware of the irredeemable absurdities of man, he is always in search of the ways and means for the betterment of human life. By introducing various theatrical techniques, he wants to shock the audience and make them feel for human suffering.

It is notable that postmodern or contemporary Indian English Drama is full of experiments, creativity and innovations on account of dramaturgy and selection of themes. A new trend is emerged which is a unique tradition in the history of Indian English Drama. It could happen because dramatists have reinvestigated ancient myths, historical events, legends, religious beliefs and folk lore to deal with the current social, political, economical issues in sugarcoated manner. Dramatists like Girish Karnad, Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar and Vijay Tendulkar played major role to build the background for Indian English Drama tradition in our time. The history of modern Indian English drama has witnessed, Girish Karnad as a rising son in the firmament of Indian and International drama. He is one of the most noteworthy dramatists of Contemporary Indian English drama tradition. Karnad’s writings have depth and strong Indian roots that earned him critical appreciation
and international fame. His knowledge of theatre made his plays giant success at international level.

In the Indian English Drama tradition, Girish Karnad is a versatile personality and gifted playwright who revived the tradition of Indian culture and history in the contemporary Indian Literature. He won the prestigious Jnanpith Award for Kannada for his excellent contribution in the field of literature. The classical Sanskrit tradition and folk literature is inseparable part of Indian English drama. As a Man of land Karnad was aware about this fact and interestingly used in his creative writing. M.K Naik observes:

If Indian English drama wishes to go ahead, it must go back first, that is, only a purposeful return to its own roots in the rich tradition of ancient Indian drama, both in Sanskrit and folk drama in Prakrit, can help it shed its lean and pale look, and increase its artistic hemoglobin count... (Naik 43-44)

The modern Indian society has been passing through psychological and philosophical conflicts and to justify such situations, Karnad invented new approach collecting materials from historical and mythological sources to describe the contemporary Indian attitudes. In his own words, Karnad expressed:

My generation was the first to come of age after India became independent of British rule. It therefore had to face a situation in which tensions implicit until then had come out in the open and demanded to be resolved without apologia or self-justification: tensions between the cultural past of the country and its colonial
past, between the attractions of Western modes of thought and our own traditions, and finally between the various visions of the future that opened up once the common cause of political freedom was achieved. This is the historical context that gave rise to my plays and those of my contemporaries. (Karnad, Introduction, Three Plays)

Mahesh Dattani, who came on the scene after Girish Karnad, has the advantage of being the first Indian English dramatist to be honoured by the Sahitya Akademi. He is considered as an authentic voice whose plays are rooted in contemporary urban experience. He, like Girish Karnad, is a playwright, director, an actor, producer and the founder of a theatre group known as the Play Pen, a performing art group for promoting plays written not only in English but also in regional languages. His plays hold mirror to the contemporary Indian society in certain respects. Rai aptly remarks:

He has the unique capacity to read the rumblings of contemporary urban Indian society and smell the perennial clash between tradition and modernity. He is not interested in polemics but writes frankly about the oppressed or the marginalized class such as minorities, women, gays, hijaras etc. If Girish Karnad is the first important pillar of contemporary Indian English drama, Mahesh Dattani is the second one. (Rai 21)

Vijay Tendulkar (1928-2008) also needs a mention here for his contribution to drama. His language embraced middle class people but it was true to the people he
chose to portray. Tendulkar’s plays like *Silence! The Court is in Session* (1967), *Ghasiram Kotwall* (1972) and *Sakharam Binder* (1972) deal with suppressions and anxieties faced by women and satirizes the urban middle-class. He has changed the form and pattern of Indian drama with his Marathi plays. He brought the traditional and modern theatre close by demolishing the constraints imposed by the three-act play and by developing flexible and carefully crafted form. In *Sakharam Binder, Ghashiram Kotwall* and *Silence! The Court is in Session*, he raises disturbing questions about love, sex, marriage and moral values, and highlights the hollowness of middle class morality. In *Ghashiram Kotwal*, the protagonist is an embodiment of political machination and Sukharam shows hollow patriarchal morality. However, *Vultures* (1961) shows people caught in hypocrisy and acute social and mental isolation. Jain remarks:

Tendulkar has, over the years, moved from one social concern to another and has experimented with shock tactics, chorus and folk forms like Tamasha to arouse public conscience… [He] has worked with enclosed spaces, with rehearsals as the subject of a play and their sudden detonations which break the boundaries, and overflow into personal conflicts of the characters as in *Silence! The Court is in Session*… [He] has also worked with domestic spaces as in *Sakharam Binder* where moral norms become agents of disruption and the enclosed space no longer remains closed. (Jain 30-32)
Tendulkar, like all contemporary dramatists paints Indianness and tries to bring awareness in the society. His dramas speak about the sufferings, dooms and suffocation of contemporary middle class men. The focus of dramatist is on, isolation of man and his confrontation with hostile surroundings. It is also notable that the theme of oppression and violence dominates his plays.

There are other dramatists also who have in one way or the other helped Indian English drama to go ahead in its journey. Notable among them are Badal Sircar (1925-2011), Mohan Rakesh (1925-1972), Gieve Patel (b. 1938), Uma Parameswaran (b. 1938) and Manjula Padmanabhan (b. 1953). Badal Sircar is also a reputed dramatist in contemporary tradition of Indian English drama. Sircar has penned plays on political, social, psychological and existential problems. His major plays are, *Evan Inderjit* (1962), *That Other History* (1964) and *There Is No End* (1971).

Diana Mehta’s *The Myth Maker* (1969), *Brides Are Not for Burning* (1979) and *Getting Away with Murder* (2000) present before us the prevailing conditions in Indian society like dowry deaths, sexual abuse, infidelity and insecure relationships. Uma Parameswaran has also been active in theatre in Canada where she teaches. She is the founder of PALT—Performing Art and Literature in India at Winnipeg, Canada and presents weekly shows there. Her play, *Sons Must Die* (1998) is a play about Kashmir conflict in 1948. But her reputation as a playwright rests on *Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees* (1987), presenting the conditions of immigrants in Canada. The contribution of Mohan Rakesh on Indian English drama cannot be
ignored. Rakesh has narrated crisis of contemporary man stuck in the web of congenial surroundings and persistent threat to human relationships. Basically Mohan Rakesh has written in Hindi language. His plays have been translated into English and other regional languages. His famous plays are, *Asadh Ka Ek Din* (1958), *Lahron Ke Rajhans* (1963) and *Aadhe Adhure* (1969). Through these dramas, dramatis throws light on the problems of men – women relationships, issues of ego, conflicts, illusions caused by information technology, nothingness, social relationships and unawareness of self.

Indian writing in English is not only enriched by male dramatists but also women dramatists who have played major role by taking the theme of feminism where she explored the mindset of Indian women. Manjula Padmanabhan and Mahasweta Devi are notable in this regard. Manjula Padmanabhan’s *Harvest* (1998) which won the first prize in the Onassis International Cultural competition deals with the sale of human organs. Her play, *Lights Out* (2000) present the tragic spectacle of the daily rape of women. Besides them Derek Antao (1936-2002) and Poile Sangupta (b. 1948) have contributed to this genre. The other dramatists who deserve reference and critical attention are M.V. Rama Sarma for his eleven plays in *Collected Plays* (1982), Rajindra Paul for *Ashes Above Fire* (1970), Shiv K. Kumar for *The Last Wedding Anniversary* (1975), Derek Antao for *Give Us This Day* and *Our Black Sheep* (1980), Shashi Tharoor for *Twenty Two Months In The Life Of a Dog* and *The Five Dollar Smile* (1990) and R. Raja Roa’s *The Wisest Fool On Earth and other plays*
The tradition is flourished and going well with pace. At present juncture, Indian English Drama has earned its place amongst world literature. It has been contributed continuously by various dramatist of postmodern time with their dramatic genius.

Overview of Reception Theory in context of Drama Genre

The study of literary work with the reference of another literary text brings the domain of comparative literature in the discussion. Comparative literature is a methodology to study literature across the language and culture. It widens the area of literary text and helps to understand culture, language and psychology pertaining to other literary text. Susan Bassnett in her work Comparative-literature: a Critical Introduction “comparative literature involves the study of texts across cultures, that it is interdisciplinary and that it is concerned with patterns of connection in literature across both time and space.”(1) Comparative literature studies two literatures or more literature side by side, which makes the subject matter broader and the perspective wider. As Henry Remark defines:

Comparative literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, architecture, music), philosophy, history, the social sciences (e.g., politics, economics,
sociology), the sciences, religion, etc., on the other. In brief, it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression. (Remark 12)

Apart from different culture and surface, the common human experience is reflected in the literature of all country. In a way, Comparative Literature functions as a literary bridge and brings the literature on the same platform. In the context of India, Madhusudan Dutt, a famous 19th Century Bengali Poet and dramatist expresses the importance of comparative literature in one of his letters to a friend, (1 July 1860), that suggests the importance of comparative study, “As for me, I never read any poetry except that of Valmiki, Homer, Vyasa, Virgil, Kalidasa, Dante, Tasso and Milton”. (Pathak 31)

During 1960s to 1980s, Reception Theory emerged from the Germany with the contribution of Hans Robert Jauss. It mainly emphasizes on the interaction between text and reader. According to Reception Theory, the role of author is to create only the text and after it is a reader who adds life into the text. It is concerned with the collective social effects of a work of art in a certain historical period, given the prevailing moral values and the cultural-sociological circumstances. Generally, this theory believes that the value of literary text depends on the historical, social and cultural background of reader. During the process of interpreting the text, the response of reader is pivotal to re-invent its literary value and quality. In
Comparative literature, Reception theory deals with the literary influence of one writer on the other directly or indirectly.

**Myth and Mythology**

The word myth is derived from Greek word ‘mythos’ and Latin word ‘mythus’. The myth is complex and difficult to define. Generally, it means any traditional or supernatural story. According to M. H. Abrams, “In classical Greek, “mythos” signified any story or plot, whether true or invented. In its central modern significance, however, a myth is a story in the mythology system. Which are the hereditary stories of ancient origin, once believed to be true by an individual or a group of people having common culture. It served to explain why the world is as it is and things happened as they do, to provide a rationale for social customs and observances, and to establish the sanctions for the rules by which people conduct their lives. To explain and understand natural phenomenon and their connection with the real life, myths are rooted in the psychology of human society. The divine myths try to explain that the natural divine powers are the reflections of human thoughts and belief. Myths are the symbolic presentation of primitive man’s instinct that his work-a-way world was interpenetrated with a super-rational or extra-rational activity. Modern anthology sees all religion, art springing, and growing from this primitive root of symbolic transformation. By his symbol-making instinct man’s knowledge and experience of outer and inner world were projected into direct
sensuous embodiment, giving them life and outline and meaning. In the opinion of Lévi-Strauss:

More rapid cross-references, together with an increase in the number of points of view and angles of approach have made it possible to consolidate into a whole what might at first have seemed to be a loose and precarious assemblage of odds and ends, all dissimilar in form, texture and colour. Careful stitching and darning, systematically applied to reinforce weak spots, has finally produced a homogeneous fabric, clear in outline and harmonious in its blend of shades; fragments which at first seemed disparate, once they found their appropriate place and the correct relationship to their neighbours, come together to form a coherent picture. In this picture, the tiniest details, however gratuitous, bizarre, and even absurd they may have seemed at the beginning, acquire both meaning and function. (Strauss 562)

Myth is associated with human tendency of inquiring for example how the world began; how humans and animals came into being; how certain customs, gestures, or forms of human activity originated; and how the divine and human worlds interact. Often myth describes gods, supernatural elements and mysteries of the world and universe. According to Andrew Lang:

The essence of myth, as of fairy tale, we agree, is the conception of the things in the world as all alike animated, personal, capable of endless interchanges of form. Men may become beasts; beasts may change into men; gods may appear as human or bestial; stones, plants, winds, water, may speak and act like human beings, and change shapes with them. (Lang 20)
Even, the scholars have noted the religious aspect in myth. Ancient mythologies and their chief gods include those of Egypt (Osiris), Greece (Zeus), Rome (Jupiter) and India (Brahma). Mythology embraces the examination of these stories and how they relate to similar tales told in other cultures. Many English poets and dramatists have extensively used various myths in their writing. English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley’s lyric drama *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) is an example of the rewriting of myth (in this case, an attack on God as the oppressor of mankind). Norse and Germanic mythology provided the basis for German composer Richard Wagner’s operatic cycle *Der Ring des Nibelungen* / *The Ring of the Nibelung* (1876).

In the Indian context several myths are existing since Vedic time. Even Kshatriyas have also created and replied of the Brahmin myths by creating myths of their own supremacy. Parashuram (the 6th incarnation of Vishnu), a Brahmin who decimated Kshatriyas from the earth for at least twenty-one times. The study of Rama throws light on the war-like qualities of the Kshatriyas. Even in penance, we find the Kshatriya attempt to break the monopoly of the Brahmins and Kshatriya Vishvamitra ultimately being called Brahma Rishi. *Fire and the Rain*, a masterpiece by trendsetter dramatist Girish Karnad speaks of the caste myth and proved as perfect example of it. These are some of the examples in support of arguments presented above.

Modern explorations of myths have completely changed the conceptions of their origins, nature and functions. Myth became an interesting area of study to alive
it from the dead bone of time. It is true that the ancient stories that we call myths are ancient legends expressing man's existence. The mythical method is the presentation of experience in symbolic form, the earliest and still the most direct and immediate form of human expression. Long before man developed the power of logical discourse and intellectual interpretation, the material transmitted to his mind through his senses moulded itself into meaning the myth. It was the first step of primitive man 'towards order and form', the giving of imaginative shape and experience to the totality of his experience.

Many Indian English dramatists like Girish Karnad, Asif Karimbhoy and Mahesh Dattani have taken myth as a major or supportive theme. They have made mythological characters alive in our time, with new interpretations and references. For example plays of Karnad like, *Yayati, Hayavadana, Naga - Mandala, Fire and the Rain, Bali: The Sacrifice* and *Tale Danda* bridges two generations. It peeps into the myths for the solutions of today’s problems. In Gujarati language ‘Purakalpan’ and ‘Prachinlok-katha’ are widely accepted synonyms for myth. In short myth is an independent imagination which has direct relation with ancient stories, though it expresses the modern emotions. Nowadays myth tends to signify a fiction, but a fiction which conveys a psychological truth. According to Merriam Webster myth signifies “a popular belief or tradition that has grown up around something or someone; especially: one embodying the ideals and institutions of a society or segments of a society”.

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Role of Myth in Drama

It is a historical fact that drama in its early stages of development depended upon myths; the myths provided the fables - a complex of action and character –, which assumed the shape of drama. Indian English drama, flourished as much possible during the last hundred years, has tried to deal with philosophical views, religious convictions, political issues, social problems, psychological matters, etc. through myths, legends, historical events and day-to-day happening. Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, T. P. Kailasam, Girish Karnad, Badal Sircar and Uma Parameswaran are among the Indian English dramatists who have made a frequent use of Indian as well as foreign myths in their writings, particularly in plays.

Girish Karnad is no stranger to the world of Indian myths, including the epics and puranas. As his contemporary playwright Vijay Tendulkar puts it aptly, Karnad was "groomed in mythology". Karnad has found myths a powerful vehicle to carry the complex ideas of the modern times. Besides, the use of myths enables him to link the continuity of emotions from the beginning of the civilization to the present age. Thirdly, he is able to interpret the past in terms of the present and vice versa. The following remark of Hazel E. Barnes is relevant in the context of Girish Karnad.

In a period when values are relatively stable, authors tend to use the classical myths merely allusively, enriching the poetic quality of their work with layers of older connotations. In an age more obviously transitional, there is likely to be more of new interpretations.
Karnad too has admitted on more than one occasion that he grew up with "a lot of myths". It is not surprising then that his very first play Yayati is based on Adiparva, the first book of the Mahabharata. Interestingly, the story of Shakuntala is also from the same source, Adiparva. Like his illustrious and immortal predecessors Kalidasa and Shakespeare, Karnad has mostly adapted his plots from various sources. Like them again, he has endowed his borrowed stories with a new lease of life by adding his own share of myths. Chitralekha in Yayati and Hayavadana in Hayavadana are good examples of his myth making imagination.

Chaman Singh in his thesis, “Existentialism in Girish Karnad’s Plays” aptly says:

Karnad’s plays testify to a larger cultural matrix of a mythic modes, oral folk forms, and narrative conventions than any other plays written and performed in the recent times. His re-writing of myths and folktales instills unique emotional and intellectual angles to the given prototypes and this attains a larger frame of reference-psychologically complex.

(Chaman Existence 6)

The stories of the past from 10th century BC to the present intersect and in displacement and reverberation, we sense their presence in our personal and public life in the contemporary world.

The influence of the Mahabharata on Karnad’s life and works is visible through his writing and speech. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana are the oldest and most popular India epics written in Sanskrit language. These two epics are related to the
roots of Indian culture and represent the great heritage of Indian life and society. Karnad is highly impressed by the structure and the plot and subplots of these two epics which later became the style of writing his plays.

Karnad very skillfully uses mythical, historical and folk themes into his plays by giving the contemporary taste. In fact, Karnad uses old literature and ancient source to represent the contemporary atmosphere and problems. His writing comes out with a little amusing satire to depict the present political and social problems of Indian life. These plays are artistically depict the mood of the society and as we read them we feel that history or Purnas are repeating themselves. Moreover, Karnad’s service to the India stage is incredible. He has extensively introduced the folk tradition into his plays and enlarged the horizons of the Indian drama. Therefore, Karnad’s all plays can be divided into two major categories: Mythological Plays and Historical Plays.

In Naga-Mandala, Yayati, Hayavadana, and The Fire and Rain one finds the predominance of mythical element and structure. In Tughlaq, Dreams of Tipu Sultan and Tale-Danda one finds a predominant historical structure. However, Karnad also treats history as a myth and rather than writing a strictly factual historical play he gives it symbolical reshaping to reinforce the contemporary issues. His Tughlaq mythicizes history; Hayavadana derived its idea from Vetala Punchasi; Yayati, The Fire and the Rain present re-telling of episodes from the Mahabharata; Tale-Danda is inspired by life of Basavesvara, Virasaiva social reformer. While the earlier plays
deal with human imperfection and the theme of responsibility, the later ones dramatize contemporary communal strife and caste-based politics in India. When one peeps into his total dramatic output, he/she is impressed by the loftiness of Karnad’s artistic perception and creative ingenuity. Karnad culls anecdotes, parables and ideas from forgotten conventions, scrapes and fragments of Indian history and mythology and welds them in the contemporary stories / histories of India. The universal pleasure that people get from stories require that they resonate with the lives and imaginative experience of their readers, however magical or improbable the incidents related may be. In this sense, every drama is a story enacted for those who are directly or indirectly the subject of the story they are seeing and are doubly represented - as characters and spectators.

The playwright’s immense interest in past which is loaded with mythology is there because it remains an integral part of the living culture of India. The deities of the Indian pantheon are part and parcel of the day-to-day life of the people. Because of their long association with the deities, the supernatural world is more a fact than fiction. Hence, living in the age of reason and science, Karnad does not lose touch with tradition. Mythology and history remains a repository of ideas for him.

Reception of traditions, literature, knowledge, ideas and technological inventions are not limited to Gujarati only. Kannada and Indian English literature also have traces of reception, influence and translation activities. All the languages and literature are affected without any geographical or physical boundaries or
limitations. Gujarati literature is also received in many other languages and has remained influential.

The purpose of this research is to study selected plays of Chinu Modi and Girish Karnad in the light of their reception of Indian myths. Girish Karnad, an influential figure of Kannada literature influenced Chinu Modi in representation of myth. The plays of Girish Karnad and Chinu Modi contain many similarities especially in the context of Indian myths from Folklore, regional popular tells and Mahabharata.